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Developing the speaking ability of Iranian EFL learners via auditory input-enhancement

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Abstract

This study examined the impact of auditory input enhancement on the speaking abilities of Iranian EFL learners. Given the importance of speaking in language acquisition and the challenge of limited exposure to spoken English, the study focused on auditory input enhancement—altering intonation and pitch—to improve speaking proficiency. Fifty intermediate-level female learners, aged 18-28, from an English Language institute were selected based on their Oxford Placement Test (OPT) scores. Participants were divided into an experimental group, which received auditory input enhancement, and a control group, which followed traditional methods. Speaking abilities were evaluated with pretests and posttests using the Preliminary English Test (PET). An independent samples t-test analyzed the scores to test the hypothesis. Results indicated a statistically significant improvement in the experimental group's speaking performance compared to the control group, with Cohen's d showing a large effect size. These findings support previous research on input enhancement, underscoring the role of auditory input in focusing learners' attention on linguistic features and enhancing speaking performance. The study suggests that auditory input enhancement could be a valuable tool for EFL teachers and curriculum designers to improve learners' speaking skills.

Keywords: EFL Learners, Auditory Input Enhancement, Speaking Ability

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1. Introduction

In today's rapidly globalizing world, proficiency in English has emerged as a crucial skill for individuals across the globe. English, often referred to as the world's lingua franca, serves as the primary language for communication in international settings. It is not only the official language in numerous countries, but also plays a vital role in fields such as education, business, politics, science, and technology (Council of Europe, 2020; Deardorff, 2018). The pervasive use of English has positioned it as a tool for accessing vast resources of knowledge and engaging in cross-cultural interactions. As a result, the ability to communicate effectively in English has become a significant marker of academic and professional success.

Among the four core language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—speaking holds a particularly important place in language learning. While all the skills are interrelated and contribute to overall communicative competence, speaking stands out as both a primary goal of language instruction and a key measure of language proficiency (De Jong & Perfetti, 2011; Richards, 2015). Unlike reading or writing, which allow for careful planning and revision, speaking requires real-time language production and involves spontaneous expression, making it one of the most cognitively demanding skills to master. For English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, achieving fluency in spoken English is often regarded as the most challenging aspect of language acquisition. Learners must not only acquire linguistic knowledge but also develop the ability to use language effectively in diverse social contexts.

Speaking in a second language is a complex and multi-faceted skill that involves both verbal and non-verbal communication. It requires learners to select appropriate linguistic structures, utilize a wide range of vocabulary, and produce accurate pronunciation, all while adhering to the sociocultural norms of the target language (Bygate, 2018; Chaney, 1998, as cited in Kayi, 2006). Non-verbal cues, such as body language, gestures, and facial expressions, also play a critical role in effective communication, as they help convey meaning and regulate conversational flow. Consequently, speaking is not just about linguistic competence; it also involves pragmatic

and strategic competence, making it one of the most dynamic language skills.

The complexity of speaking as a skill underscores the need for targeted teaching strategies that address its unique challenges. Despite this, many learners, particularly in EFL contexts, struggle to achieve proficiency in spoken English. In countries like Iran, where opportunities for authentic language use are limited, learners often face significant barriers to developing their speaking skills (Rahimy & Sasapr, 2012). Research has shown that Iranian EFL learners tend to perform poorly in speaking tasks, often due to insufficient exposure to spoken English and lack of meaningful speaking activities in the classroom (Dahmardeh, 2009). Learners frequently experience difficulties in expressing their ideas, using appropriate grammatical structures, selecting accurate vocabulary, and maintaining proper pronunciation. These issues are further compounded by lack of confidence and fear of making mistakes, which can lead to silence and passivity in the classroom (Tsui, as cited in Liu & Jackson, 2009).

