Original Article

The Role of Contemplative Teaching in EFL Learners' Speaking Development and Self-Regulation: Learners' Attitudes

Sahar Ahmadpour[1], Hassan Asadollahfam[1,*], Davud Kuhi[2]

[1] Department of English Language, Bonab Branch, Islamic Azad University, Bonab, Iran

[2] Department of English Language, Maragheh Branch, Islamic Azad University, Maragheh, Iran

Abstract

As an effective instructional approach, contemplative teaching has been shown to improve language learning. Nevertheless, its impact on the development of L2 speaking and self-regulation particularly from the perspective of learners has not been examined so far. For this purpose, 62 English as a foreign language (EFL) learners in a language institute in Iran were selected to participate in the study. Participants in the experimental group were exposed to contemplative instruction using the relevant practices, whereas those in the control group received no such instruction. A mixed-methods approach was used in this study for data collection and the obtained data were analyzed through t-tests. The results of statistical analyses failed to demonstrate the effect of the contemplative teaching approach on the speaking skill development of learners. Furthermore, contemplative teaching did not affect the self-regulation behaviors of learners receiving it. And, while learners appreciated some aspects of the contemplative approach, they had concerns about its applicability in teaching speaking. The implications of this study for the teachers who wish to practice contemplative teaching are presented.

Corresponding Author's E- mail: Asadollahfam@gmail.com

1. Introduction

Speaking is a complicated and multifaceted skill, the expert use of which necessitates adequate knowledge of linguistic resources including knowledge of grammar, lexis, and pronunciation, awareness of pragmatic conventions, knowledge of culture-related rules of discourse, the capability for handling the conversation, or the skill to cope with the challenges in interaction through the use of several communication strategies (McDonough & Mackey, 2013). To make issues even more complex, such systemic knowledge needs to be implemented in real-time, usually even in seconds, in contexts when the restricted attentional resources are at a premium as they should be concurrently dedicated not only to formulating the communicative purpose, selecting the essential linguistic resources and generating the real meanings, but also to monitoring all the phases of this process, evaluating the context in which communication occurs, drawing upon the indispensable subject knowledge, planning what to say next, and simply listening to the interlocutor (Khezrlou, 2020a, 2020b; Oliver & Philp, 2014).

It is evident that for the effective interaction to happen, it is of crucial significance that all of these occur to a large extent automatically, which implies that speakers need to draw on their implicit instead of explicit second language knowledge (Oliver & Philp, 2014). This presents an alarming difficulty for language learners, not just because of inadequacies in communicative competence, but because they often need to resort to compensatory strategies (Segalowitz, 2010).

The proficiency of second language speaking encompasses knowledge of language and discourse, basic speaking capabilities, and interaction and discourse strategies (Goh & Burns, 2012). Every English classroom needs to afford an appropriate learning atmosphere through the setting up of the discourse of learner autonomy by the teacher (Khezrlou & Sadeghi, 2012; Little, 2003). In this type of class, learners are motivated to select, use the target language, and evaluate their products. Learners' intrinsic motivation is involved intentionally by making use of their interest in autonomy, and at the same time cultivating connection, and urging competence. The objective is consistently to empower them to generate and use the target language (in this study English) through impromptu and authentic activities. Such a learning context would then enable and permit the learners to advance a variety of second language discourse and maintain their focus on the task and enhance their motivation (Khezrlou, 2019a, 2019b, 2019c; Little, 2003). The scholars of

the field of second language acquisition (SLA) have been consistently looking into finding effective approaches to second language speaking development. One of the approaches which are ignored in many of the EFL contexts, namely Iran, is the contemplative approach which is "an educational philosophy that infuses learning with experiences of compassion, awareness, and insight through practice of contemplative disciplines" (Gyeltshen, 2016, p. 89). Zajonc (2009) states that the goal of the contemplative approach is to join insight, compassion, wisdom, and love in a meaningful way to one's life, and to meet these goals we must learn to be ever more awake.

Many studies have been carried out on contemplative teaching in Western countries (Baumgatner, 2012; Byrnes, 2009; Zajonc, 2009), but there is little evidence about the practical research on these approaches in Iran. There is no doubt we will avail from such approaches in developing both receptive and productive language skills. In this study, the inquirer used this approach to find out how they can improve the speaking skills of Iranian EFL learners. Moreover, the present study attempted to explore the role of contemplative learning in learners' self-regulative development. Self-regulation necessitates those individuals to become "meta-cognitively, motivationally, and behaviorally active participants in their learning" (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2001, p. 4).

