GOOD EFL LEARNERS' LEARNING STRATEGY TO DEVELOP THEIR SPEAKING SKILL

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the learning strategies employed by successful EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners in improving their speaking skills. This research used a qualitative approach with a case study method, involving third-semester students of the English Education Department at Muhammadiyah University of Parepare. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation, then analyzed using data reduction, data presentation, and verification techniques. The results showed that the most effective strategies included group discussions, role-playing, and spontaneous speaking practice. However, there is a need for more individualized feedback on pronunciation and additional spontaneous speaking tasks to reduce anxiety. By addressing these issues, instructors can create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment that fosters EFL learners' success.

Keywords:

EFL, learning strategies, speaking skills, English education

1. INTRODUCTION

The ability to speak fluently and accurately in English is crucial for EFL learners, as it enhances their communication skills, academic performance, and career prospects. In many EFL classrooms, however, students struggle with speaking due to anxiety, lack of confidence, and limited exposure to real-life conversations. These challenges hinder their ability to practice and develop fluency, leading to ineffective communication skills.

Various studies suggest that successful EFL learners adopt specific strategies to overcome these challenges. These strategies include active participation in discussions, self-monitoring of pronunciation, and engagement in real-life speaking tasks. However, not all learners have access to the same opportunities or guidance on how to improve their speaking proficiency. This study aims to identify the most effective learning strategies employed by high-achieving EFL learners and provide recommendations for language educators to enhance speaking instruction in the classroom.

2. METHODOLOGY

This research employed a qualitative approach focusing on case study methodology. The participants were third-semester students from the English Education Department at Muhammadiyah University of Parepare. The selection of participants was conducted using purposive sampling, selecting students who demonstrated a strong interest and performance in English speaking activities.

Data collection involved three primary methods: observation, interviews, and documentation analysis. Observations were conducted in classroom settings where students participated in speaking activities such as discussions, debates, and presentations. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with students and instructors to gain insights into the effectiveness of various learning strategies. Additionally, documentation such as student speaking assessments and teacher feedback were analyzed to support the findings.

The collected data were analyzed using the qualitative data analysis framework suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994), which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. This process ensured that patterns and themes were identified in the strategies employed by successful EFL learners in enhancing their speaking skills.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
The findings indicate that successful EFL learners rely on a combination of structured and

unstructured speaking activities to develop their skills. Among the most frequently used strategies were:

- **Group Discussions:** 87.5% of students found group discussions highly effective in improving their fluency, as they provided opportunities for real-time interaction and idea exchange.
- **Role-Playing Activities:** 75% of students reported that role-playing helped them gain confidence and practice conversational skills in various real-life contexts.
- **Pronunciation Feedback:** 62.5% of students stated that teacher feedback on pronunciation was beneficial, though some learners expressed a need for more individualized corrections.
- **Spontaneous Speaking Tasks:** While 50% of students felt they had sufficient opportunities for spontaneous speaking, 37.5% indicated they needed more exposure to impromptu speech exercises to build confidence.

Additionally, the study found that anxiety remains a key challenge for some learners, affecting their willingness to participate in speaking activities. Techniques such as peer support, motivational encouragement, and structured feedback were recommended to address this issue.

The analysis of student responses and observations suggests that successful EFL learners actively employ metacognitive, cognitive, and social strategies to enhance their speaking proficiency. Metacognitive strategies, such as goal-setting and self-reflection, help learners identify their weaknesses and monitor their progress over time. Cognitive strategies, including memorization of key phrases and repeated practice, allow learners to internalize language structures and improve fluency. Meanwhile, social strategies, such as peer collaboration and role-playing activities, create a supportive environment for learners to practice and gain confidence in their speaking abilities.

Additionally, findings reveal that feedback plays a crucial role in language development. Learners who receive regular and constructive feedback from instructors tend to show greater improvement in

pronunciation, fluency, and confidence. However, some students expressed the need for more individualized feedback, particularly in correcting pronunciation errors and expanding their vocabulary.

The study also highlights the importance of spontaneous speaking activities in fostering fluency. Structured speaking tasks, such as scripted dialogues and presentations, help students develop accuracy, but they do not always prepare learners for real-life interactions. Learners who engage in impromptu discussions, debates, and storytelling exercises demonstrate greater ability to think on their feet and use language in unpredictable situations. This finding supports the notion that spontaneous speech practice should be integrated into EFL curricula to better prepare students for real-world communication.

Another important finding of this study is the impact of motivation on EFL learners' speaking development. Students who demonstrated a strong intrinsic motivation to learn English were more likely to engage in speaking activities, seek additional practice opportunities, and take risks in conversations. In contrast, students who lacked motivation tended to participate less actively and experienced greater anxiety when speaking. These findings align with previous research that highlights motivation as a key factor in language acquisition.

Moreover, cultural factors played a role in shaping students' willingness to communicate in English. Some learners from high-context communication cultures exhibited a greater reluctance to speak due to fear of making mistakes or violating social norms. This suggests that EFL educators should implement culturally responsive teaching strategies that create a safe and supportive environment for learners from diverse backgrounds.

Future research should explore the long-term effects of different speaking strategies on EFL learners' proficiency. It would also be beneficial to investigate how digital learning tools, such as

AI-based pronunciation feedback and virtual reality language immersion, can further support speaking development in EFL learners.

4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The findings of this study reinforce the importance of adopting multiple learning strategies for EFL speaking development. Successful learners demonstrate a combination of metacognitive, cognitive, and social strategies that contribute to their progress. However, challenges such as anxiety, pronunciation difficulties, and lack of spontaneous speaking practice still hinder many students from achieving their full potential.

To improve speaking instruction, educators should consider implementing the following:

- **Increased Pronunciation Feedback:** Providing detailed, individualized feedback on pronunciation errors can help students refine their speaking skills.
- **Spontaneous Speaking Activities:** Encouraging unstructured speaking tasks such as debates, impromptu speeches, and conversational exercises can build fluency and confidence.
- **Technology Integration:** Utilizing speech recognition software, AI-assisted pronunciation tools, and online language exchange platforms can enhance learning opportunities beyond the classroom.
- **Reducing Speaking Anxiety:** Teachers should create a supportive environment that fosters motivation and minimizes performance pressure. Encouraging peer support and gradually increasing speaking difficulty levels can help students develop confidence.

Further research should explore how digital learning tools and AI-powered feedback mechanisms can further support EFL speaking development. Additionally, future studies may examine how cultural differences influence learners' speaking strategies and engagement in English communication.

5. REFERENCES

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