The Self-Regulatory Blueprint: Assessing Its Role in Word Knowledge and Speaking Competence

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Abstract

Self-regulation is crucial in foreign language acquisition, requiring learners to set clear goals, choose effective strategies, and manage their learning. However, many face challenges in applying these strategies, indicating a need for educator support. This study examined the impact of Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) strategies on word knowledge and speaking competence among Iranian EFL learners. Data was collected from 200 pre-intermediate and intermediate students using the Vocabulary Levels Test (VLT), Self-Regulating Strategy in Vocabulary Learning Scale (SRCvoc), and Key English Test (KET), along with semi-structured interviews with 30 learners in Urmia, Iran. Analysis included descriptive statistics, multiple regression, ANOVA, and thematic analysis. Results showed that learners utilized SRL strategies for vocabulary learning above average, with specific subscales positively affecting acquisition. Commitment control emerged as the most significant factor influencing speaking proficiency, explaining 58.6% of the variance, while satiation control had minimal impact at 15.8%. Challenges in time management, motivation, and anxiety were also identified. The research advocates for targeted interventions to enhance commitment and motivation, contributing valuable insights for educators to improve learning outcomes through tailored instructional strategies that integrate self-regulation training into language curricula.

Key words*: EFL learners, instructional strategies**, self-regulation, oral proficiency, vocabulary acquisition*

Introduction

In recent years, English has emerged as the most important foreign language, witnessing an upsurge in global interest and necessity. As a result, studies of foreign language learning have shifted dramatically from traditional pedagogical beliefs toward innovative theories, techniques, and strategies that enhance the learning experience (Zahra, 2020). Central to this evolution is the concept of self-regulated learning (SRL), which empowers students to actively engage in their educational journeys by setting goals, selecting effective learning strategies, and monitoring their own progress. This shift positions learners at the core of the language acquisition process, emphasizing their responsibility for self-development and achievement (Irsyadella, 2020).

Effective communication is universally acknowledged as the ultimate purpose of language learning, prompting an exploration of how SRL strategies can serve as catalysts for improvement in both vocabulary acquisition and speaking proficiency. Research indicates that the incorporation of these strategies not only supports language learners in managing their learning processes but also fosters their inherent motivation and confidence (Weinstein et al.,2018; Zimmerman & Schunk, 2011). Teachers play an indispensable role in this regard, as they can greatly influence students' psychological needs for growth and development by providing them with the tools necessary for successful self-regulation (Nejabati, 2015). By presenting students with strategies to retain taught knowledge and develop communicative competence, educators can help their learners flourish into competent, lifelong learners.

Self-regulation is conceptualized as the extent to which learners actively seek and utilize personalized learning mechanisms to control their educational outcomes (Tseng et al., 2006). This process requires learners to remain committed to their learning contexts, effectively managing their time and resources while working toward personal goals (Zhang, 2021). It encompasses a dynamic interplay between a learner's cognitive and emotional responses and the surrounding environment, ultimately enhancing their self-awareness and capacity to adapt to challenges (Karlen et al., 2020). Empirical evidence suggests that higher levels of self-regulation correlate with increased academic success, greater motivation, and more effective task performance, thus reinforcing the importance of developing self-regulated learning skills in students (Perry et al., 2020).

The vocabulary is a critical component of language learning, playing a pivotal role in students' ability to engage in effective communication (Martina, 2017). It has been established that

vocabulary knowledge directly impacts learners' capacity to initiate, maintain, and conclude conversations (Sentürk, 2016). Insufficient vocabulary can hinder learners' progress, while a robust vocabulary foundation enhances their confidence and proficiency in language use (Vujnović, 2017). However, challenges exist within the process of vocabulary acquisition, such as students' reluctance to engage with teachers, a lack of reliance on instructional support, and ineffective use of vocabulary resources (Zahra, 2020; Berne & Blachowicz, 2008; Sivell, 2013). As vocabulary knowledge is closely linked to emotional, cognitive, and social dimensions of learning, equipping learners with self-regulation strategies can dramatically bolster their conversational skills and overall language competency (Zimmerman, 2002).

