

An Integrative Review of the Components Required for Designing and Developing an EFL Teaching-Speaking Intervention

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Article information	Abstract
<p>Article history: Received: 6 Jun 2024 Last revised: 31 Mar 2026 Accepted: 3 Apr 2026 Available online: 9 Apr 2026</p> <p>Keywords: Integrative literature review PRISMA L2 acquisition Speaking skills Instructional intervention</p>	<p><i>Designing and developing instructional interventions for English language teaching (ELT) has been a central focus of second language (L2) research, particularly concerning the development of speaking skills. This study aims to identify the essential components required for the design and development phases of instructional interventions, which was achieved through an integrative literature review of previous research on teaching speaking. Given the extensive empirical research on this topic, only literature published between 2020 and May 2024 was considered. The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework was adopted by the current study. The thematic analysis of the 21 selected studies identified six key components necessary for designing and developing teaching speaking interventions, with the module serving as the primary form of intervention. These components include “performance assessment,” “intervention timeframe,” “materials selection,” “lesson arrangements,” “language proficiency,” and “learning objectives.” Results also demonstrate that instructional interventions can enhance L2 learners’ speaking proficiency. This study provides suggestions for the design and development of L2 speaking interventions, such as teaching modules, to ensure curricular sustainability.</i></p>

INTRODUCTION

In language education, the first question that comes to mind is which language people can speak, rather than what language people can listen to, read, or write. While all these language skills are essential, communicative competencies, which include speaking and understanding spoken language are often prioritized (Lingomolvilas & Wudthayagorn, 2022). This phenomenon highlights the importance of mastering speaking in language acquisition because speaking involves a complex interplay of linguistic knowledge, cognitive processes, and physical articulation as well as socio-cultural factors (Alderson-Day & Fernyhough, 2015). Over the last few decades, there has been significant attention given to speaking instruction in native languages. However, equitable focus on speaking instruction, especially for English as a

foreign language (EFL) learners, has been lacking. In foreign language learning, teaching and learning are often restricted by classroom settings, limiting the necessity for teachers and students to interact in the target language (Han, 2023). Educational settings frequently encompass students from diverse linguistic backgrounds, making it crucial to take this diversity into account when developing speaking instruction. It overlooks the needs of EFL learners, who face critical challenges due to the requirement to develop strong speaking skills in a non-native language. This oversight affects the ability to address the diverse needs of students and promote effective communication skills.

In the educational context, instructional interventions in language learning are generally defined as including ongoing professional development, specific instructional lessons with teaching strategies, and engaging components designed to enhance communication abilities (Lara-Alecio et al., 2012). These interventions typically take the form of teaching modules, approaches, and methods aimed at consolidating learning outcomes (Cheng et al., 2026; Ilishkina, 2025). Their ultimate goal is to empower EFL learners to construct meaningful communication, ultimately leading to greater proficiency, with self-regulation playing a crucial role in this process (Ostovar-Namaghi et al., 2024). Therefore, this study reviews various instructional speaking interventions, including relevant modules, models, approaches, and methods by synthesizing the existing relevant literature. Thus, this review aims to establish a comprehensive understanding of these interventions, highlight their importance, and evaluate the impact of their implementation across all levels of EFL education for speaking.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section lays the foundation for understanding the key concepts driving this study: i) instructional intervention and ii) integrative literature review in the context of L2 research. Grasping these concepts is essential for comprehending the scope and methodology of this research.