Traditional language teaching methods have long relied on activities such as short dialogues and controlled speaking exercises to provide learners with opportunities to practice speaking in the classroom (Bashir et al., 2011). While these methods can help build foundational speaking skills, they are often insufficient for fostering true communicative competence. Learners may become proficient in rehearsed speech but struggle with spontaneous communication in real-world contexts. This highlights the need for more innovative approaches to teaching speaking that not only provide practice opportunities but also engage learners in meaningful, authentic communication.

One pedagogical approach that has gained attention in recent years is input enhancement. Input enhancement refers to techniques used to make specific features of the target language more salient to learners, thereby facilitating the process of noticing and acquisition (Ellis, 2019). It is grounded in the theoretical framework of second language acquisition (SLA), which emphasizes the importance of input for language learning (Schmidt, 1990; Van Patten, 2017). According to SLA theories, input—defined as the linguistic data that learners are exposed to—is essential for the development of linguistic competence. However, not all input is equally effective. For input to lead to

acquisition, learners must actively notice the linguistic forms and structures present in the input, a procekk known an nnoggggggShhmttt , 1990..

Shhmidsss99990) noiiii ng hypohhesssposssshhat eeaeeess can onyyacqurre eeatusss of the target language that they have consciously noticed in the input. Therefore, the role of input enhancement is to draw learner'' ateenoon ooppeii fccaanguage fomns, eeeeegggg the likelihood that they will notice and internalize these forms. Input enhancement can be implemented through both visual and auditory means. Visual input enhancement techniques include bolding, underlining, or highlighting key linguistic features in written texts (Lee & Benati, 2007). Auditory input enhancement, on the other hand, involves modifying the auditory input through changes in intonation, pitch, or stress to make specific language forms more noticeable to learners (Doughty & Williams, 1998).

The theoretical foundations of this study are rooted in both input-based approaches to language learning and communicative language teaching (CLT). Input-based approaches emphasize the role of exposure to linguistic input in shaping learners' developing language systems (Ellis, 2021; Wong & VanPatten, 2003). According to these approaches, input provides the raw material from which learners build their linguistic competence. However, input alone is not sufficient for language acquisition; learners must also engage in output, or language production, in order to develop the ability to use the language fluently and accurately (Swain, 1985). This view aligns with CLT, which posits that the primary goal of language instruction is to develop learners' communicative competence by providing them with opportunities to use the language in meaningful, authentic communication (Richards & Rodgers, 2020).

In the context of speaking, input and output are inextricably linked. Learners need exposure to high-quality input in order to develop their linguistic knowledge, but they also need opportunities to practice speaking in order to develop fluency and accuracy. The role of input enhancement in this process is to ensure that learners notice the linguistic features necessary for accurate and fluent speech. Auditory input enhancement, in particular, may be especially beneficial for speaking development, as it mirrors the natural variability of spoken language and helps learners attune to the prosodic features of

speech (Doughty & Williams, 1998).

While input enhancement has been widely studied in the context of written language learning, its application in oral language development, particularly through auditory input enhancement, has received less attention. This is surprising given the central role of spoken communication in language learning. Spoken input plays a critical role in deveppppggggaaaeeee'' speaggggllll ,,, as tt proveees hhe iinguccccc odess neeessayy for learners to imitate and internalize. Additionally, auditory input enhancement offers unique advantages in language learning, as it mirrors the natural variability of spoken language and helps learners attune to the prosodic features of speech, such as rhythm, stress, and intonation (Cook, 2016).

Given the challenges faced by Iranian EFL learners in acquiring speaking proficiency, there is a pressing need for research that explores the effectiveness of auditory input enhancement in improving speaking skills. Existing studies on input enhancement have primarily focused on reading and writing skills, with little attention given to speaking. Hence, the purpose of this study was to determine whether auditory input enhancement could improve the speaking abilities of Iranian EFL learners. By focusing on auditory input, the study sought to fill a gap in the existing literature and contribute to our understanding of effective teaching strategies for speaking skills. The findings of this research have the potential to inform teacher educators, trainers, and curriculum designers, as well as to provide practical insights for classroom teachers. If auditory input enhancement proves to be effective in improving speaking performance, it could be integrated into language instruction to help learners overcome the challenges they face in developing spoken fluency and accuracy.