Given the imperative of SRL and its significant contribution to learners' success, there exists a pressing need for research specifically focused on its application within the EFL context. While the benefits of self-regulation strategies in language learning are well-documented, a limited number of studies have thoroughly examined their role in vocabulary acquisition and speaking proficiency, particularly among Iranian EFL learners. This study seeks to address this research gap by investigating the influence of self-regulation learning strategies on these critical language skills. By analyzing data from pre-intermediate and intermediate students at various English institutes in Urmia, Iran, this research aims to illuminate the relationship between self-regulation, vocabulary knowledge, and speaking ability, providing valuable insights for educators seeking to enhance language learning outcomes.

Ultimately, this study highlights the necessity of incorporating self-regulation training into language curricula to support learners' autonomous learning journeys. As the global demand for English proficiency continues to grow, fostering self-regulated learning strategies will empower EFL learners to become confident, effective communicators, equipped to navigate the complexities of language use in their personal and professional lives. Through this endeavor, it is not only aimed to contribute to the academic discourse surrounding self-regulated learning in EFL but also to provide practical recommendations for educators dedicated to learners' success. Therefore, this research will focus on several specific inquiries to explore these dynamics thoroughly. The primary research questions guiding this study are:

1. Which of the sub-scales of Self-Regulating Strategy in Vocabulary Learning (SRCvoc) scale are the most and the least influential ones among the Iranian English learners concerning the vocabulary learning?

2. Which of the sub-scales of Self-Regulating Capacity in Vocabulary Learning (SRCvoc) scale are the most and the least influential ones among the Iranian English learners concerning the speaking proficiency?
3. What challenges do Iranian EFL learners face in implementing self-regulation strategies for vocabulary learning, and how do these challenges affect their speaking proficiency?

Review of the Literature

Self-regulated learning (SRL) has gained increasing recognition in educational psychology, particularly in the context of foreign language acquisition. SRL refers to the processes by which learners actively manage and monitor their learning experiences, including goal setting, strategy selection, and self-reflection (Zimmerman, 2002). This model underscores the importance of learner agency and autonomy, suggesting that self-regulated learners are more likely to achieve academic success (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2012).

In the realm of foreign language learning, SRL has been found to promote greater engagement and motivation among students. Research indicates that EFL learners who employ self-regulation strategies are better equipped to tackle the challenges associated with language acquisition. For example, Mega et al. (2014) highlighted that learners who actively engage in self-monitoring and employ various learning strategies demonstrate improved language proficiency and confidence.

Vocabulary acquisition is a crucial aspect of second language learning, as it directly influences learners' communicative competence. Studies have shown that self-regulation strategies can significantly enhance vocabulary learning outcomes. For instance, Rahimi and Saberi (2020) emphasized that learners employing metacognitive strategies, such as planning and self-reflection, experience higher levels of vocabulary retention and retrieval. Additionally, Loewen (2020) noted that self-regulated learners often utilize mnemonic devices and contextual learning, which facilitate deeper understanding and usage of vocabulary in real-life contexts.

Speaking proficiency is often considered the most challenging aspect of language learning (Oxford, 2016). The integration of self-regulation strategies has been shown to positively influence learners' speaking skills. Nurjanah et al. (2021) found that the use of self-regulated strategies, such as self-evaluation and goal setting, significantly improved learners' speaking fluency and accuracy. By fostering a growth mindset and heightened awareness of their speaking practices, students can

effectively manage their speaking anxiety and enhance their performance (Raković & Winne 2022).

Despite the documented benefits of self-regulation in language acquisition, challenges persist, particularly within EFL contexts. Research by Tomak and Seferoğlu (2021) reveals that many learners struggle to implement self-regulation strategies effectively due to factors such as inadequate teacher support, lack of awareness about strategic options, and cultural barriers. Therefore, understanding these challenges is essential for educators aiming to promote self-regulated learning in their classrooms.

While considerable research has been conducted on self-regulation strategies in language learning, there exists a noticeable gap concerning their specific applications to vocabulary acquisition and speaking proficiency within the Iranian EFL context. Prior studies (e.g., Nejabati, 2015; Zahra, 2020) have largely focused on broader aspects of self-regulation without delving deeply into the interplay between vocabulary knowledge and speaking ability. Consequently, the current study aims to bridge this gap by exploring how Iranian EFL learners perceive and utilize self-regulation strategies in enhancing their linguistic competencies.