Instructional intervention in English language teaching

Success in ELT is influenced by a combination of external factors such as the learning environment, teacher quality, and parental support, as well as internal factors including linguistic features, discursal patterns, and communication strategies (Lara-Alecio et al., 2012). Mastering the necessary skills for foreign language learning is crucial for EFL learners to effectively transfer their knowledge to real-life situations. Hu and AlSaqqaf (2024) highlight the need for innovative teaching methods in this context. As mentioned earlier, instructional interventions are frequently employed in second language (L2) research to address deficiencies and difficulties for both EFL teachers and learners, often utilizing specific pedagogical treatments (Lara-Alecio et al., 2012). These interventions often compare the efficacy of traditional teaching approaches with newer methods using quasi-experimental research designs (Lee et al., 2005). In these designs, independent variables are manipulated to assess their impact on dependent variables. For example, instructional interventions serve as the independent variable, while pretest-posttest designs are used to collect data and analyze improvements in speaking abilities as the dependent variable (Hu & AlSaqqaf, 2024).

Previous literature identifies some of the benefits of incorporating instructional interventions specifically for speaking skills is crucial. In general, instructional intervention exemplifies instructional practices and offers a philosophical approach that combines “discipline-specific” and “diversity-oriented” methods (Abrami et al., 2008; Lee et al., 2005). This aligns with the nature of the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (UN-SDGs), which aim to improve the quality of education (Maley & Peachey, 2017). The need for such instructional interventions is critical in EFL education, where speaking performance by L2 students has been alarmingly unsatisfactory (AlSaqqaf et al., 2024). By using instructional interventions, teachers establish a coherent framework for teaching, aligning with specific educational goals and curricular objectives based on their teaching context, learner needs, and desired outcomes (Mallillin, 2022). As such, speaking is a vital component of language education, and by focusing on teaching speaking, teachers can empower students to express themselves effectively, engage in meaningful interactions, and participate actively in various contexts (Burns, 2019). Therefore, instructional interventions should address these multifaceted aspects of speaking. Besides that, systematic teaching of speaking goes beyond merely providing speaking activities. Teachers need to create practical scenarios that mimic real-life situations, allowing learners to practice spoken English authentically (Syarifudin, 2019). These interventions enhance communicative competence and boost learners’ confidence, leading to more meaningful and motivating language learning experiences.

Necessities of integrative literature review in L2 research

The vast and diverse scope of L2 research includes various theoretical perspectives, methodologies, and contexts. While individual studies contribute some insights, a comprehensive understanding requires synthesizing findings across multiple sources. A robust research methodology like a literature review, specifically an integrative literature review, allows researchers to integrate findings and perspectives from multiple empirical studies, addressing research questions with a collective strength that no single study can achieve (Snyder, 2019). This approach, defined as a method for reviewing, critiquing, and synthesizing representative literature on a topic in a comprehensive manner (Torraco, 2005; Zawacki-Richter et al., 2020), focuses on a thorough examination of accumulated evidence within a specific area of L2 research, whether the topic is well-established or emerging. By revealing gaps or inconsistencies in existing research, integrative literature reviews help identify promising avenues for future research and guide the development of new studies addressing these gaps (Cho, 2022). Moreover, it is crucial to include studies that genuinely contribute to the specific research focus to align with ethical considerations (Lubbe et al., 2020).

While an integrative literature review is commonly used in educational reviews (Jeong et al., 2018; Lahn et al., 2024; Zak, 2021), its application to specific aspects of L2 research, such as the instruction and curriculum development of speaking proficiency interventions, remains relatively limited. With these key concepts in mind, this study aims to better understand the rationale behind examining speaking proficiency interventions using an integrative literature review to achieve quality education in line with UN-SDGs (Buerkle et al., 2023).

METHODOLOGY

For rigorous analysis, a five-step strategy for conducting an integrative literature review was adapted, following the guidelines outlined by Lubbe et al. (2020): i) formulating a review question, ii) choosing literature using the PRISMA framework, iii) critically assessing the literature, iv) extracting and synthesizing data through thematic analysis, and v) presenting the findings and discussion. The following sections detail each step taken in the integrative literature review process.