In conclusion, speaking is a critical skill for EFL learners, but one that presents unique challenges. Traditional language teaching methods have often failed to adequately address these challenges, leading to persistent difficulties in speaking proficiency. Input enhancement, particularly auditory input enhancement, can offer a promising approach to improving speaking skills by making key linguistic features more salient to learners. This study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of auditory input

enhancement in enhancing the speaking abilities of Iranian EFL learners, with the goal of providing insights that can inform both theory and practice in language teaching. Considering the above points, the research question guiding this study was as follows:

- **Q1**: Does auditory input enhancement instruction have a significant effect on EFL learners' speaking abilities?

From this research question, the following null hypothesis was be formulated:

- **H01**: Auditory input enhancement instruction has no significant effect on EFL learners' speaking abilities.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

Initially, the participants of this study were 70 Iranian intermediate EFL learners studying at an English Language center, aged 18-28. Based on their results on a sample of the Oxford Placement Test (OPT), only students who scored within a range of one standard deviation (SD) above or below the mean of the intermediate level scores were selected based on non-random convenience sampling technique. This range ensured that participants had intermediate language proficiency. The language institute's placement exam also confirmed that participants, all female students studying English for three years, were at the same level of language competency. To maintain homogeneity in language proficiency at the start of the study, the researcher administered the OPT to all participants.

To finalize selection, 50 students with OPT scores within one standard deviation above and below the intermediate level mean were selected, excluding any students with scores beyond this range to maintain intermediate-level proficiency. These 50 students were then randomly divided into two homogeneous groups of 25, labeled as the experimental group and the control group. While the control group followed the language institute's recommended approach, the experimental group received auditory input

enhancement methodology as part of their instruction.

2.2. Instruments and Materials

2.2.1. Oxford Placement Test (OPT)

The OPT is a commonly used assessment tool with 60 components. It is designed to "measure global language abilities" and, as a proficiency test, is meant to be norm-referenced (Brown, 2005, p. 2). A proficiency test should yield "scores which fall into a normal distribution" (p. 5), which permits relative interpretations of the test results in terms of "how each student's performance relates to the performances of all other students" (p. 4). This is one particular characteristic of a proficiency test as a norm-referenced test. "The test must provide scores that form a wide distribution so that interpretations of the differences among students will be as fair as possible" (p. 8). For professors, the OPT offers a dependable and effective way to assign students at the beginning of a course (Allan, 2004).

2.2.2. Speaking Pretest

The researcher employed the Preliminary English Test (PET) speaking part as a pretest to gauge the trainees' speaking proficiency. As per the official Cambridge ESOL webpages, the PET exam is intended for individuals who possess an intermediate level of proficiency in written and spoken English in daily life. The four language skills—reading, writing, speaking, and listening—are all covered.

The PET speaking practice exam is divided into four sections, and each segment lasts between ten and twelve minutes. During the first section of the speaking examination, each candidate spoke with the interviewers for two to three minutes while the examiner answered questions concerning their personal information. The second portion of the speaking exam involved a simulated scenario with a visual stimulus that allowed the applicants to communicate with one another. This section usually takes two to three minutes. It was suggested that during this time, you make and respond to comments, discuss options, make recommendations, and negotiate agreements. The applicants discussed one photo on a related topic for up to a minute each in the third

speaking exam section. This section focused on managing discourse in a longer turn that requires three minutes, replying to images, and taking longer turns. In the fourth section, which focused on casual discussion, the candidates discussed their likes and dislikes, preferences, past experiences, routines, etc. In addition, they spoke and debated the subject of part three for around three minutes. Determining whether or not the participants' speaking abilities were uniform was the aim of the speaking pretest.