Method

Design

A mixed-methods approach was chosen to examine the factors influencing vocabulary learning and speaking proficiency among Iranian English learners. By combining quantitative methods, the impact of various sub-scales of SRCvoc scale was measured, allowing for the identification of which strategies were most and least influential across a wide sample. Qualitative methods were incorporated to enhance the data by offering deeper insights into learners' experiences and perceptions regarding the challenges Iranian EFL learners encounter when implementing SRL strategies for vocabulary learning, as well as the impact of these challenges on their speaking proficiency.

Participants

The study involved 200 pre-intermediate and intermediate EFL learners, selected through convenience sampling from various educational institutes in Urmia, Iran. Participants, aged 14 to 25, comprised both males and females, with no specific control for gender distribution. For the

qualitative phase, the sample size was not predetermined but was based on data saturation, which was achieved after conducting 30 interviews. This approach allowed to gather comprehensive insights while ensuring that the views of a diverse group of learners were represented.

Instruments

Data collection utilized several instruments to assess both vocabulary knowledge and SRL strategies among participants. The Vocabulary Levels Test (VLT) was administered to evaluate the size of learners' English vocabulary. Additionally, the Self-Regulating Strategy in Vocabulary Learning Scale (SRCvoc), developed by Tseng et al. (2006), was used to assess self-regulation strategies. The Key English Test (KET), designed by Cambridge English, was also administered to measure participants' English language skills.

In the second phase of the study and to address Research Question 3, the participants underwent interviews to capture rich, qualitative data to provide a deeper understanding of their strategies and experiences. Inspired by the literature (Ping et al., 2015; Tseng et al., 2006), the interview questions were designed to be semi-structured, allowing for flexibility in responses while focusing on key themes related to vocabulary learning and speaking proficiency. This format encouraged participants to share their personal experiences and insights regarding self-regulating strategies used in vocabulary acquisition and their impact on speaking skills. The questions aimed to delve into participants' perceptions of the effectiveness of various strategies, the challenges they encounter in their language learning journey, and how these challenges influence their speaking abilities.

Data analysis

Descriptive statistics were employed to identify the most and least influential subscales of SRL strategies for vocabulary learning among participants. In addition, multiple regression analysis and ANOVA were used to examine the quantitative data. For the SRCvoc, the internal consistency, assessed using Cronbach’s alpha, was 0.85. In addition, each of the individual sub-scales had an alpha coefficient greater than 0.70. The validity of the questionnaire was also evaluated through content validity, utilizing a comprehensive item specification during its development and application.

The qualitative data from the interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and subsequently transcribed for analysis. A thematic content analysis approach was utilized to identify patterns and themes within the data. This method involved a systematic process of coding the material, where significant statements were extracted and categorized into broader themes related to self-regulation and speaking proficiency challenges. The researcher iteratively revisited the transcripts to ensure a comprehensive understanding and accurate representation of the participants' experiences.

Procedure

Initially, participants were informed about the study's purpose and procedures, ensuring their comfort and confidentiality in responding. The VLT was administered first to evaluate vocabulary knowledge, followed by the distribution of the SRCvoc questionnaire, which participants completed at their own pace within a 20-minute timeframe. The data collection phase lasted two weeks, concluding with the KET examination to assess overall English proficiency.

To gain deeper insights into the self-regulated learning strategies employed by participants, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 30 participants selected from the original sample. The sampling method for the interviews involved purposive sampling, where participants were chosen based on their responses to the SRCvoc questionnaire, ensuring a mix of high and low self-regulation strategy users. This approach was justified as it aimed to highlight the strategies that different learners found effective or challenging, providing a richer understanding of their experiences.

Each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes and was conducted in a private setting to ensure confidentiality and promote open dialogue. The semi-structured format allowed for flexibility, enabling the researcher to probe deeper into responses and explore emerging themes related to self-regulation strategies, challenges faced, and the implications for speaking proficiency.

Results

RQ1: Which of the sub-scales of Self-Regulating Strategy in Vocabulary Learning (SRCvoc) scale are the most and the least influential ones among the Iranian English learners concerning the vocabulary learning?

To investigate the first research question, the null hypotheses for each subscale were rejected in favor of the alternative hypotheses, confirming their significant effects on vocabulary learning. Regression analysis was employed to assess the impact of each SRCvoc subscale, with results presented in tables that visually illustrate the relationships between the subscales and vocabulary learning.

1. **Commitment Control**

H0: Commitment Control does not have any significant effect on vocabulary learning among Iranian EFL learners.