Same as contemplative understanding, contemplative teaching, is a move toward the processes of teaching and learning that emphasizes entirety. Entirety embraces both positive and negative aspects and "thrives on paradox; seeming contradictions such as art and science can complement each other" (Byrnes, 2012, p. 24). A teacher with contemplative approach endeavors to teach with compassion, integrity, and careful awareness. These three dimensions of being are indicated in descriptions and observations of one's teaching self, relationships with others, and instruction. In sum, the emphasis on process and outcomes of consciousness-raising, critical reflection or viewpoint altering, developmental growth, or individuation distinguishes this approach to learning (Hart, 2004; Sadeghi et al., 2017).

This study was an attempt to figure out how effective the contemplative approach was effective in developing EFL learners' personalities and performances along with identifying their strengths and weaknesses. Hence, the researcher attempted to focus on how contemplative and transformative learning and teaching can enrich the personality, performance, and attitude of a learner in an Iranian context. In the contemplative approach

to pedagogy, the teacher implements forms of introspection and reflection in an attempt to provide the learners with the opportunity to focus internally and find more of themselves in their courses.

The main objective of the study was to invite consideration of this approach into the speaking classes and extract the more useful techniques of the approach in Iranian classes and finally flesh out what makes Iranian learners more attentive, aware, compassionate, present, wise, and the like. And, the effects on learners' self-regulated learning were analyzed.

2. Literature Review

In this section, the theoretical, as well as empirical backgrounds for the contemplative approach to teaching and self-regulated learning, are presented.

2.1. Contemplative Teaching

The emphasis of contemplative teaching is on wholeness. The practical inheritance of the modernist convention is a compartmentalized, disjointed way of instruction and acquisition, dualistic separation of body from mind, affection from mental power, humans from nature, and art from science, in which as the foundation of contemplative comprehension is wholeness, unity, and integration (Bush, 2006, p. 1723). According to this viewpoint, then, teachers need to have empathy, integrity, and attentive awareness. Jerslid (1995) remarks that empathy refers to involvement in desire: the desire for others, the desire that results from within an individual. Integrity refers to being whole and irrespective of the wisdom of a teacher, the lack of integrity prevents a constructive interaction with learners (Hook, 2003). Furthermore, attentive awareness underlines a state of mind which leads a teacher to live in the current moment and to contemplate beyond the archaic and outdated opinions and attitudes (Senge et al., 2004). In sum, contemplative teaching is considered a model that brings about transformative experiences for teachers and learners (Byrnes, 2012). Figure 1 represents a myriad of contemplative teaching practices comprising their elements and relationships.
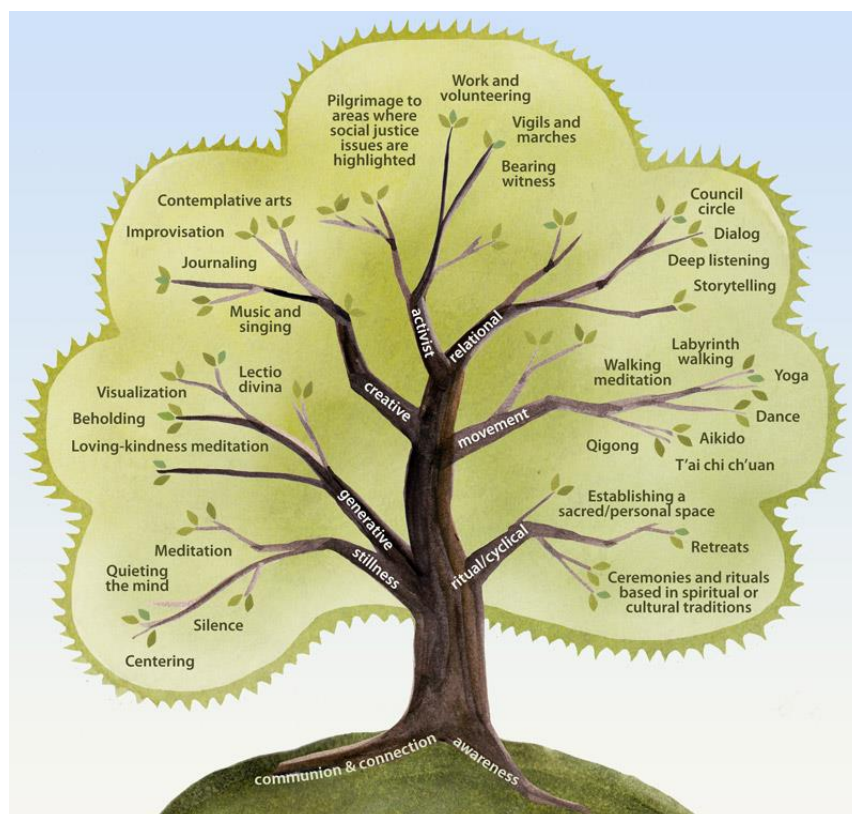
Figure 1. *The Tree of Contemplative Practices*

