

Language Learning Strategies for Managing Speaking Anxiety among English Students: A Narrative Inquiry

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Abstract: *Speaking anxiety is one of the most prominent obstacles for EFL students in improving their speaking skills. Successful students use more language learning strategies to overcome their speaking anxiety. This study aims to portray the experiences of an English education department student in dealing with speaking anxiety. More specifically, this study focuses on student's speaking anxiety experience and the utilisation of language learning strategies. To achieve the objective of the study, a narrative inquiry is employed. The data collection methods are semi-structured interviews and photo elicitation. The interview data was translated into English, re-examined, and analysed using narrative analysis (Labov, 1972). The findings of this study indicate that a student experience speaking anxiety due to several factors, and utilising language learning strategies helped in reducing speaking anxiety itself. The findings of this study are presented in the narrative analysis framework proposed by Labov (1972): (1) Abstract: "The Early Motivation", (2) Orientation: "A Supportive Environment as the Starting Line", (3) Complicating action: "Facing Fear in English Speaking", (4) Resolution: "Strategy Adoption as Emotional Regulation", (5) Evaluation: "From Avoidance to Agency", (6) Coda: "Rediscovering Joy in Speaking". This study suggests applying language learning strategies as it can assist students in coping with speaking anxiety.*

Keywords: *Narrative Inquiry; Language Learning Strategies; Speaking Anxiety*

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INTRODUCTION

Oral presentation is often challenging for most EFL learners. This leads to the symptoms of speaking anxiety, such as nervousness, shyness, and frustration (Tareen et al., 2023). Kala (pseudonym) experienced this during her first presentation in high school, where she felt deeply anxious by the negative feedback from her teacher. Such experiences make students view speaking English in the classroom to be intimidating due to mistakes and negative evaluations. However, speaking anxiety is not limited in presentation, but also affecting students when answering questions and expressing ideas in English (Putri et al., 2020). Kala, for instance, frequently avoided speaking to prevent embarrassment. Moreover, anxiety can harm students' language performance and ability (Hermagustiana et al., 2021). Even though Kala had been interested in English since she was a kid, everything changed when she experienced speaking anxiety. Therefore, a solution is needed to deal with this problem.

Kala became a successful language learner when she entered university because of the utilisation of language learning strategies. The negative feedback from her high school teacher unexpectedly motivated Kala to improve her speaking skills. Therefore, Kala often uses strategies such as self-talk, peer practice, making scripts, note-taking, and understanding material. According to Sukying (2021), students use language learning strategies to help them memorise, save, and use new information in real-life settings, boosting their self-esteem and self-regulation. With the help of language learning strategies, Kala could finally show her best performance in her speaking tasks, proven by her perfect marks in all speaking courses and her achievement as the best speaker at an international conference.

A plethora of research to date has been conducted to address language learning strategies in support of dealing with students' speaking anxiety. Many of them used quantitative methods and discussed more general aspects, such as the strategies used, the level of speaking anxiety, and factors of speaking anxiety. As an example, studies conducted by Pertiwi and Hidayanti (2022) and Widhayanti (2018) utilised quantitative research. Previous research has shown the positive impacts of language learning strategies (e.g., Habók & Magyar, 2018; Sukying, 2021). However, it is yet to be explored in more detail with a student's life story of facing speaking anxiety using language learning strategies. Triyoga et al. (2022) mentioned in their study that it is essential to investigate students' language learning strategies, focusing on how students apply language learning strategies using

narrative study. Henceforth, this study tries to fill the gap by focusing on Kala's exciting story in utilising language learning strategies to deal with speaking anxiety through narrative inquiry.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview of Language Learning Strategies

The term language learning strategies has been defined in various ways as it has been fine-tuned by many experts over many research and studies. In 1990, Oxford defined language learning strategies as detailed actions by learners to make learning easier, faster, more fun, self-directed, and flexible to new situations. A decade later, Macaro (2006) highlighted that language learning strategies are distinctive approaches and activities students use to understand, learn, or memorise information. Moreover, Oxford (2017) has tried again to refine the definition of language learning strategies, which she defined as several compound and flexible thoughts and actions that are chosen and applied by language learners consciously with the goals of accomplishing language tasks, enhancing language performance and advancing long-term proficiency by managing some aspects including cognitive, affective, and social. It is also stated that language learning strategies can be used according to learners' creativity and flexibility by taking notes that the appropriateness of the strategies depends on personal and contextual factors. Considering that Oxford (2017) has successfully addressed all key features of language learning strategies, the definition is believed to be the most comprehensive (Pawlak, 2021; Thomas & Rose, 2018). Therefore, Oxford's definition of language learning strategies will be utilised in this study.

Language learning strategies consist of several items. They are categorised into two broad, more specific subcategories (Oxford, 1990). This taxonomy is one of the most influential categorisations of language learning strategies (Alfian, 2021). The categorisation of language learning strategies according to Oxford (1990) are as follows:

Direct Strategies

1. Memory

Memory strategies help students save important information. In this strategy, students create mental connections and use images and sound to review and employ action. According to Kehing and Yunus (2021), by applying this strategy, students can associate visuals and audio in their memory and visualise the new vocabulary. Therefore, memory strategies can help students enrich their vocabulary and strengthen their memory.