H1: Commitment Control has a significant effect on vocabulary learning among Iranian EFL learners.

Table 1

Examining the Effect of Commitment Control on Vocabulary Learning

Model Summary	
Correlation Coefficient (R)	0.765
R Square (R^2)	0.585
Adjusted R Square	0.583
Std. Error of the Estimate	0. 42752
ANOVA	
Sum of Squares (Regression)	51.028
Mean Square (Regression)	51.028
Sum of Squares (Residual)	36.189
Mean Square (Residual)	0.183
F Statistic	279.190
Significance (Sig.)	0.000

The R square value of .585 suggests that approximately 58.5% of the variability in vocabulary learning can be explained by commitment control. The F-statistic (279.190) is statistically significant ($p<.001$), confirming that the effect of commitment control on vocabulary learning is not due to chance. This underlines the importance of commitment control in vocabulary learning,

although it also suggests the presence of other contributing factors. The model's robustness is reinforced by a close alignment of R square and adjusted R square values.

2. **Metacognitive Control**

H0: Metacognitive Control does not significantly affect *vocabulary learning*.

H1: Metacognitive Control has a significant effect on *vocabulary learning.*

Table 2

Examining the Effect of Metacognitive Control on Vocabulary Learning

Model Summary	
Correlation Coefficient (R)	0.548
R Square (R^2)	0.300
Adjusted R Square	0.297
Std. Error of the Estimate	0.55521
ANOVA	
Sum of Squares (Regression)	26.183
Mean Square (Regression)	26.183
Sum of Squares (Residual)	61.034
Mean Square (Residual)	0.308
F Statistic	84.940
Significance (Sig.)	0.000

The R square value of .300 suggests that approximately 30% of the variability in vocabulary learning can be explained by metacognitive control. The F-statistic (84.940) is statistically significant ($p<.001$), confirming that the effect of metacognitive control on vocabulary learning is not due to chance. This underlines the importance of metacognitive control in vocabulary learning, although it also suggests the presence of other contributing factors. The model's robustness is reinforced by a close alignment of R square and adjusted R square values.

3. **Satiation Control**

H0: Satiation Control does not significantly affect *vocabulary learning*.

H1: Satiation Control has a significant effect on *vocabulary learning*.

Table 3

Examining the Effect of Satiation Control on Vocabulary Learning

Model Summary	
Correlation Coefficient (R)	0.429
R Square (R^2)	0.184
Adjusted R Square	0.180
Std. Error of the Estimate	0.59963
ANOVA	
Sum of Squares (Regression)	16.024
Mean Square (Regression)	16.024
Sum of Squares (Residual)	71.193
Mean Square (Residual)	0.360
F Statistic	44.565
Significance (Sig.)	0.000

The R square value of .184 suggests that approximately 18.4% of the variability in vocabulary learning can be explained by metacognitive control. The F-statistic (44.565) is statistically significant ($p<.001$), confirming that the effect of satiation control on vocabulary learning is not due to chance. This underlines the importance of satiation control in vocabulary learning, although it also suggests the presence of other contributing factors. The model's robustness is reinforced by a close alignment of R square and adjusted R square values.

4. Emotion Control

H0: Emotion Control does not significantly affect *vocabulary learning*.

H1: Emotion Control has a significant effect on *vocabulary learning*.

Table 4

Examining the Effect of Emotion Control on Vocabulary Learning

Model Summary	
Correlation Coefficient (R)	0.523
R Square (R^2)	0.274

Adjusted R Square	0.270
Std. Error of the Estimate	0.56552
ANOVA	
Sum of Squares (Regression)	23.893
Mean Square (Regression)	23.893
Sum of Squares (Residual)	63.324
Mean Square (Residual)	0.320
F Statistic	74.710
Significance (Sig.)	0.000

The R square value of .274 suggests that approximately 27.4% of the variability in vocabulary learning can be explained by emotion control. The F-statistic (74.710) is statistically significant ($p<.001$), confirming that the effect of emotion control on vocabulary learning is not due to chance. This underlines the importance of emotion control in vocabulary learning, although it also suggests the presence of other contributing factors. The model's robustness is reinforced by a close alignment of R square and adjusted R square values.

5. Environmental Control

H0: Environmental Control does not significantly affect *vocabulary learning*.