As the figure demonstrates, the tree roots are awareness and communion and connection which develops the foundation of contemplative teaching and the branches exhibit the aspects which an aware learner or teacher can possess.

The viewpoints put forward by the contemplative teaching approach have been the subject of some studies. Byrnes (2012) conducted a study to figure out how a contemplative orientation to teaching facilitates wholeness in ESL students. In her study, she considered three main features of contemplative teaching, that is, compassion, integrity, and mindfulness. These features influence the roles of teachers and students in the classroom in a way that they should begin with not only mind and head but also heart and body. In his study, Sable (2014) aimed to investigate the impact of contemplative practices on critical thinking among undergraduates. According to his report, contemplative practices strengthened learners' development of reflective dispositions for critical thinking; and therefore, resulted in higher levels of self-confidence, engagement with multiple points of view, and a sense of connectedness with others. Scida and Jones

(2017) also conducted a study in which they examined the impact of the integration of contemplative practices on foreign language anxiety, self-efficacy, classroom climate, and language learning in students. The results of their study indicated that there were no significant differences in foreign language anxiety, and self-efficacy but significantly higher scores on classroom climate measures in the contemplative group.

There have been a few empirical studies on contemplative teaching and wholeness theory in Iran. In a case study by Zarinshoja (2011) about the holistic view, he concluded that by studying students "holistic arts-based approach can appeal to students and touch their deepest feelings and promote their environmental awareness" (p.8). He invited 163 junior high school first graders to partake in the study. He collected data through observations, students' portfolios, interviews, reflective essays, and teachers' artwork. The researcher intended to create a novel educational environment for the EFL students to experience language learning in a modern way and connect students to their mother nature. Zarinshoja (2011) mentioned that "traditional education had limited my students' attention to marks, competitions in a harsh disciplinary environment" (p. 206). He added that during the process of experiencing a holistic approach, students had changed their opinions of the environment and the researcher found some changes through students' behavior and artworks. According to relevant works, the inquirer found little or almost no trace of empirical research on contemplative/transformative teaching and wholeness theory in Iran. In a case study by Shoja (2011) about the holistic view, he concluded that by studying students "Holistic art-based approach can appeal to students and touch their deepest feelings and promote their environmental awareness" (p. 8). He invited 163 junior high school first graders to partake in the study. He collected data through observations, students' portfolios, interviews, reflective essays, and teachers' artwork. The researcher intended to create a novel educational environment for EFL students to experience language learning in a modern way and connect students to their mother nature. Shoja (2011) mentioned that "traditional education had limited my students' attention to marks, competitions in a harsh disciplinary environment" (p. 206). He added that during the process of experiencing a holistic approach, students had changed their opinions of the environment and the researcher found some changes through students' behavior and artworks. Lastly, Giveh (2018) in her study attempted to investigate contemplative L2 instruction with a flavor of transformative instruction which is an option for improving

self-directed learning in EFL learners.   The findings of her study revealed that contemplative teaching, accompanied with transformative instruction, had significant effects on Iranian EFL learners' self-directed second language learning, and second language reading comprehension skills. Furthermore, she concluded that participants had positive attitudes towards contemplative and transformative L2 instruction.

To summarize, the contemplative teaching approach has been shown to have the potential to enhance the second language learning experience. Nevertheless, the lack of sufficient studies in this realm particularly in the Iranian context necessitates more research. Furthermore, questions remain about the role that contemplative teaching can play in helping learners become self-regulated learners in instructional contexts. Another area deserving research is the learners' attitudes towards the use of the contemplative approach in the classroom. The present study was therefore an attempt to bridge these gaps.