Formulating a review question

This study aims to identify the essential components needed for the design and development of a speaking module. However, due to the limited number of relevant studies, it is justifiable to supplement and leverage data from interventions in language programs, teaching models, and approaches. This approach considers pedagogical principles in practice, evidence-based insights, and the broad applicability and interconnectedness of language skills (Lubbe et al., 2020). By doing so, it ensures a comprehensive and well-rounded design for a speaking module, utilizing a wide range of proven strategies and components. Therefore, the review question for the study was defined as: *“What are the components required for the design and development of an interventional teaching speaking module?”*

Choosing literature using the PRISMA framework

A well-defined, pre-specified inclusion and exclusion criterion formed part of the search strategy. Decisions on the type of documents, the written languages, and the years of publication were made to refine the search further (Snyder, 2019). The inclusion and exclusion criteria for the study, shown in Table 1, were aligned with aspects of the formulated research question, such as the population of interest and the desired outcomes (Lubbe et al., 2020). These criteria ensured that the selected literature was directly relevant and contributed to addressing the research objectives effectively.

Table 1
Inclusion and exclusion criteria of the study

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Studies published from 2020 to May 2024	Studies published before 2020
The participants in the study were students from all schooling levels	Not focused on students as participants
Full-text and peer-reviewed research articles from journals	Conference proceedings, review articles, book chapters, reports
The text was written in English	Text not written in English
Giving empirical evidence in instructional intervention for speaking skills	Not given empirical evidence in instructional intervention for speaking skills

The selection of proper literature samples followed a three-stage process: searching, screening, and selecting the literature. Papers were chosen from two databases: Scopus and the Education Resources Information Centre (ERIC). This approach is justified by the expansive and multidisciplinary nature of the Scopus search system, alongside the capability of ERIC to

provide full access to all datasets returned from a single search (Gusenbauer & Haddaway, 2020). The search strings used for both databases were consistent, as outlined in Table 2. Combining these two databases with well-defined search keywords ensured an objective and comprehensive search process, enhancing the robustness and reliability of the literature selection.

Table 2
Research strings for the integrative literature review

Database	Search string
Scopus	(TITLE-ABS-KEY (design AND development) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (“speaking skills”)) AND PUBYEAR > 2009 AND PUBYEAR < 2025 AND PUBYEAR > 2019 AND PUBYEAR < 2025 AND (LIMIT-TO (OA , “all”)) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE , “ar”)) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE , “English”))
ERIC	“design OR development AND speaking skills”, Peer reviewed only, Full text available on ERIC, PUBLICATION DATA: Since 2020 (last 5 years), PUBLICATION TYPE: Journal Articles

In addition to these steps, the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis) framework was employed to guide the search and selection processes (Moher et al., 2009; Page et al., 2021). Using the PRISMA framework for the study (see Figure 1) ensures adequate reporting, and can be replicated by other researchers, which strengthens the reliability and validity of the findings.