2.2.3. Speaking Posttest

The learners were given the speaking component of a different version of the PET from the one used for the pretest in order to determine the participants' speaking performance scores. It is important to remember that the posttest was designed to compare the two groups' post-treatment performance. To ensure the objectivity and consistency of the speaking pre and posttest scores, inter-rater reliability was employed. Two trained raters independently evaluated participants' recorded performances on both hhe pttt ett and pottt ett ugggg hhe PETss aaandazzzzed ppeannng bbbii.. nree-rater reliability was assessed using the Intraclass Correlation Coefficient (ICC), which is widely recognized for measuring agreement between multiple raters. The ICC value obtained was 0.85, indicating a high level of agreement and reliability. Discrepancies between the raters were minimal and resolved through discussion, ensuring that the scores reflected an accurate and unbiased assessment of participants' speaking abilities.

2.3.4. Speaking Rubric

General Mark Schemes for Speaking, a rating scale offered by Cambridge, was utilized in this study to grade Jenny Quintana's (2003) PET speaking part. The rating was completed using the parameters specified in the rating scale, which includes the 0–5 rating scale (which, in accordance with the scoring rules, should be translated to a 15).

2.3.5. Course book

Since this was the primary variable in the current study that needed to be controlled, the two groups used the same course book. American English File Book 2 (2008) was the course book. This textbook, which consists of nine units and mostly concentrates on

vocabulary and grammar at an intermediate level, was used at the English language institute for intermediate learners. This book includes a workbook and a relevant CD to help with pronunciation and sentence repetition. All four units of the book were covered by the students in this study.

2.3.6. Listening Materials

Eight listening texts were used in the current study. Four listening texts were taught based on their course book while another four listening texts came from another supplementary course book at the time of the study. Indeed, these texts were chosen from Tactics for Listening (Richards, 1997).

2.4. Research Design

This quasi-experimental study followed a pretest-treatment-posttest design. An independent samples t-test was used to analyze differences between groups, with both descriptive and inferential statistics presented below.

2.5. Procedure

To investigate the impact of auditory input-enhancement on Iranian EFL learners' speaking ability, participants were first administered a pre-test to evaluate their baseline speaking proficiency. The experimental group then underwent six weeks of auditory input-enhancement sessions, which involved exposure to carefully designed listening materials emphasizing key linguistic features, such as pronunciation, stress patterns, and sentence intonation. These materials were presented through audio recordings and interactive listening tasks. Each session lasted 60 minutes and was conducted twice a week. Simultaneously, the control group received traditional instruction without auditory enhancement. After completing the intervention, all participants took a post-test identical to the pre-test, measuring their improvement in speaking skills. Two trained raters independently assessed participants' speaking performances using a standardized rubric to ensure inter-rater reliability. Any disagreements between the raters were resolved through discussion. The results of the pre- and post-tests were then statistically analyzed to determine the effectiveness of the auditory input-enhancement approach.

2.6. Data Analysis

Data analysis included:

1. Descriptive statistics of OPT scores to verify group homogeneity.
2. Inferential analysis of pretest and posttest scores using independent samples t-tests, with checks for normality and homogeneity of variance prerequisites.
3. Effect size (Cohen's d) to assess the magnitude of group differences.

3. Results

As hhe frrtt patt of RReuu"""" "" ooon and oodeeemmine hhe aaaaapaodiii enyy vvvel of hhe participants, descriptive statistics for the Oxford Placement Test (OPT) scores were calculated for both the control and experimental groups. The results are as follows:

Table 1.

Descriptive Statistics of the OPT

Group	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Range	Minimum Score	Maximum Score
Control Group	53.4	4.8	45-61	45	61
Experimental Group	54.1	4.9	46-62	46	62

These statistics shown in Table 1 indicate that both groups had similar levels of language proficiency prior to the intervention, as expected given the selection criteria. Regarding the speaking pretest scores, the following Descriptive Statistics show the baseline speaking ability of participants in both groups:

Table 2.

