

**DISCOVERING STRATEGIES OF STUDENT IN ENHANCING
ENGLISH SPEAKING FLUENCY: A CASE STUDY AT SIXTH
SEMESTER STUDENTS OF ENGLISH STUDY PROGRAM
AT ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY OF INDRAGIRI
TEMBILAHAN**

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the strategies used by sixth-semester students of the English Study Program at the Islamic University of Indragiri Tembilahan to enhance their speaking fluency in English. Speaking fluency is a crucial skill in foreign language learning, yet many students still face difficulties due to a lack of practice, anxiety, low confidence, and an unsupportive language environment. This research employed a qualitative method with a case study design. Data were collected through interviews and questionnaires, and analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings revealed that students employed a variety of learning strategies classified into cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective strategies, based on the frameworks of O'Malley & Chamot (1990) and Oxford (1990). Cognitive strategies such as practicing, rehearsal, and summarizing were the most frequently used. Metacognitive strategies like planning and self-monitoring also played a significant role. Socio-affective strategies such as self-encouragement and interaction with peers helped reduce anxiety and increase confidence. These strategies were chosen based on students' individual learning preferences, motivation, and their need to improve real-time communication skills. This study suggests that lecturers should understand and support the use of these strategies in order to design more effective teaching methods to enhance students' speaking fluency.

Keywords: *Speaking fluency, learning strategies, cognitive, metacognitive, socio-affective, case study*

INTRODUCTION

The focus of this research is to explore the methods sixth-semester English Study Program students at the Islamic University of Indragiri Tembilahan utilize to enhance their speaking fluency in the language. Speaking fluently is a crucial skill

for learning a foreign language, but many students still struggle because of a lack of practice, nervousness, low self-esteem, and an unsupportive linguistic environment. The research used a case study design and a qualitative methodology. Interviews and questionnaires were used to obtain data, and the Miles and Huberman model—which involves data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing—was used for analysis. According to the frameworks of Oxford (1990) and O'Malley & Chamot (1990), outcomes displayed that students used a range of learning methods that were categorized into cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective strategies.

Speaking fluently requires both linguistic ability and the strategic application of language acquisition strategies, according to research. According to Oxford (1990) and O'Malley & Chamot (1990), students' use of learning strategies—which divide into three categories: cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective—is directly related to their capacity to increase their fluency. Metacognitive techniques include planning and tracking one's learning, socio-affective strategies deal with controlling emotions and connecting with others to promote learning, and cognitive strategies manipulate language in the mind through practice and summary.

Successful language learners frequently employ a range of these techniques, according to earlier research. For instance, language development was found to be greatly aided by visual and individual learning styles in conjunction with cognitive and compensatory methods (Urai Salam et al., 2020). Similar findings were found by Malini (2022), who found that high achievers used a wider range of language learning techniques, particularly metacognitive ones, than their less accomplished classmates.

However, there is still a dearth of localized research that focuses explicitly on how students in rural Indonesian university contexts plan to improve their speaking proficiency. Despite having taken multiple speaking courses, many sixth-semester English Study Program students still struggle with speaking fluently, according to pre-observations made at the Islamic University of Indragiri Tembilahan. Others still mostly rely on classroom instruction without

implementing individualized strategies, while some pupils have established distinctive strategies like engaging with native topic or practicing self-talk.

This study intends to investigate the particular methods used by sixth-semester students at the Islamic University of Indragiri Tembilahan to enhance their fluency in English in light of these difficulties. By recognizing these tactics and comprehending the motivations behind their application, this study aims to offer insightful information to both teachers and students. It is intended that the results would help create more efficient teaching strategies that suit students' strategic choices and communication requirements in the actual world.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Speaking Fluency

Speaking fluency, which includes the capacity to communicate naturally and without undue hesitation or mistakes, is a crucial aspect of language proficiency and a crucial objective for English language learners. Stockdale (2009) states in Maghfirah (2024:20) that fluency is the ability to speak effectively while reducing self-corrections, quiet pauses, and false starts. According to Safitri (2015:210), using specific approaches can enhance a number of speaking indicators, including pronunciation, comprehension, and comprehension, all of which help to increase speaking fluency.