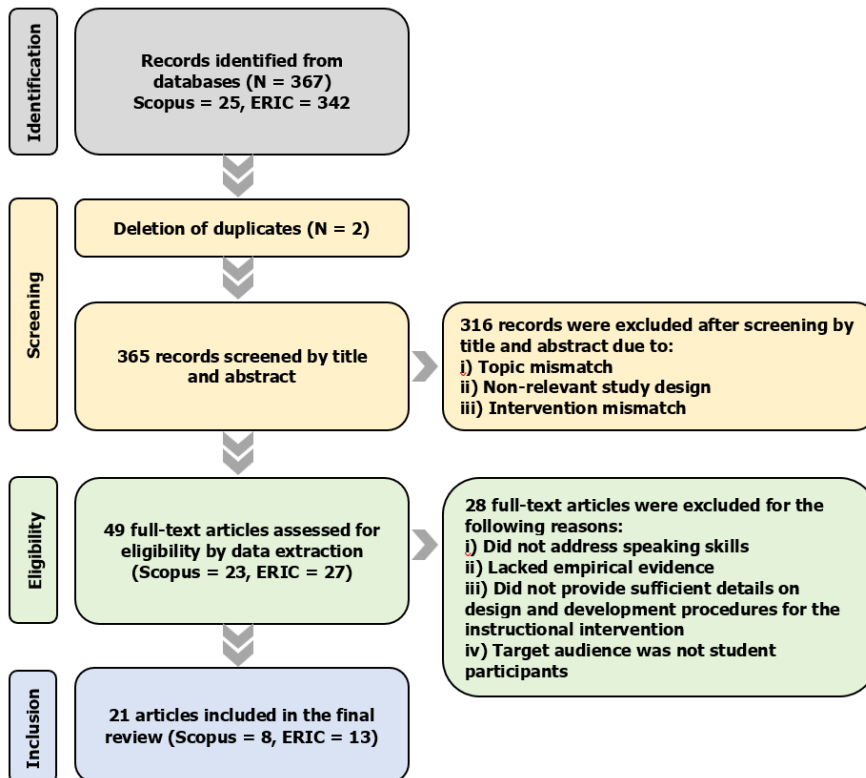


Figure 1 PRISMA framework of the study data screening procedures

This study employed a meticulous search strategy to identify relevant scholarly articles within the realm of instructional interventions for speaking skills. As shown in Figure 1, the PRISMA flow diagram illustrates the integrative literature review's data screening process, starting with 367 records that were identified from two databases: Scopus (25 records) and ERIC (342 records). After removing two duplicates, 365 records remained. These records underwent a screening process based on their titles and abstracts, resulting in the exclusion of 316 records that did not align with the review's focus. The excluded records were removed due to reasons such as topic mismatch, non-relevant study design, or intervention mismatch. Subsequently, 49 full-text articles (Scopus = 23, ERIC = 27) were selected for a more detailed assessment. During this phase, 28 articles were excluded for several reasons: not addressing speaking skills, lacking empirical evidence, insufficient details on instructional intervention design, or not having student participants as the target audience. After this rigorous screening and eligibility assessment, 21 articles were included in the final review (Scopus = 8, ERIC = 13), providing a comprehensive and focused assessment of effective instructional interventions for improving speaking skills.

Critically assessing literature

The third step in the integrative literature review process entails an in-depth assessment of the relevant documents identified during the searches. Critically assessing the literature is needed to identify low-quality documents to exclude based on quality and rigorousness (Connolly et al., 2012), thereby strengthening the evidence included in the final review based on the data collection procedures and instruments, statical data analysis methods, convincing results and discussion. Following a review by two independent reviewers using the criteria outlined by Connolly et al. (2012), 21 studies were retained for final analysis. Each study received a minimum score of 10 across four criteria, evaluated on a 1–3 scale (1 = low, 2 = medium, 3 = high) for each aspect (giving a quality rating ranging from 1 to 12): i) the appropriateness of content in terms of research design, methods, and data analysis; ii) the generalizability of findings; iii) the relevance of the study's focus; and iv) the trustworthiness of the findings in addressing the research question.

Extracting and synthesizing data through thematic analysis

During the critical literature assessment process, documents containing substantial evidence were identified and subsequently transferred to the data extraction phase using Microsoft Excel. Here, meticulous attention was given to recording the context of each document, including crucial information such as the author's biodata, the methodology employed, and the main findings derived from these selected studies. Utilizing thematic analysis, a comprehensive overview of the key themes and insights gleaned from the literature was developed as well.

The themes extracted were aligned with the predefined concept of components required for any module. These components included setting learning objectives, constructing teaching plans, selecting appropriate teaching content, deliberating on teaching strategies and approaches, and organizing inventory for activities and tasks, as well as preparing assessments and managing logistics such as instructional duration (Van den Akker, 2013). By adhering to these

fundamental components, the synthesized literature provided valuable insights into the essential elements necessary for designing and developing a speaking teaching module (see Table 3). The existing components for each study are marked with a “/”.