H1: Environmental Control has a significant effect on *vocabulary learning*.

Table 5

Examining the Effect of Environmental Control on Vocabulary Learning

Model Summary	
Correlation Coefficient (R)	0.383
R Square (R^2)	0.147
Adjusted R Square	0.142
Std. Error of the Estimate	0.61314
ANOVA	
Sum of Squares (Regression)	12.782
Mean Square (Regression)	12.782

Sum of Squares (Residual)	74.435
Mean Square (Residual)	0.376
F Statistic	34.001
Significance (Sig.)	0.000

The R square value of .147 suggests that approximately 14.7% of the variability in vocabulary learning can be explained by environmental control. The F-statistic (34.001) is statistically significant ($p<.001$), confirming that the effect of environmental control on vocabulary learning is not due to chance. This underlines the importance of environmental control in vocabulary learning, although it also suggests the presence of other contributing factors. The model's robustness is reinforced by a close alignment of R square and adjusted R square values.

RQ2: Which of the sub-scales of Self-Regulating Capacity in Vocabulary Learning (SRCvoc) scale are the most and the least influential ones among the Iranian English learners concerning the speaking proficiency?

To examine this, the null hypotheses for each subscale were rejected in favor of the alternative hypotheses, confirming their significant effects on speaking proficiency. Regression analysis was utilized to explore the impact of each SRCvoc subscale, with results presented in accompanying tables that visually depict the relationships between the subscales and speaking proficiency.

1. **Commitment Control**

H0: Commitment Control does not have any significant effect on speaking proficiency among Iranian EFL learners.

H1: Commitment Control has a significant effect on speaking proficiency among Iranian EFL learners.

Table 6

Examining the Effect of Commitment Control on Speaking Proficiency

Model Summary	
Correlation Coefficient (R)	0.765
R Square (R^2)	0.586
Adjusted R Square	0.584
Std. Error of the Estimate	0.41409

ANOVA	
Sum of Squares (Regression)	48.046
Mean Square (Regression)	48.046
Sum of Squares (Residual)	33.951
Mean Square (Residual)	0.171
F Statistic	280.199
Significance (Sig.)	0.000

The results indicate a strong and statistically significant relationship between Commitment Control and speaking proficiency, with an R^2 value of 0.586, suggesting that Commitment Control explains approximately 58.6% of the variance in proficiency. The F Statistic of 280.199 with a significance level of 0.000 underscores the robustness of the model, confirming that Commitment Control significantly impacts speaking proficiency among Iranian EFL learners.

2. Metacognitive Control

H0: Metacognitive Control does not significantly affect speaking proficiency.

H1: Metacognitive Control has a significant effect on speaking proficiency.

Table 7

Examining the Effect of Metacognitive Control on Speaking Proficiency

Model Summary	
Correlation Coefficient (R)	0.442
R Square (R^2)	0.195
Adjusted R Square	0.191
Std. Error of the Estimate	0.57724
ANOVA	
Sum of Squares (Regression)	16.021
Mean Square (Regression)	16.021
Sum of Squares (Residual)	65.976
Mean Square (Residual)	0.333
F Statistic	48.080

Significance (Sig.)	0.000

The analysis demonstrates that Metacognitive Control has a statistically significant effect on speaking proficiency, as evidenced by an R^2 value of 0.195, indicating that it accounts for approximately 19.5% of the variance in proficiency. The F Statistic of 48.080, coupled with a significance level of 0.000, confirms the model's overall significance, suggesting that higher levels of Metacognitive Control are associated with improved speaking proficiency among Iranian EFL learners.

3. Satiation Control

H0: Satiation Control does not significantly affect speaking proficiency.

H1: Satiation Control has a significant effect on speaking proficiency.

Table 8

Examining the Effect of Satiation Control on Speaking Proficiency

Model Summary	
Correlation Coefficient (R)	0.397
R Square (R^2)	0.158
Adjusted R Square	0.153
Std. Error of the Estimate	0.59062
ANOVA	
Sum of Squares (Regression)	12.927
Mean Square (Regression)	12.927
Sum of Squares (Residual)	69.069
Mean Square (Residual)	0.349
F Statistic	37.058
Significance (Sig.)	0.000

The results indicate that Satiation Control significantly influences speaking proficiency, with an R^2 value of 0.158, suggesting it accounts for approximately 15.8% of the variance in proficiency. The F Statistic of 37.058, along with a significance level of 0.000, reinforces the

model's validity, indicating that higher levels of Satiation Control are positively associated with speaking proficiency among Iranian EFL learners.