2.2. Self-Regulated Learning

According to Piaget (1999) and Vygotsky (1981), the notions of self-regulation (SR), and self-regulated learning (SRL) has been delineated as being a complicated combination of capabilities, knowledge, motivation, and social relationships (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002; Zimmerman & Schunk, 2001). The idea of SR has been recognized in two ways. Some scholars consider that learners arrive at school with SR which is an innate characteristic of them, while others regard SR as the quality and feature of the learners when they are situated within particular contexts that empower them to develop their SR skills and capacities through experiences within and across different contexts (Boekaerts & Corno, 2005; Sadeghi & Khezrlou, 2012, 2016).

As no unit theory is available, it is impossible to arrive at a simple definition of self-regulation and Schunk (2008) regards the differing theoretical viewpoints as problematic while understandable when attempting to summarize the variety and scope of educational psychology research of self-regulation into a generally accepted definition. Nevertheless, a commonly accepted perspective is that self-regulation is a complicated and multifaceted concept entailing processes according to which individuals reflexively self-guide their learning through employing a resourceful range of strategic approaches to adapt and build

up new learning directions towards self-developed objectives (Khezrlou, 2012a, 2012b; Wagener, 2013; Zimmerman & Schunk, 2001).

Self-regulated learning encompasses different processes and components. Zimmerman and Moylan (2009) demonstrate self-regulated learning as a three-phase framework that includes forethought, performance control, and self-reflection (see Figure 2). Forethought refers to the movement to self-motivate behaviors, activities, and strategies towards achieving self-developed purposes through the use of individual affection and cognitive processes. Forethought is subject to influence by behavioral alterations when self-evaluation or performance control is triggered entailing the process of investigating and measuring an individual's attainments with regard to his/her goals. Self-reflection refers to the investigation and monitoring of how well the pre-determined objectives have been attained and the behavior of rewarding or punishing oneself for achievement or not to meet identified objectives (Bandura, 1991; Zimmerman, 1990; Xiao & Yang, 2019).
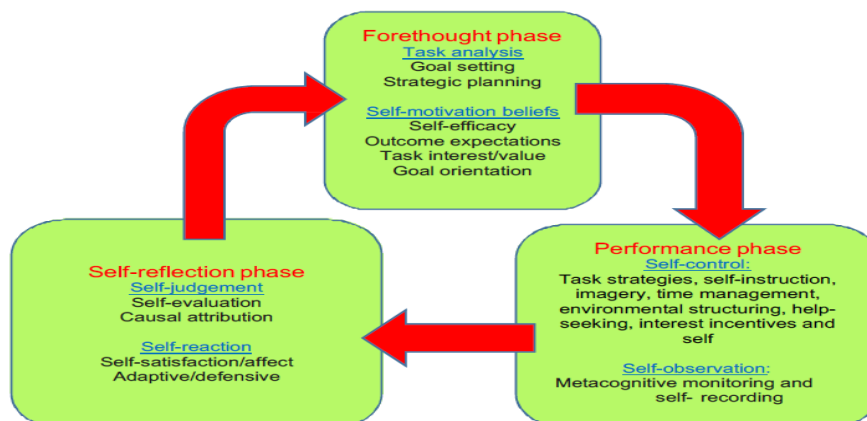

Figure 2. Steps and Process of Self-Regulation (Zimmerman & Moylan, 2009)

Several studies have tested these assumptions in empirical studies on the role of self-regulation in speaking development. In an interesting study, Kuk (2002) tested the assumption that when time-sharing is the joint purpose in small group discussions, group members are more likely to regulate when they speak again by carefully supervising the extent of time they have taken up. Results revealed, over time, the more time group members had needed before speaking again, the longer the interruption before they could

talk again. El-Sakka (2016) explored the impact of teaching training self-regulated strategies to Egyptian university participants on enhancing their speaking proficiency and declining their speaking anxiety. The results, as expected, pinpointed the positive influence of training self-regulated strategies on the development of the EFL learners' speaking proficiency. Furthermore, the self-regulated strategy instruction and in turn the greater speaking proficiency declined the speaking anxiety of participants. In a recent study, Wise and Hsiao (2019) examined 105 undergraduate learners' listening and speaking performance in online discussions with an emphasis on the development of self-regulated behaviors. Participants were provided with either two opposing alternative solutions to discuss (negotiation task) or were required to find their solutions (generative task). Learners' regulation of their listening was measured according to click-stream data and their speaking regulation was measured by manually coding post content for argumentation. Results indicated that the generative task was more effective regarding the regulation of listening. There was also a significant relationship between idea ownership and self-regulation of interaction.