Table 3
Summary of the components included for each study

Studies (N = 21)/Authors	LA	LO	LP	MS	PA	IT
Chou (2021)	/		/	/	/	/
Bataineh et al. (2020)				/	/	/
Nasab & Rahimi (2023)	/			/	/	
Göktürk et al. (2020)	/	/			/	/
Nget et al. (2020)	/				/	/
Hentasmaka et al. (2022)				/	/	/
Şahin (2023)					/	/
Phoeun & Sengsri (2021)			/	/	/	/
Thaosiri & Chano (2022)	/			/	/	/
Boonteararak (2021)		/	/	/	/	/
Öztürk-pat & Yılmaz (2021)	/			/	/	/
Mykytiuk et al. (2022)		/			/	/
Alghmadi (2024)			/	/	/	/
el Majidi et al. (2024)	/		/	/	/	/
Heinzmann et al. (2023)	/		/	/	/	/
Kafipour & Khoshnood (2023)			/	/	/	/
Yenkimaleki & Van Heuven (2023)	/		/	/	/	/
Irianti et al. (2024)	/				/	/
Mahdi (2022)	/				/	/
Lin (2021)		/	/	/		/
Menggo et al. (2023)	/	/	/	/	/D	

Note. Lesson arrangement (LA), Learning objectives (LO), Language proficiency (LP), Materials selection (MS), Performance assessment (PA), and Intervention timeframe (IT).

To synthesize the essential components for designing and developing EFL teaching-speaking interventions (see Table 3), this study analyzed the frequency and percentage of occurrence of these components across the 21 selected studies.

Table 4
Thematic evidence derived from the studies

Components	Studies included (N = 21)	%
Performance assessment (PA)	21	100.00
Intervention timeframe (IT)	19	90.47
Materials selection (MS)	13	68.42
Lesson arrangement (LA)	12	57.14
Language proficiency (LP)	9	42.86
Learning objectives (LO)	5	23.81

As Table 4 presents above, reviewing the 21 studies on EFL teaching-speaking interventions revealed key components frequently included in their design. Most studies incorporate performance assessment (100%), intervention timeframes (90.47%), material selection (68.42%), and lesson structure (57.14%), highlighting their importance. However, language proficiency levels (42.86%) and learning objectives (23.81%) are less frequently addressed, emphasizing the crucial need for greater emphasis on these areas.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, which reflects on the fifth step of conducting the integrative literature review, six major components are identified from the 21 selected papers for designing and developing a teaching speaking module. These components are discussed through thematic analysis as follows.

Performance assessment

Performance assessment, using both formative and summative methods, is crucial in evaluating instructional interventions for speaking skills. Empirical research highlights the importance of pretests and posttests in measuring intervention effectiveness, guiding instructional adjustments, and enhancing student engagement. In the current review, 20 out of the selected studies utilized pretest-posttest designs, validating the teaching methods and materials used in the interventions. Variations such as mid-tests (Chou, 2021), delayed posttests (Boonteerarak, 2021; Yenkimaleki & Van Heuven, 2023), and questionnaires (Lin, 2021) were also employed to strengthen findings. These assessments allow teachers to refine their strategies and help students track their progress, increasing motivation and participation. Including standardized tests in future research could further enhance validity and reliability. Positive changes in student performance after interventions could provide evidence of success, while a lack of improvement in students' outcomes suggests the need for pedagogical adjustments (Harackiewicz & Priniski, 2018). Students knowing their speaking skills will be assessed can motivate students to practice more, improving their overall learning experience. Therefore, performance assessments, especially pretest-posttest designs, are essential for validating the effectiveness of instructional interventions, informing teaching practices, and ultimately improving learning outcomes.