4. **Emotion Control**

H0: Emotion Control does not significantly affect speaking proficiency.

H1: Emotion Control has a significant effect on speaking proficiency.

Table 9

Examining the Effect of Emotion Control on Speaking Proficiency

Model Summary	
Correlation Coefficient (R)	0.457
R Square (R^2)	0.208
Adjusted R Square	0.204
Std. Error of the Estimate	0.57253
ANOVA	
Sum of Squares (Regression)	17.093
Mean Square (Regression)	17.093
Sum of Squares (Residual)	64.904
Mean Square (Residual)	0.328
F Statistic	52.145
Significance (Sig.)	0.000

The analysis reveals that Emotion Control significantly affects speaking proficiency, with an R^2 value of 0.208, indicating that approximately 20.8% of the variance in proficiency can be explained by Emotion Control. The F Statistic of 52.145, alongside a significance level of 0.000, highlights the strength of the relationship, suggesting that higher levels of Emotion Control are associated with improved speaking proficiency among Iranian EFL learners.

5. **Environmental Control**

H0: Environmental Control does not significantly affect speaking proficiency.

H1: Environmental Control has a significant effect on speaking proficiency.

Table 10

Examining the Effect of Environmental Control on Speaking Proficiency

Model Summary	
Correlation Coefficient (R)	0.511
R Square (R^2)	0.261
Adjusted R Square	0.257
Std. Error of the Estimate	0.55325
ANOVA	
Sum of Squares (Regression)	21.392
Mean Square (Regression)	21.392
Sum of Squares (Residual)	60.605
Mean Square (Residual)	0.306
F Statistic	69.889
Significance (Sig.)	0.000

The findings indicate that Environmental Control has a significant impact on speaking proficiency, as shown by an R^2 value of 0.261, which means it explains approximately 26.1% of the variance in proficiency. The F Statistic of 69.889, along with a significance level of 0.000, confirms the robustness of the model, indicating that higher levels of Environmental Control are positively associated with improved speaking proficiency among Iranian EFL learners.

RQ3*:* What challenges do Iranian EFL learners face in implementing self-regulation strategies for vocabulary learning, and how do these challenges affect their speaking proficiency?

The interviews provided rich insights into SRL strategies utilized in vocabulary acquisition and their impact on speaking proficiency in English. Through thematic analysis, several key themes emerged from the data, revealing the participants' experiences, strategies, challenges, and perceived outcomes.

1. Self-Regulated Learning Strategies in Vocabulary Acquisition

Participants identified a range of self-regulated learning strategies they employed to enhance their vocabulary acquisition, which can be broadly categorized into strategic planning, self-monitoring, and self-reflection.

Strategic Planning: Many participants emphasized the importance of setting specific goals for vocabulary learning, such as mastering a certain number of words each week. They

often created personalized study schedules and utilized various resources, including flashcards, language apps, and online vocabulary lists. For instance, one participant stated, "I set a goal to learn 30 new words every week, and I use apps to quiz myself daily."

Self-Monitoring: Participants reported actively tracking their progress in vocabulary learning. Several mentioned using journals to record their learning experiences and monitored their performance in speaking exercises. One participant highlighted, "I keep a log of the words I've learned and the contexts I've used them in; it helps me see how I'm improving."

Self-Reflection: Many respondents indicated that reflecting on their learning strategies was crucial for improvement. They used self-assessment tools or sought feedback from peers and teachers to evaluate their speaking practice. A participant noted, "After each speaking practice, I think about what words I struggled with and how I can use them next time."

2. Challenges in Implementing Self-Regulated Strategies

Participants highlighted several challenges they faced while implementing self-regulated learning strategies.

Time Management: A common concern was balancing language learning with other academic responsibilities. Many participants expressed difficulty in dedicating sufficient time for vocabulary study amidst their busy schedules. One student remarked, "I want to practice more, but sometimes I just don't have the time between school and other commitments."

Motivation: Sustaining motivation over time was also a significant challenge. Some participants reported losing interest in their vocabulary learning routines, particularly when they did not see immediate improvements in their speaking proficiency. A participant shared, "At times, I feel discouraged because even though I learn new words, I struggle to use them in conversation."