There have been some similar studies in the Iranian context as well. Tavallali and Marzban (2014) examined 40 Iranian EFL learners' consciousness of and implementation of the self-regulated learning strategies and the possible impacts on learners' speaking capabilities. The experimental participants received the self-regulated learning intervention to boost awareness and use of self-regulated learning strategies. Results revealed an enhanced speaking performance for those learners who were exposed to strategy training with considerable progress noted in their speaking ability. The authors argue that the knowledge of using the self-regulated behaviors in speaking helped learners enhance their speaking performance. Mahjoob (2015) investigated the relationship between self-regulation and speaking proficiency by examining 60 male and female Iranian EFL learners from a public language institute. Based on the IELTS speaking test, participants were divided into high achievers and low achievers. Results revealed that the high achievers compared with the low achievers were more capable of carrying out the speaking test. Additionally, the high achievers were found as self-regulated as the low achievers in speaking English, with very minor distinctions between the two groups in terms of the self-regulation strategies. Mahmoodi and Karampour (2019) explored the relationship between English language causal attributions, self-regulation, and speaking performance of Iranian

EFL learners. For this purpose, participants filled out some questionnaires and they performed the interview section of the IELTS. It was found that the participants' speaking skills were significantly correlated with the locus of causality and the internal control dimensions of attribution theory. Furthermore, a positive significant correlation was uncovered between speaking ability and metacognitive self-regulation.

To summarize, the studies reviewed here underscore the great role of self-regulated strategies in the development and enhancement of EFL learners' speaking skills. Nevertheless, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, there have been no endeavors as of yet to examine whether different oral instruction approaches such as contemplative teaching in the present study could mediate the role of self-regulated behaviors in L2 speaking development. To better understand the effectiveness of contemplative teaching particularly about the development of self-regulation in L2 speaking, the present study addressed the following research questions:

RQ1. Does the contemplative teaching approach have any significant effect on EFL learners' speaking development?

RQ2. Does the contemplative teaching approach have any significant effect on EFL learners' self-regulated learning?

RQ3. What are EFL learners' attitudes towards the use of the contemplative teaching approach in speaking classes?

3. Methodology

To attain the abovementioned purposes, the study adopted a mixed-methods design using both quantitative and qualitative approaches which are discussed in detail below.

3.1. Design and Context of the Study

This study was conducted in 2019 in a language school in Boukan. In the present study, to carry out the research, a mixed-methods research design was utilized. Data collected started with the quantitative part and then continued with the qualitative component. The overall format is QUAN + QUAL design which is a type of mixed-method design. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) argue that quantitative and qualitative methods are well-matched, instead of being opposing. Ercikan and Roth (2006) argued against polarizing quantitative and qualitative methods since they are neither meaningful

nor fruitful. They postulated that the two are suited to be used together.

3.2. Participants

In the present study, convenience sampling was used for the selection of the sample due to the accessibility of the participants to the researchers. The statistical population in this study consists of all intermediate adult learners who study English in a private language school in Boukan, during the sampling time frame. A total of 62 English as a foreign language (EFL) participants were selected out of a language school in Boukan based on purposeful and convenient sampling techniques because of the availability principle. Participants included both male (N = 27) and female (N = 35) learners. The demographic information of the participants is reported in Table 1.

Table 1.

Demographic Background of the Participants

No. of Students	62
Gender	27 males and 35 females
Native Language	Farsi
Major	EFL learners
Institute	Private institute in Boukan
Academic Years	2018-2019

The level of proficiency of participants was intermediate based on the courses they had passed in the institute and the placement test of the institute. However, to ensure the homogeneity of participants, the Preliminary English Test (PET) was administered. Three intact classes were used in this study, with each being assigned to one treatment condition. Class A (N = 21) received contemplative learning program. Class B (N = 21), received the conventional approach of teaching discussion was practiced. Regarding the age factor, students fell within the age range of 20-30. Participants were from a middle-class socioeconomic background. The first language of learners was Kurdish, yet they were also familiar with Farsi as the official language of Iran. All participants were informed of the purpose of this study through oral consents and agreed to take part in the experiment.

3.3. Instruments

3.3.1. Proficiency Test

The PET test was used based on the context of the study to measure the level of language proficiency of the learners. As the structure of the test displays, PET measures four main language skills, namely – listening, speaking, reading, and writing. PET is a standardized test and consists of parts measuring listening and speaking skills. The reliability index of the listening was estimated using Cronbach's alpha. The results showed a satisfying level (α = .95). The inter-rater reliability of the participants' speaking performance in the PET was calculated through Cohen's Kappa test. The resulting Kappa of .96 signified that both raters provided similar information about learners' speaking performance. Furthermore, the validity of the PET was calculated through an exploratory factor analysis with a principal components analysis. After the varimax rotation, a two-factor solution was found which accounted for 89.46% of the total variance. These items met the criterion of loading above 1.0 on their related factor.