Developing fluency requires deliberate, regular practice using methods catered to each learner's preferences. According to Burns (2012:19), speaking abilities can be developed through focused strategies such technology integration, group peer activities, and repeated practice. These techniques assist students in overcoming typical barriers such as language barriers, lack of confidence, and fear of making mistakes. Practical application is further improved by include role plays, interactive exercises, and multimedia materials.

Speaking Fluency Indicators

According to Hsieh and Wang (2019:29), fluency is the capacity to convert ideas or communicative goals into language within the constraints of online processing time in a rapid, accurate, clear, and efficient manner. Four primary

disfluency data components need to be examined in order to assess a speaker's fluency from the standpoint of general disfluency. The speaker's fluency level is ascertained by adding the outcomes of these elements. Stockdale is the foundation of this strategy (2009:26-27).

1) Speech Rate (SR)

In order to calculate speech rate, all nonconformities and irrelevant syllables were included. To calculate the number of syllables per minute, divide the total number of syllables by the number of seconds needed to produce a voice sample, and then multiply the result by 60. The Tennessee Department of Education Fluency Resource Packet (2009) states that an adult or teen's typical speech rate is 162-230 syllables per minute.

2) Pause Rate (PR)

The entire number of pauses, including corrections and repetitions, including pauses like "uhm," "err," or "emm," is divided by the total duration in seconds and then multiplied by 100.

3) Disfluent Syllables (DS)

To determine whether syllables were non-fluent, the number of filtered syllables was subtracted from the total number of syllables in the sample. Repetition, mistakes, and fillers are examples of filtered syllables. The result is then multiplied by the duration in seconds and divided by 230, which is the maximum number of syllables per minute that is regarded as normal.

4) Mean Length of Runs (MLR)

The average number of syllables in a speech run between pauses or other disfluency is measured by the average length of runs between pauses. In order to perform the computation, the total number of syllables is subtracted by the number of pauses longer than 0.3 seconds and other disfluencies. The result is then divided by the typical number of syllables per minute for the two-minute speech sample.

Language Learning Strategies

The intentional acts or methods that learners employ to enhance their capacity to learn, retain, and utilize a second or foreign language are known as language

learning strategies. According to Scarcella and Oxford (1992) in Maghfirah (2024:9), learning strategies are particular behaviors, activities, procedures, or approaches that students employ to improve their learning. Examples of these include seeking discussion partners or using self-encouragement to conquer difficult language assignments. Furthermore, language learning strategies are the methods and techniques that students employ to learn or use a language more effectively, according to Rose (2015:9).

According to Oxford (1990) in Maghfirah (2024:9), learning strategies are particular steps that students take to improve their unique educational experiences. These techniques, which are all meant to enhance speaking talents, could include conversing with others, asking for constructive criticism, and practicing speaking aloud. According to Ghani et al. (2015:18), these methods are crucial resources that encourage concentrated and active learning and greatly enhance the development of language proficiency (Dörnyei, 2005). Therefore, learning strategies have a critical role in determining the learning process as well as the overall success of learning a foreign language.

In order to categorize and comprehend which learners' tactics worked best, scholars have created a number of theories and frameworks over the years to determine the most successful language learning methods (Ellis, 1997). Experts such as Stern (1975), Nauman et al. (1978), Rubin (1987), and Wenden (1991) have different participants and situations, which causes some variances, but their classifications of learning strategies are very comparable, even though no consensus has been achieved. Since the writings of Oxford (1990), Wenden (1991), and O'Malley and Chamot (1990), studies on language learning techniques have drawn a lot of interest in the field of second language acquisition. Of these, the most well-known categories are those made by Oxford (1990) and O'Malley and Chamot (1990).

With their extensive volume, *Learning Strategies in Second Language Acquisition*, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) made a significant contribution to the field of strategy research. They divided language learning strategies into three primary categories: (1) metacognitive strategies, which include planning,

monitoring, and evaluating learning activities; (2) cognitive strategies, which concentrate on language practice and processing, including rehearsal, organization, inferencing, summarizing, reducing, imagery, transfer, and elaboration; and (3) social/affective strategies, which involve interacting with others and managing emotions to improve learning, such as self-talk, cooperation, and asking clarifying questions.