Fear of Making Mistakes: Several respondents expressed anxiety about speaking in English, fearing that their vocabulary limitations might result in mistakes. This fear inhibited their willingness to practice speaking with peers. As one participant explained, "I know the words, but when I speak, I often hesitate because I don't want to make mistakes in front of others."

3. Impact on Speaking Proficiency

The participants' self-regulated learning strategies had a notable impact on their speaking proficiency, which was reflected in their increased confidence and performance in speaking tasks.

Increased Confidence: Many participants felt that their efforts in vocabulary acquisition contributed significantly to their speaking confidence. The ability to use a wider range of vocabulary in their conversations allowed them to express themselves more effectively. One participant stated, "Now that I have learned more words, I feel more confident speaking with my classmates."

Improved Fluency and Accuracy: Participants reported improvements in both fluency and accuracy during speaking exercises. Those who actively utilized their vocabulary in practical contexts felt more capable of forming coherent sentences and engaging in discussions. A participant noted, "I can now form sentences more easily, and I make fewer mistakes when I speak."

4. Peer Interaction and Learning Communities

Participants identified the role of peer interaction in enhancing their vocabulary learning through self-regulation. Engaging in group study sessions and language exchange activities helped reinforce their learning strategies.

Collaboration: Many students valued collaborative learning experiences, where they could practice speaking and receive constructive feedback. One participant shared, "Studying with friends helps so much; we motivate each other and practice speaking together."

Learning Communities: The creation of supportive learning communities was highlighted as essential for sustaining motivation and facilitating vocabulary practice, with some participants suggesting that such environments allowed for shared learning experiences and reduced anxiety around speaking.

Discussion

First, the analysis aimed to identify which SRCvoc sub-scales are most and least influential in enhancing vocabulary learning. The results indicate that certain strategies, such as commitment control and metacognitive awareness, play a more significant role in vocabulary acquisition, while others, such as learning environment management, were found to be less impactful.

The study also sought to determine which SRCvoc sub-scales most and least affect speaking proficiency among the same learner demographic. The results reveal that strategies focusing on self-monitoring and self-evaluation were the most influential in improving speaking proficiency, whereas sub-scales related to managing motivation appeared to exert a lesser influence. These findings underscore the varying degrees of effectiveness of different self-regulating strategies in both vocabulary learning and speaking proficiency, highlighting the need for tailored instructional approaches to enhance these skills among the participants.

The findings indicate that commitment control accounts for 58.5% of the variability in vocabulary outcomes ($R^2 = 0.585$). This aligns with more recent research, emphasizing that commitment to learning goals enhances motivation and persistence, which are essential factors in successful vocabulary acquisition (Kim et al., 2021). The high level of statistical significance ($F = 279.190$, $p < .001$) suggests that sustaining motivation significantly contributes to learners' ability to engage and effectively manage their vocabulary learning process.

Reporting an R^2 of 0.300, metacognitive control's substantial role in vocabulary learning reveals that learners who actively monitor and reflect on their learning strategies achieve better outcomes. Recent studies have highlighted that metacognitive awareness can lead to improved learning strategies and greater academic success (Xie et al., 2024).

With an R^2 of 0.184, satiation control's impact suggests that maintaining interest and engagement in learning activities is vital. Research indicates that intrinsic motivation, bolstered by effective satiation strategies, allows learners to extend their focus on vocabulary learning, thereby enhancing retention (Ryan et al., 2021).

The influence of emotion control ($R^2 = 0.274$) illustrates the necessity for learners to manage their emotional states during the learning process. Recent findings support that emotional regulation significantly affects academic performance, indicating that learners equipped to handle their emotions can engage more fully with their vocabulary studies (Raković & Winne, 2022).

Although environmental control ($R^2 = 0.147$) showed the least impact, its presence indicates the importance of context, consistent with contemporary studies on the social learning environment (Derakhshan et al., 2024). While its direct effects may be limited, it offers a foundation that can indirectly influence other self-regulatory strategies.

The interviews provided valuable insights into SRL strategies utilized by the learners for vocabulary acquisition and their effects on speaking proficiency. Participants reported employing

strategies such as strategic planning, self-monitoring, and self-reflection, emphasizing goal-setting and personalized study schedules. However, challenges like time management, motivation, and fear of making mistakes hindered their progress. The positive impact of these strategies was evident in increased confidence, fluency, and accuracy during speaking tasks. Peer interaction and collaborative learning were also highlighted as essential for motivation and practice.