Intervention timeframe

Many of the students' learning experiences spanned various contexts as they explored ideas, accessed content, and engaged in activities at school. Nearly all the selected studies ($n = 19$) indicated a specific period for sufficient speaking intervention, except for Menggo et al. (2023) and Nasab and Rahimi (2023). There was a significant variation in the duration of interventions among the studies. Three studies extended over an entire academic semester (Chou, 2021; Irianti et al., 2024; Mykytiuk et al., 2022). The weekly duration of interventions varied, ranging from four to 18 weeks. Eight studies had specific interventions lasting less than 10 weeks, while five studies exceeded 10 weeks. Among the 13 studies, interventions lasting more than nine weeks were common. The intensity of each intervention session also varied, with sessions lasting from 45 minutes to 480 minutes per week. Some interventions incorporated additional support, such as an online platform (Thaosiri & Chano, 2022) and a multimedia laboratory (Lin, 2021). Based on these 19 studies, the average duration for speaking interventions should be at least 14 hours (equivalent to 840 minutes) across a semester at the school level. Most of the educational interventions were implemented in institutional settings using quasi-experimental designs. Considering the intervention timeframe could balance intensity and manageability, ensuring students have enough time to practice and develop their speaking skills thoroughly without being overwhelmed. Svartdal et al. (2020) support the claim that a comprehensive

curriculum, incorporating well-organized course schedules, defined deadlines, and anticipated learning objectives, can effectively reduce the considerable amount of freedom inherent in learning.

Materials selection

Materials selection involves carefully considering what students are learning with, focusing on content based on their interests, needs, and intended outcomes. This plays a pivotal role in designing and developing a teaching module, as it directly influences the effectiveness, relevance, and inclusiveness of instruction. Typically, coursebooks serve as the primary source of language learning (Chou, 2021; Kafipour & Khoshnood, 2023; Öztürk-pat & Yilmaz, 2021; Phoeun & Sengsri, 2021). Additionally, authentic materials are often used in interventions (Bataineh et al., 2020; Boonteerarak, 2021; el Majidi et al., 2024; Heinzmann et al., 2023; Hentasmaka et al., 2022; Thaosiri & Chano, 2022). Moreover, multimedia formats may also be utilized depending on the requirements of the English syllabus, the subskill of speaking, and learning objectives (Alghmadi, 2024; Nasab & Rahimi, 2023; Yenkimaleki & van Heuven, 2023). One effective way to identify appropriate materials is to find those produced by native speakers that align with specific levels in the CEFR and then adapt these materials to match the intended learning content, making modifications for localized use by non-native speakers (Kovačević, 2023). Well-chosen materials can enhance student engagement and motivation. Selecting materials that are interesting, relevant, and culturally appropriate can capture students' interest and make learning more enjoyable, leading to increased participation and retention of information. Additionally, authentic materials sourced from real-life contexts provide learners with exposure to natural language use, cultural nuances, and communicative norms that help bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world communication, making the learning experience more meaningful and relevant (Hasaniyah et al., 2023).

Lesson arrangement

Among the 21 selected papers, nearly half discussed the construction of lesson arrangements. A well-organized lesson arrangement ensures that students' progress through the material logically and sequentially. Typically, speaking lessons were divided into a traditional three-stage instruction, including pre-, while-, and post-stages (as discussed by Thaosiri & Chano, 2022; Yenkimaleki & van Heuven, 2023), or a multiple-stage approach (as explored by Chou, 2021; el Majidi et al., 2024; Göktürk et al., 2020; Heinzmann et al., 2023; Irianti et al., 2024; Mahdi, 2022; Menggo et al., 2023; Nasab & Rahimi, 2023; Nget et al., 2020; Öztürk-pat & Yilmaz, 2021). Considering lesson arrangement as a crucial component ensures effective time management. For instance, Content-Based Instruction (CBI), particularly through theme-based instruction, incorporates the Six T's approach (Themes, Topics, Texts, Tasks, Transitions, and Threads), developed by Stoller and Grabe (1997), to provide a structured framework for organizing and presenting educational content. This approach allows educators to create a coherent learning environment where students engage with material that aligns with their interests and needs, thereby enhancing their motivation and participation (Ryshina-Pankova et al., 2021). Given that, proper lesson arrangements help teachers manage class time efficiently; each lesson contributes directly to the overall goals of the teaching module, providing a clear pathway for students to achieve desired educational outcomes.