Oxford distinguishes between direct and indirect language learning processes, in opposition to O'Malley and Chamot. Active participation and language processing are necessary for direct techniques (Oxford, 1990). These include (1) memory strategies, which help students retain and retrieve information by grouping, creating mental connections, using sounds and images, reviewing, and using physical actions; (2) cognitive strategies, which help students understand and generate new language through reasoning, practicing, receiving and transmitting messages, analyzing, and summarizing; and (3) compensatory strategies, which help students use the language for comprehension and communication even when they have limited knowledge. These techniques fill up grammatical knowledge gaps, especially those caused by a limited vocabulary (Oxford, 1990:17).

Although they have a less direct impact on learning, indirect techniques nevertheless have a significant impact on it (Oxford, 1990). Affective strategies help learners manage emotions, motivation, and attitudes, such as lowering anxiety, rewarding oneself, and self-encouragement; metacognitive strategies help learners manage their learning by focusing attention, planning, self-evaluating, and monitoring errors or the learning process; and social strategies involve learning the language through interaction with native speakers or others using the target language, such as asking questions, working with peers, and improving cultural understanding.

Cognitive Strategies

Oxford (1990) defined cognitive strategies as activities including reasoning, practicing, sending and receiving messages, analyzing, and summarizing. This strategy's activities involve practice by speaking or repeating words and phrases to increase fluency, as well as reasoning exercises where students examine

grammatical rules or spot linguistic patterns. Students also transmit and receive messages by speaking and writing to effectively communicate, as well as by listening and reading to understand the language. To improve comprehension and fluency, this technique also entails examining sentence patterns and summarizing important details from texts or discussions.

The methods of rehearsal, organizing, inferencing, summarizing, reduction, imaging, transfer, and elaboration were added by O'Malley and Chamot (1990). Direct mental processes are used in cognitive methods to comprehend and process language. These exercises include organization, which entails organizing material using mind maps or classification, and rehearsal, in which students frequently rehearse new words or phrases by reading aloud or speaking to themselves. While summarizing enables students to extract important information from texts or conversations, inferencing enables them to infer word meanings from context without the use of dictionaries. Other cognitive strategies include cutting out irrelevant details to improve comprehension, recalling terminology through mental imagery, translating knowledge from their home language to English, and elaborating by making connections between new and existing material to enhance comprehension. These techniques support individual language practice and reinforcement for students.

Metacognitive Strategies

Selective attention, planning, monitoring, and assessing learning activities are all examples of metacognitive processes, according to O'Malley and Chamot (1990). They noted that planning, which entails establishing learning objectives and selecting suitable tactics prior to speaking in English, and selective attention, which involves students focusing on important language while listening to discussions, are two components of metacognitive methods. Furthermore, while monitoring enables students to examine their understanding and speech accuracy in real time, evaluation enables them to determine whether the speaking practice methods they are doing are indeed improving their fluency.

Conversely, Oxford (1990) outlines metacognitive techniques that help pupils manage and organize their learning. It entails tasks like planning, focusing,

assessing oneself, and keeping track of one's mistakes or learning process. Students can use this strategy to organize their learning objectives and methods, monitor and rectify their faults in speaking or writing, assess the efficacy of the strategies they have used, and pay attention to important information when reading or listening. Students can enhance their speaking fluency by employing metacognitive techniques, which increase their awareness of their learning process.

Socio-affective Strategies

The emotional and social components of language acquisition are covered by socio-affective techniques. These tactics were defined by O'Malley and Chamot (1990) as self-talk, cooperation, and asking clarifying questions. Students who cooperate are more likely to participate in role-plays or group discussions to practice speaking English. Asking questions enables students to get clarification on words or phrases they are unfamiliar with from peers or teachers. Finally, by encouraging oneself before speaking, such as "I can do this!" before presenting in front of the class, self-talk helps increase confidence.

Oxford (1990) distinguished between affective and social strategies when classifying socio-affective strategies. While emotional tactics include reducing anxiety, self-rewards, and self-encouragement, social strategies include asking questions, working with peers, and enhancing cultural awareness. Oxford According to this method, students can work together with classmates through role-playing or conversations, question teachers or peers for clarification, and improve their cultural awareness of the target language. This approach also involves making an effort to lower nervousness before speaking in English by employing calming methods or optimistic thoughts. After reaching their learning objectives, students can also treat themselves, which will motivate them to continue studying in spite of obstacles.