In the listening section, learners need to complete four tasks according to audio-recorded input. They need to demonstrate that they can comprehend the meaning of some recorded spoken materials such as announcements and discussions for daily life. They need to be able to pursue the perspectives and intentions of the speakers. This section entails 25 marks and contributes 25% of the total.

The speaking test encompasses four parts in which the learners have to indicate their ability to take part in communicative situations. This test includes 30 marks but is weighted to 25% of the total score. It needs to be noted that the scale was used to assess the speaking skill of the learners.

3.3.2. Semi-Structured Interviews

To obtain insights into the participants' perspectives about the contemplative approach in teaching, a semi-structured interview was designed based on Gardner's attitude motivation test AMTB (2004). The questions inquired about the efficacy of this teaching approach, the barriers in its implementations, and ways to enhance it, and learners' preferences towards it. A digital voice recorder was implemented to record participants' responses to the interview questions with permission. Cohen's kappa coefficient was used to explore the inter-rater reliability of the interviews between the

researcher and a second trained rater. The resulting value (κ = .89) confirmed the agreement between the raters.

3.3.3. Self-Regulation Questionnaire

Learners' self-regulated behavior was assessed through the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire—MSLQ questionnaire (Pintrich et al., 1993). The self-regulation section of this questionnaire includes 9 items based on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *not at all true of me* to 7 = *very true of me).* The reliability analysis through Cronbach's alpha was .87.

3.4. Data Collection and Procedure

Two classes received treatment for almost 2 months, that is, 10 sessions. During this period, group A received contemplative practices through some options according to Scida and Jones (2017). More particularly, the teacher in the contemplative group taught their classes for 5-10 minute contemplative practices at the outset of class time, commonly in English; learners were asked to take part in these activities but were not required to do so. Some contemplative practices were selected to present to learners including breath meditation, loving-kindness practice, body scan/body awareness, mindful movement/stretching, journaling, visualization meditation, gratitude writing, just worrying labeling technique, rest your hands, vision-setting, goal-setting, and intention-setting. In contrast to the experimental group, group B was considered as the placebo group and it received the conventional teaching program designed by the language school. Through conventional teaching, the teacher followed the regular classroom teaching practice in which all four language skills are practiced yet through more teacher-fronted teaching. In the last session, participants were interviewed to understand their attitudes towards the contemplative teaching approach. Every single change was recorded by the inquirer for later interpretation. Lastly, they provided answers to the self-regulation questionnaire.

3.5. Data Analysis Procedure

At the first, normality tests including Kolmogorov- Simonov plus the related histograms and box plots were carried out to make sure that that the data were normally distributed without any outliers. Second, all measurement instruments including PET,

the speaking tests were taken out of parallel PET tests, and the questionnaire was analyzed and interpreted to make sure that they are reliable and valid measures for the constructs in question. The quantitative research questions were analyzed using the paired-samples tests and independent samples *t*-tests. Follow-up interviews were conducted to provide triangulation of data. The extra detail and richness provided by the retrospective data-enabled clarification of Attitudes towards the use of different instructional approaches to improve speaking skills. For the qualitative questions of the study, participants' replies were investigated descriptively through interpretive content analysis.

4. Results

Initially, to make sure of the normality of data distribution, some statistics were conducted. The results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test which assesses the normality of the distribution of scores indicated normality for the regulation (p = .74), pretest (p = .21), and posttest (p = .11).

To investigate the first research question concerned with the effectiveness of the contemplative teaching approach, a paired samples *t*-test was conducted comparing the pretest and posttest performance of the participants in this group. The results of descriptive statistics are shown in Table 2 and the results of *the t*-test are presented in Table 3.

Table 2.

Descriptive Statistics for Contemplative Group

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pretest	2.6667	21	1.06458	.23231
	Posttest	2.3810	21	1.16087	.25332

As the mean and standard deviation scores in Table 2 illuminate, there are non-significant differences between the contemplative group learners' pretest and posttest speaking performance. However, to get more accurate results, a paired samples *t*-test was conducted, the results of which are demonstrated in Table 3.

Table 3.