Descriptive Statistics of the Speaking Pretest

Group	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Range	Minimum Score	Maximum Score
Control Group	12.3	2.1	8-16	8	16
Experimental Group	12.5	2.0	9-16	9	16

These pretest scores presented in Table 2 suggest that participants in both groups had comparable speaking proficiency at the outset of the study.

To verify that there was no significant difference in speaking ability between the control and experimental groups prior to the intervention, an independent samples t-test was conducted on the pretest scores. Assumptions for the t-test were checked, including nomnaiiyy and homogeneyyy of vaii anee.. Leveness eett confrmed homogeneyyy of variances (F = 0.12, p = .73).

Table 3.

Results of Independent Samples T-Test for the Scores of the Two Groups on the Speaking Pretest

Test	t-value	Degree of Freedom (DF)	p-value	eevnne's Tsst for Equality of Variance (F)	e eeeenn'' s Test)
Pretest (Control vs. Experimental)	0.36	48	.72	0.12	0.73

These results presented in Table 3 indicate that there was no significant difference in pretest speaking scores between the control and experimental groups, confirming their homogeneity at the beginning of the study.

After the intervention, an independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the speaking posttest scores of the control and experimental groups. Assumptions for paaameiii t t esnng were agannveii feed, whhh Leveneee eeeeindtttt gggequav vaii anee= == = 0.25, p = .62). The results have been demonstrated in Table 4.

Table 4.

Results of Independent Samples T-Test for the Scores of the Two Groups on the Speaking Posttest

Test	t-value	Degree of Freedom (DF)	p-value	Effect Size	eevnne's Tssf frr Equality of Variance (F)	e eeeenn'' s Test)
Pretest (Control vs. Experimental)	2.91	48	.005	0.83	0.25	0.62

The results of the t-test for the speaking posttest shown in Table 4 revealed a statistically significant difference favoring the experimental group. The effect size CCohenssd = 0883) nddtttt es a lagg e..e,,, gggnffyggghhat audttoyy ppput enhaneement

significantly improved speaking performance compared to the traditional method. This significant result suggests that auditory input enhancement effectively supports the acquisition of prosodic features, such as intonation, rhythm, and stress, which are critical for speaking proficiency. The rejection of the null hypothesis confirms that the auditory input intervention was instrumental in fostering these aspects of speech, leading to enhanced communicative competence. The large effect size further underscores the practical significance of the intervention, not just its statistical validity.

4. Discussion

The findings of the study indicate that enhancing auditory input can significantly improve the speaking skills of EFL learners, especially in environments with limited access to genuine language use, like Iran. The performance gap between the experimental and control groups underscores how auditory input serves as an efficient means for promoting language acquisition by increasing awareness of prosodic elements such as stress, rhythm, and intonation (Doughty & Williams, 1998; Schmidt, 1990). This aligns with the hypothesis, which asserts that awareness of language features in input is essential for learning (Schmidt, 1990). By foregrounding these elements through controlled auditory cues, the study enabled learners to actively notice and integrate these features into their speech production, thereby promoting more accurate and fluent language use.

The ggg nffaaant mmpoovement nn the expeiimenaal guuupss ppeakggg ooo,,,, as evidenced by the posttest results, provides robust support for the effectiveness of auditory input enhancement. The rejection of the null hypothesis indicates that the intervention introduced linguistic scaffolding absent in traditional teaching methods. Specifically, auditory input enhancement leverages the principles of heightened linguistic salience to ooeeer aaarne''' abllyyyoonocce and ttt eaaaize iii aaalappeech eeemen... hhe gggg effett size observed (d = 0.83) is particularly noteworthy as it signals the practical application of the method in EFL classrooms. Such results suggest that auditory input enhancement not only aids learners in overcoming common barriers—like pronunciation accuracy and intonation mastery—but also equips them with skills for more confident and fluent speech production. These findings are consistent with the broader body of research (e.g., Doughty & Williams, 1998; Cook, 2016) advocating for multimodal approaches to

language learning.