RESEARCH METHOD

Utilizing a qualitative research approach and a case study methodology, this study aims to explore the methods sixth-semester English Study Program students at the Islamic University of Indragiri Tembilahan employed to improve their

speaking fluency. The qualitative method was selected to provide a thorough investigation of the participants' individual learning styles, experiences, and beliefs. Creswell (2012) asserts that qualitative research allows the researcher to obtain rich, in-depth descriptions of a phenomenon, whereas Yin (2016) highlights that a case study design is appropriate for examining current challenges in authentic settings.

Seventeen sixth-semester students who have taken English-speaking classes participated in the study. Ten students with the highest Grade Point Averages (GPA) were chosen for the interview phase using purposive sampling, which was predicated on the idea that top achievers are more likely to use efficient and reliable study techniques. In the meantime, all 17 students participated in the whole sample technique that was used to distribute the questionnaire to the entire population. The small population size and the need to guarantee thorough coverage of student replies led to this decision.

Data was collected using two basic methods: interviews and questionnaires. The interviews were semi-structured, one-on-one, and intended to elicit detailed comments about the learning strategies students utilized and their motives for doing so. The questions, derived from Liao and Chiang (2004) and quoted in Maghfirah (2024), cover three major strategy types: cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective. To supplement the interview data, a closed-ended questionnaire was distributed. The questionnaire had 24 items based on Oxford's (1990) classification of language acquisition techniques, and it used a 5-point Likert scale (ranging from "Never" to "Always") to determine how frequently students used each strategy.

A questionnaire and an interview guide were among the instruments that were utilized in this investigation. Both were created using known theoretical frameworks that categorize learning processes into cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective groups. These frameworks were produced by Oxford (1990) and O'Malley and Chamot (1990). The questionnaire's twelve items for cognitive strategies, six for metacognitive, and six for socio-affective were all created to fit into these categories.

The three steps of the Miles and Huberman (1994) model—data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification—were used to analyze the

interview data. Raw interview data was filtered and coded by the researcher during the data reduction phase. Thematic tables presenting participant statements and approach categories were then used to represent these. Finding patterns and relationships in the data was the last phase, and to make sure these interpretations were accurate and reliable, a member-checking procedure was used. Meanwhile, Microsoft Excel was used to analyze the questionnaire data using descriptive statistics. The frequency and percentage of replies were computed and graphically shown to show the prevailing techniques and the extent to which students used them. This approach to methodology made it possible to have a thorough grasp of the methods students use to become more fluent in English.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The data from interviews and questionnaires revealed that sixth-semester students employed a wide range of language learning strategies to enhance their English-speaking fluency. These strategies fall into three major categories: cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies, and socio-affective strategies, based on the frameworks of O'Malley & Chamot (1990) and Oxford (1990).

All categories of methods were employed, according to the questionnaire answers; nevertheless, students tended to choose particular tactics according to their individual learning styles, language difficulties, and emotional preparedness. Data from interviews, meanwhile, provide more in-depth explanations of how and why these tactics were applied.

**Table 1. Mean Score of Students' Learning Strategies
in Enhancing Speaking Fluency**

Strategy Type	Number of Items	Total Score	Mean Score
Cognitive Strategies	12	761	3.73
Metacognitive Strategies	6	382	3.74
Socio-affective Strategies	6	391	3.83

According to the questionnaire responses, all types of methods were used; nevertheless, students tended to select specific strategies based on their unique learning preferences, language challenges, and emotional readiness. Interview data,

on the other hand, offer more thorough justifications for the methods and motivations behind these strategies.

As demonstrated in Table 1, socio-affective strategies had the highest average score (3.83). This means that students rely heavily on emotional and social support mechanisms such as self-encouragement, fear reduction, and teamwork to improve their speaking fluency. The frequency of use indicates that these tactics are regarded as highly effective and personally significant. Several students, including Sabna and Shagyta, reported to feeling uncomfortable or unconfident before speaking and relied on tactics such as self-talk, deep breathing, and practice with friends to overcome these obstacles.

In addition to being widely employed, these tactics were also emotionally charged. Many students said that they were more inclined to talk in English, even in public or in class, when their anxiety levels decreased and they received support from their peers.