T-test Results for Contemplative Group

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	pretest – posttest	.28571	1.41926	.30971	-.36032	.93175	.923	20	.367

The results of paired samples *t*-test show statistically non-significant differences, *t* (20) = .92, *p* = .37, *d* = .25 between the pretest and posttest performances.

In addition, an independent samples t-test was carried out to compare the performance of experimental and control groups' speaking performance. Results were reported in Tables 4 and 5.

Table 4.

Descriptive Statistics for Groups' Speaking Performance

	groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
posttest	contemplative	21	2.38	1.16	.25
	control	21	2.42	1.12	.24

As the results of Table 4 depict, the speaking performance of both the contemplative group (*M* = 2.38, *SD* = 1.16) and control group (*M* = 2.42, *SD* = 1.12) is similar. Nevertheless, independent samples t-test was conducted to provide more accurate results.

Table 5.

Independent T-test Results for Groups' Speaking Performance

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
posttest	Equal variances assumed	.03	.85	-.13	40	.89	-.04	.35	-.75	.66
	Equal variances not assumed			-.13	39.95	.89	-.04	.35	-.75	.66

As the results of Table 5 confirm, there was not a significant difference, t (40) = -.13, p = .89, between the experimental and control groups in terms of their posttest speaking performances.

For purpose of providing an answer to the research question about the participants' self-regulated behaviors in the contemplative teaching approach versus the traditional teaching, their questionnaire outcomes were analyzed. Results of independent samples t-tests are presented in Tables 6 and 7.

Table 6.

Descriptive Statistics for Groups' Self-Regulation

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Contemplative	21	35.38	10.16	2.21
Control	21	30.85	10.47	2.28
Total	62	38.25	12.74	1.61

Results of Table 6 indicate that the mean score of the contemplative group (M = 35.38 , SD = 10.16) was not significantly higher than the control (M = 30.85, SD = 10.47) group. Results of the independent samples t-test are reported in Table 7.

Table 7.

Independent T-test Results for Groups' Self-Regulation

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower	Upper
regulation	Equal variances assumed	.15	.69	1.42	40	.16	4.52	3.18	-1.91	10.96
	Equal variances not assumed			1.42	39.96	.16	4.52	3.18	-1.91	10.96

The results of Table 7 reveal that the groups did not have significant differences in their self-regulation scores, t (40) = 1.42, p = .16.

Lastly, to provide an answer to the last research question about the participants' attitudes to the contemplative teaching approach, their interviews were analyzed. Overall, learners appreciated this approach and held distinct viewpoints. One participant noted that "the teacher involved us in some meditation and mindfulness activities in the class. This was a different experience that we never had in the previous semester and I enjoyed it". Similarly, another participant emphasized that "through this practice, my friends and I could participate in class activities with less anxiety". One other interviewee stated that "speaking in front of others has always been stressful for me. Engagement in this different activity helped me reduce stress". Despite these advantages, however, there were some concerns expressed by the participants about this approach. For example, several learners considered this approach "weird", "unusual", "ineffective", and "a waste of time". For example, one participant remarked that she "thinks other approaches to teach speaking with a more heavy emphasis on interaction, feedback, and negotiation is more useful". Another interviewee explained that "these activities did not help raise my awareness about my weaknesses in English and I did not reflect upon what I was doing and why." Additionally, learners believed that during the deep speaking activities which motivated them to articulate their meanings, they were not able to interact with their peers appropriately. One learner highlighted that "she could not ask for the help of my friends to perform the speaking task". She continued that "the strong emphasis on mediation and relaxing activities deviated us from attending to the main act of speaking". The results of the interviews are in fact in line with those of the statistical analyses showing that although the contemplative teaching method was interesting and different to the learners, they could not benefit from it for the development of their speaking skills.

5. Discussion

Foreign language studies in the realm of speaking development examine new ways to deliver information, involve learners in the lesson, empower learners, foster motivation, and enhance L2 learning. This study intended to explore the role of the contemplative instructional approach in Iranian EFL learners' speaking development, particularly, concerning self-regulated learning. Results for the first research question showed that the contemplative instruction was not very effective in fostering the learners' oral skills. Contemplative teaching is argued to present an educational vision with the purpose of both

individual and societal change (Byrnes, 2012). Contemplative instruction, in other words, is ''a set of pedagogical practices, originally developed in the great contemplative traditions of the world, that have as their aim personal growth and social transformation through the cultivation of conscious awareness and volition in an ethical-relational context'' (Roeser & Peck 2009, pp. 119–120). This finding is in contrast with those of several studies highlighting the positive impacts of contemplative teaching on student learning (Arnold, 2011; Franco et al., 2010; Ramsburg & Youmans, 2014; Schlesiger, 1995), yet supports those of a prior study (Yamada & Victor, 2012) that revealed no significant enhancements in learners' grades.