In comparison, the control group, which relied on traditional methods, lacked the focused auditory stimuli designed to highlight and reinforce key linguistic features. Consequently, participants in this group were less likely to notice and integrate these features into their speech. The findings align with Schmidt's (1990) noticing hypothesis, emphasizing that learners need to consciously notice linguistic forms for effective acquisition.

Moreover, the findings underscore the utility of input-based approaches in communicative language teaching (CLT) frameworks, which emphasize meaningful exposure to language as foundational for acquiring communicative competence (Ellis, 2021; Wong & Van Patten, 2003). Auditory input enhancement supports CLT goals by ensuring that learners not only understand language in its spoken form but also become attuned to the natural flow and structure of native-like speech, including aspects that are often underemphasized in traditional language classrooms, such as intonation and expressive nuance. For the experimental group, this approach appears to have bridged the gap between mechanical speaking exercises and authentic communication, providing a model of English that mirrors real-world interactions more closely than standard, scripted dialogues (Rahimy & Sasapr, 2012; Richards & Rodgers, 2020).

Besides, the improvement observed in the experimental group may stem from their increased exposure to natural variations in speech during the intervention. By emphasizing prosodic patterns, the auditory input enhancement provided a scaffold that helped learners better replicate native-like speech. This aligns with theories of input-based learning (Ellis, 2019) and communicative language teaching (Richards & Rodgers, 2020), which advocate for meaningful, authentic input as a foundation for skill development.

The efficacy of auditory input enhancement may also be attributed to its alignment with how language is processed and learned. Unlike traditional methods, which often emphasize rote memorization and repetitive drills, this approach integrates auditory cues

that mirror real-life language use. This contextualized learning likely contributed to the aaæeeé'' mmpvvved abiiiyy oo manage sponaaneous oommuntttt ion, a eey ddddttt or of speaking proficiency.

Additionally, these results contribute to the growing body of literature advocating for the integration of input enhancement techniques in oral language development. Previous studies have primarily focused on visual input enhancement in written language learning, such as highlighting or bolding specific text features (Lee & Benati, 2007), but the present study demonstrated that auditory input enhancement could be just as effective, if not more so, in improving spoken language skills. By enabling students to detect and produce correct phonological patterns, this approach appears to foster a greater degree of phonological awareness, which is critical for building confidence and reducing anxiety associated with speaking in a second language.

Another key point is the apparent increase in student engagement and motivation observed in the experimental group. Unlike traditional speaking practice, which can become repetitive and fail to engage learners in a meaningful way, auditory input enhancement offers a dynamic approach that encourages active listening, imitation, and self-monitoring. This aligns with research suggesting that innovative, multimodal approaches to language instruction are more effective in engaging learners and supporting long-term retention (Cook, 2016). The emphasis on auditory cues seems to have helped learners overcome barriers related to pronunciation and rhythm, allowing them to focus less on language mechanics and more on conveying meaning.

Overall, the positive outcomes observed in the experimental group point to auditory input enhancement as a valuable addition to language teaching methodologies. Given its benefits, this approach could be adapted to various proficiency levels and language contexts to address challenges that traditional methods may not fully resolve. However, further studies are needed to examine how auditory input enhancement interacts with other language skills, such as listening comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and grammar. This would help clarify whether the observed improvements in speaking skills transfer to a broader range of language abilities, ultimately providing a more

comprehensive picture of its pedagogical efficacy.