This supports Horwitz et al. (1986), who stated that language anxiety can significantly hinder speaking fluency. The fact that students independently implemented socio-affective strategies shows a high level of self-awareness and emotional intelligence in language learning.

It also reflects Burns' (2012) view that speaking fluency is not only a matter of grammar and vocabulary but also of confidence and comfort. Educators should therefore focus not only on language content but also on creating supportive environments that encourage risk-taking in speaking.

Interestingly, cognitive strategies, although covering the largest number of items (12) and contributing the highest total score (761), have the lowest mean (3.73). This indicates that while students use cognitive strategies broadly, the depth or frequency of use for each specific strategy may be more varied or inconsistent.

Students like Arrahman, Fitriani, and Zezi reported using English in informal contexts, showing autonomous learning behavior. This supports Oxford (1990), who highlights the importance of meaningful and repeated exposure to language for fluency development. Rehearsal and planning before speaking tasks

helped students reduce nervousness and improve clarity, aligning with Stockdale's (2009) emphasis on structured speaking for fluency.

Interestingly, although these strategies were widely used, their intensity varied. Many students reported that cognitive strategies were situational — often used before formal speaking activities — but less consistently outside of them. This suggests that while cognitive strategies are foundational, they may need to be reinforced with other types for sustained fluency growth.

Metacognitive strategies, with a mean of 3.74, fall in between. Students are moderately engaged in planning, monitoring, and evaluating their learning, but these strategies may not yet be fully internalized or applied consistently across different speaking situations.

These findings suggest that while students are exposed to a range of strategies, those that directly help them manage emotions and social interaction have a more immediate and powerful impact on their speaking performance. For example, participants like Fitriany and Fella emphasized the need to plan what they would say before speaking and to evaluate their own pronunciation or delivery afterward. This is in line with O'Malley & Chamot's (1990) argument that metacognitive awareness enhances learning autonomy and control.

However, the interviews found that some students struggled to implement these tactics consistently, particularly when they lacked confidence or had limited time. This suggests a potential gap in strategy training, implying that while students recognize the importance of metacognition, they may require more help or guidance on how to apply it effectively.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to discover the strategies employed by sixth-semester students of the English Study Program at the Islamic University of Indragiri Tembilahan in enhancing their English-speaking fluency. Through the use of qualitative methods, including interviews and questionnaires, the research found that students employed a variety of learning strategies which were categorized into

cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective strategies, based on the theoretical frameworks of O'Malley & Chamot (1990) and Oxford (1990).

The findings revealed that among the three types, socio-affective strategies were the most intensively used, as indicated by the highest mean score. This highlights the significant role that emotional and social aspects play in language learning. Students frequently used strategies such as self-encouragement, lowering anxiety, and working with peers, indicating their awareness of how affective factors such as fear, confidence, and motivation impact their ability to speak fluently. These strategies helped them manage nervousness, increase their self-confidence, and become more willing to take risks in speaking situations.

Although cognitive strategies contributed the highest total score due to the greater number of items involved, the average use of each strategy was slightly lower. This suggests that while cognitive strategies such as practicing, organizing ideas, and rehearsing were broadly used, their intensity varied among students. Many used them selectively, depending on specific learning tasks or situations, such as presentations or class discussions. This reflects a functional and situational approach to language practice rather than a deeply habitual one.

Metacognitive strategies, on the other hand, were moderately applied. Students engaged in planning, monitoring, and self-evaluating their speaking performance, although not as consistently as the other two strategy types. This indicates an emerging but still developing sense of learner autonomy and self-regulation among the participants.

Overall, this research shows that speaking fluency is not merely the result of mastering vocabulary and grammar, but also depends heavily on how learners manage their emotions, environment, and learning process. The strategies they choose reflect not only their cognitive efforts but also their emotional resilience and social awareness. These insights underscore the importance for educators to not only focus on linguistic competence but also to foster affective support and strategic learning behaviors in the classroom.

For future research, these findings open up the possibility of exploring how targeted instruction in socio-affective and metacognitive strategies might further

enhance speaking fluency. Furthermore, longitudinal studies that observe how students' strategy use evolves over time could provide valuable insights into the development of speaking competence at various proficiency levels. As language learning continues to shift toward learner-centered approaches, understanding the nuances of students' strategy use becomes increasingly important for designing effective and empowering learning environments.

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