The results of this study for the second research question suggested a non-significant effect for the contemplative approach on EFL learners' self-regulation for speaking performance. This finding was unexpected since the majority of previous studies have verified the relationship between contemplative practices and self-regulation (Bishop et al., 2004; Evans et al., 2008; Jha et al., 2007; Valentine & Sweet, 1999; Weick & Sutcliffe, 2006). It is argued that both mindful-based activities and meditational techniques are positively related to emotional and attention enhancements and bring about clear alterations in brain functioning (Davidson et al., 2003; Jha et al., 2007). Recent research in the realm of contemplative practice also reports associations between neurological processes, cognitive functioning, and behavioral regulation (KabatZinn, 2003). The opposition between the findings of the present study with those of previous research can be attributed to the novelty of this approach and learners' unfamiliarity with it. Participants in the present study reported that they had never received practices such as this in their previous English courses. Furthermore, the dominance of teacher-fronted instruction in Iranian language schools and educational contexts prevents learners from benefitting from these practices.

The third question concerning the EFL learners' attitudes towards the use of the contemplative teaching approach in speaking classes can be used as a framework for thinking about how to empower learners' potential for intellectual and personal growth over time. Results of the interviews revealed that a large number of learners expressed that they had lower levels of stress and anxiety and an increased ability to focus on learning after having taken part in the contemplative practices. This result aligns with some previous studies. For example, in Tang et al.'s (2007) study, even brief meditation

interventions have led to enhancements in learners' conflict monitoring, attention, and mood, as measured by decreases in anxiety, depression, anger, and fatigue. Napoli et al. (2005) also reported significant developments in a self-rated measure of test anxiety and teacher-rated measures of attention, social skills, and selected attention as a result of a contemplative approach practice. Nevertheless, while the learners interviewed did recognize a direct influence on their stress and worry, they also had some concerns about the suitability of this approach for teaching speaking. It might be speculated that the Iranian EFL learners who are normally accustomed to the teacher-fronted approach to instruction where the teacher delivers the knowledge to the learners could not benefit from this practice and could not welcome it as was evident in the interview results as well.

6. Conclusion

Contemplative teaching, similar to contemplative understanding is a move toward the processes of teaching and learning that emphasizes entirety. Entirety embraces both positive and negative aspects and "thrives on paradox; seeming contradictions such as art and science can complement each other" (Byrnes, 2012, p. 28). The main purpose of speaking instruction is to develop flexibility and adaptability in students to draw from and use the whole range of possible component knowledge and cue sources interchangeably as strategies. The constructs of self-regulation and speaking development appear intertwined, in that both theories are developing students' ability to be adaptive and flexible in the strategy used to achieve (speaking) goals. Both increase self-efficacy and motivation. However, it requires timely and thoughtful teacher practice to provide modeling, constructive feedback, and scaffolding while engaging students in metacognitive conversation so that instruction is at the cutting edge of each learner's immediate learning needs.

The results obtained from this study suggest that instructional conditions particularly the contemplative approach did not enhance learners' self-regulated behaviors. In the end, it could be mentioned that contemplative teaching would seem to seize the main similarities that are present across the major recent approaches to learning and classroom teaching. Therefore, it is suggested that it can be used as an overarching framework for thinking about how to maximize learners' potential for intellectual and personal development over time. Nevertheless, due to the timid results of the present study, teachers

are recommended to first familiarize their learners with this approach, present the strengths of it, provide training and only then adopt it in the classroom.

The present study is not free from limitations. Firstly, this study did not investigate the effects of contemplative teaching on other aspects of language learning such as grammar, morphology, lexis, pronunciation, and so forth. Future studies are therefore encouraged to not just examine components of the speaking skill as well the impacts on different language skills. Secondly, the present study did not interview teachers about the suitability of this approach and the challenges in its implementation which deserves further attention. Additionally, learners were at the intermediate level of proficiency in the current study. It is essential to examine the effectiveness of this approach with learners at different proficiency levels. And lastly, only self-regulation as an individual difference variable was examined in this study. Future studies are needed to examine the effects of the contemplative approach on working memory, anxiety, task engagement, and so forth.

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