The findings from the interviews underscore the crucial role of self-regulated learning strategies in enhancing vocabulary acquisition and speaking proficiency among EFL learners. As highlighted by Zimmerman (2002), SRL encompasses the processes through which learners actively manage their educational experiences, including goal setting, strategy selection, and self-reflection. This framework is particularly relevant in the context of foreign language acquisition, where learner autonomy is essential for navigating the complexities of language learning.

The participants in this study utilized various self-regulated learning strategies, which can be categorized into strategic planning, self-monitoring, and self-reflection. These strategies align with the findings of Mega et al. (2014), who emphasized that learners who engage in self-monitoring and strategy selection tend to achieve higher proficiency levels and greater confidence. For instance, the strategic planning identified by participants, such as setting specific vocabulary goals and creating personalized study schedules, reflects the proactive approach necessary for effective learning. This proactive engagement is crucial, as it not only fosters a sense of ownership over the learning process but also enhances motivation and persistence in the face of challenges.

However, the study also revealed significant challenges that Iranian EFL learners encounter when implementing self-regulated strategies. Time management emerged as a significant barrier, with many participants struggling to balance their language learning with other academic commitments. This finding resonates with the research of Tomak and Seferoğlu (2021), which highlights the difficulties learners face in effectively employing self-regulation strategies due to external pressures. Furthermore, the participants' experiences of fluctuating motivation and fear of making mistakes reflect common obstacles in language learning, particularly in speaking contexts. As noted by Raković and Winne (2022), these emotional barriers can significantly hinder learners' willingness to engage in speaking practice, ultimately impacting their fluency and accuracy.

The impact of self-regulated learning on speaking proficiency was evident in the participants' increased confidence and improved performance in speaking tasks. This aligns with the

conclusions of Nurjanah et al. (2021), who found that self-regulation strategies such as self-evaluation and goal setting contribute positively to speaking fluency and accuracy. The ability of participants to utilize a broader vocabulary repertoire not only enhanced their communicative competence but also fostered a greater sense of self-efficacy, as illustrated by their reported feelings of confidence in speaking with peers.

Moreover, the role of peer interaction and learning communities emerged as a vital component in the participants' vocabulary learning process. Collaborative learning experiences provided opportunities for practice and feedback, reinforcing the importance of social interactions in language acquisition. This finding aligns with existing literature that emphasizes the benefits of peer support in enhancing motivation and reducing anxiety (e.g., Rahimi & Saberi, 2020). The creation of supportive learning environments, as highlighted by the participants, is essential for sustaining motivation and facilitating vocabulary practice, particularly in the context of speaking.

Conclusion

This study emphasizes the crucial role of self-regulation in word knowledge and speaking competence among Iranian EFL learners, identifying commitment control as the most significant factor affecting both areas. It highlights the importance of learners' motivation and resilience in overcoming challenges for effective language acquisition, while noting that environmental and satiation control have less direct impacts. The findings advocate for a balanced self-regulated learning approach, suggesting that educators should enhance commitment control through strategies like goal-setting, personalized study plans, and self-monitoring. Furthermore, addressing challenges such as time management and fear of mistakes is essential for fostering a supportive learning environment. The study also points to the importance of peer interaction and collaborative learning, recommending group study sessions and language exchange activities to create a motivating atmosphere that supports SRL strategies.

Future research on self-regulation in vocabulary acquisition and speaking proficiency among EFL learners could explore several promising directions. Longitudinal studies may offer insights into how self-regulation strategies evolve over time and their long-term impacts. Comparative studies across various cultural contexts could highlight different influences on self-regulation effectiveness. The integration of technology, such as mobile apps and gamified learning environments, warrants investigation for enhancing commitment control. Moreover, targeted

intervention programs focused on strengthening commitment control, alongside an examination of peer interaction dynamics in collaborative learning, could further enrich understanding. Exploring emotional and psychological factors, personalized learning approaches, and the impact of teacher training would provide a comprehensive view of self-regulation. Finally, developing new assessment tools for self-regulation strategies could lead to deeper insights into learners' experiences, ultimately informing more effective instructional strategies.

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