5. Conclusion

This study highlighted the potential of auditory input enhancement as an effective approach for improving speaking proficiency among Iranian EFL learners. By emphasizing on key phonological elements such as intonation, stress, and rhythm, auditory input enhancement facilitates the noticing and acquisition of essential speech features, helping learners achieve more fluent, accurate, and natural spoken language production. These findings align with the noticing hypothesis (Schmidt, 1990) and extend its implications to spoken language instruction, suggesting that targeted input enhancement can be a crucial tool for addressing speaking difficulties in EFL contexts, especially where opportunities for real-life language exposure are limited.

The study contributes to the field of TEFL by demonstrating that auditory input enhancement not only improves language accuracy, but also supports learners' overall communicative competence, a primary goal of communicative language teaching (Richards & Rodgers, 2020). In fostering heightened awareness of native-like speech patterns, this approach equips learners to better navigate the complexities of spoken English, an aspect often overlooked in traditional language instruction. Additionally, the positive outcomes observed suggest that auditory input enhancement could be beneficial for learners beyond the intermediate level, potentially supporting early-stage fluency development and reinforcing phonological and prosodic features at advanced stages.

The significant improvement in the experimental group's speaking scores also underscores the transformative potential of auditory input enhancement in addressing longstanding challenges in EFL speaking instruction. This evidence reinforces the argument for integrating innovative, input-based methods into language curricula to facilitate deeper and more sustained learning outcomes.

These findings highlight the necessity for language instructors to incorporate more creative and diverse methods into speaking education. Conventional teaching strategies

that emphasize memorized dialogues and scripted replies may fall short in equipping students for actual conversations that demand spontaneous communication. The findings of this research indicate that enhancing auditory input, by fostering awareness and precise replication of native-like speech, presents a feasible approach to these difficulties. Future uses of this technique could aid learners in various educational and cultural settings, broadening the impact and efficiency of EFL programs globally.

This research, although insightful, had multiple limitations that deserve attention. To begin with, the sample size was quite limited and confined to one language academy, potentially affecting the applicability of the results to larger EFL groups. Broadening the sample to incorporate students from different institutions and areas would yield more thorough insights into the effectiveness of auditory input enhancement in various educational environments. Additionally, the study focused solely on female learners, a factor that may introduce gender-specific learning patterns or cultural nuances. Including both male and female participants in future research would allow for a more balanced and ppeeeennaavve aeeessment of hhe technqque’m mpac..

Secondly, the duration of the study—eight weeks—may not have been sufficient to capture long-term effects or retention of speaking improvements. Speaking skills often require extended practice and reinforcement, and it is unclear whether the observed gains would persist beyond the study period. Conducting longitudinal studies that assess performance over several months or years could provide valuable insights into the durability of auditory input enhancement effects, offering more practical recommendations for sustained language improvement.

Furthermore, this study was limited to intermediate-level learners, and the effectiveness of auditory input enhancement may vary for learners at different proficiency levels. While intermediate learners may benefit from nuanced input adjustments, beginner or advanced learners may require different types or intensities of enhancement. Exploring the adaptability of auditory input enhancement across various proficiency levels would help clarify its broader applicability and identify specific modifications that optimize learning for each group.

Finally, the study utilized pretest and posttest assessments, which, while useful for measuring performance changes, may not fully reflect the natural progression of speaking abilities in a classroom setting. Focusing only on these test scores might miss nuances in students' communication development, especially concerning emotional elements such as confidence, motivation, and self-efficacy. Including observational data, qualitative interviews, or self-assessment tools in upcoming research may offer a deeper, more comprehensive insight into learners' experiences and results with auditory input enhancement. Hence, future research could address these limitations by including a larger and more diverse sample, extending the study duration, and testing learners of varying proficiency levels. Additionally, examining the long-term effects of auditory input enhancement on speaking retention would provide insights into its sustained impact. Researchers might also explore the effects of auditory input enhancement on different language skills, such as listening comprehension or pronunciation accuracy, to broaden the understanding of its utility in EFL instruction. Finally, investigating student perceptions of auditory input enhancement could yield valuable feedback for refining these methods in the classroom.

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