Language proficiency

Language proficiency is a fundamental component required for designing and developing a teaching module as it informs instructional decisions regarding target audience understanding, differentiated instruction, setting realistic goals, resource allocation, and learner empowerment, ultimately contributing to more effective and meaningful language learning experiences. The findings show that student participants demonstrated varying levels of English language proficiency based on the benchmark of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), ranging from A1.2 to B2 (Boonteerarak, 2021; Chou, 2021; el Majidi et al., 2024; Heinzmann et al., 2023; Lin, 2021), or aligned with TOEFL (Yenkimaleki & van Heuven, 2023) for more reliable language proficiency identification. Additionally, some studies described the participants' language proficiency simply using terms such as "intermediate level" without mapping it to any referential benchmark (Alghmadi, 2024; Kafipour & Khoshnood, 2023; Phoeun & Sengsri, 2021). However, identifying language proficiency with a reliable benchmark enhances consistency, clarity, and comparability in language assessment and instructional development, facilitating their integration into global communication networks. Moreover, understanding the levels of students' language proficiency assists in matching materials and determining appropriate content (Eccius-Wellman & Santana, 2020). This ensures that the instructional materials are neither too easy nor too challenging, thus optimizing learning outcomes.

Learning objectives

Setting proper learning objectives is crucial for aligning lesson arrangements with specific activities, ensuring that each lesson contributes directly to the overall goals of the teaching module and provides a clear pathway for students to achieve desired outcomes. Among the 21 studies reviewed, only five explicitly listed learning objectives for their interventions. Boonteerarak (2021) and Göktürk et al. (2020) provided detailed explanations of learning objectives for sample speaking lessons, while Lin (2021), Menggo et al. (2023), and Mykytiuk et al. (2022) established more general learning objectives. While these objectives reflect the levels of learning intended for students, as outlined in Bloom's taxonomy, they often lack essential qualities such as measurability, achievability, and timeliness. This highlights the need for more precise objective construction using the SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound) criteria (Ogbeiwi, 2017). Implementing these criteria in learning objectives encourages students to engage in critical thinking, problem-solving, and creative activities, which are essential for academic success and for recognizing the levels of cognitive processes they need to engage in. Additionally, by specifying what students should be able to do in observable terms, teachers can more effectively measure student progress and performance. Therefore, it highlights the urgent need for a more disciplined approach to setting learning objectives, ensuring that they are not only aspirational but also practical and assessable.

CONCLUSION

This integrative literature review study presents relevant instructional interventions addressing concerns regarding speaking proficiency published between 2020 and May 2024, targeting

students who have been learning English from an early age but remain deficient in proficiency. Two key conclusions were derived from the findings of this review. First, instructional intervention is an effective tool that has been extensively used to improve speaking proficiency for EFL students with communication difficulties, demonstrating effectiveness across various educational levels. Second, in designing and developing comprehensive instructional interventions, six components are crucial for the success of experiential learning: performance assessment ($n = 21$) as a critical component, followed by the specified timeframe for the intervention ($n = 19$), material selection ($n = 13$), lesson arrangement ($n = 12$), alignment of language proficiency ($n = 9$), and the setting of learning objectives ($n = 5$). The combined efforts of these components, through well-planned interventions (such as a teaching module) based on evidence from the extant literature, ensure the improvement of students' proficiency. These concerns enable students to take initiative and ownership of their new knowledge, thereby enhancing their speaking performance. Therefore, future research should address these concerns to further enhance the effectiveness of speaking interventions.

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