2. Cognitive

Students use cognitive strategies to practise, send and receive messages, analyse and reason, and create output. In this strategy, students take notes, translate, imitate speakers, repeat, and practice. Moreover, this strategy has also improved students' vocabulary and helped them speak (Marpaung & Widyanoro, 2020). By enhancing students' language, the cognitive strategy allows students to improve their speaking ability.

3. Compensation

This strategy includes guessing intelligently by using cues and overcoming limitations in speaking. Syafryadin et al. (2020) pointed out that this strategy can solve students' language difficulties. A compensation strategy is proper when students are lost for words. They can use gestures, mime, or synonyms to continue speaking fluently. Those can help students to speak when they experience blankness.

Indirect Strategies

1. Metacognitive

In this strategy, students create their learning system by centring, planning, and evaluating their learning. According to Kehing and Yunus (2021), metacognitive strategies can help students become independent learners. These strategies are used when students overview and link the material, set learning goals and language task purposes, and self-evaluate. Thus, students can become independent learners who always self-monitor their learning using this strategy.

2. Affective

Students use affective strategies to lower their language anxiety, encourage themselves, and take their emotional temperature. Some examples of affective strategies are deep breathing, relaxation, meditation, positive self-talk, self-reward, writing a diary, and discussing feelings with others. Students are found to decrease their anxiety when using music and sharing their feelings. (Widhayanti, 2018). Accordingly, students learned to control their anxiety and build a more positive mindset by using affective strategies.

3. Social

Students use this strategy when they ask questions and corrections, cooperate with peers and advanced language users, and empathise with others. According to Wael et al. (2018), students usually ask for clarification from people they trust when practising speaking. Consequently, students can improve their speaking ability by collaborating and asking for corrections.

Language learning strategies offer many benefits for English language learners. According to Oxford (1990), language learning strategies can create a learning process that is more enjoyable, effective, efficient, self-directed, and flexible. In addition, learners also

become more independent when they utilise language learning strategies. (Teng, 2023). As Ofiaz (2019) mentioned, students who utilise language learning strategies tend to have higher academic achievements. Especially in speaking, language learning strategies help lessen speaking anxiety, and students are encouraged to apply them (Citra & Zainil, 2021; Widhayanti, 2018). Therefore, it is recommended that students utilise language learning strategies, considering their numerous benefits.

Speaking Anxiety

Speaking anxiety is generally defined as emotional factors that can influence students' speaking performance. As mentioned by Hussain et al. (2021), anxiety itself is a negative feeling experienced by a person in an uncomfortable situation where that makes one feel nervous, worried, and scared. In an EFL environment, students are more likely to experience speaking anxiety. It is stated by Rachmawati and Jurianto (2020) that EFL students have some limitations in using foreign languages as their exposure to the language is low, and there are few opportunities to speak English. Consequently, speaking anxiety can be a barrier for learners to have the ability to speak and communicate effectively using the foreign language that is being learned (Christy & Mukhaiyar, 2021). Moreover, speaking anxiety can influence students' learning process. It can distract students and cause them to worry and be scared (Zuhri et al., 2022). On that account, speaking anxiety needs to be solved as it is detrimental to students' learning and performance.

In experiencing speaking anxiety, students are influenced by some factors that lead to the symptoms or characteristics of speaking anxiety. Syahfutra and Wibowo (2021) mentioned that several factors, such as fear of making mistakes, low self-esteem, proficiency, and preparation, are found to be the sources that contribute to the presence of students' speaking anxiety. Meanwhile, the characteristics and symptoms of speaking anxiety were shown by the students when they were facing speaking anxiety (Wardani, 2018). Rajitha and Alamelu (2020) mentioned several symptoms of speaking anxiety, such as shaking hands, trembling, sweating, heart beating faster, squeaky voice, and blankness. Hence, some factors and symptoms may be the signs of students when experiencing speaking anxiety.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach using narrative inquiry as its methodological framework. Narrative inquiry enables researchers to explore how individuals construct meaning from lived experiences across time and context (Caine et al., 2018; Lindsay & Schwind, 2016). Given the study's aim to understand how language

learning strategies function within an individual's experience of speaking anxiety, a single-case narrative design was deemed appropriate.

The study focused on one participant, Kala (pseudonym), a 19-year-old English Education student in West Java, Indonesia. She was selected purposively because she had experienced significant speaking anxiety during her secondary education yet later demonstrated notable improvement and achievement in speaking performance.

Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected through two semi-structured interview sessions conducted over a three-week period (January 2025). Each session lasted approximately 60–75 minutes and was audio-recorded with the participant's consent. The interviews were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia to ensure depth of expression and later translated into English by the researchers. To enhance contextual richness, photo-elicitation was employed, where the participant provided personal artefacts (e.g., vocabulary notebook, peer practice documentation, conference photos) that stimulated reflective narration. A follow-up interview (45 minutes) was conducted to clarify emerging themes and ensure narrative coherence.

Data Analysis

The data were analysed using Labov's (1972) narrative structure framework. The analysis followed five stages:

1. Verbatim transcription of interviews
2. Translation into English
3. Repeated reading to identify narrative episodes
4. Coding segments according to Labov's six narrative components (abstract, orientation, complicating action, evaluation, resolution, coda)
5. Interpretative analysis to identify how language learning strategies functioned within anxiety episodes

Coding was conducted manually. To enhance analytical rigor, peer debriefing was performed among the research team to cross-check narrative segmentation and interpretation.

Trustworthiness

To ensure credibility and trustworthiness, several strategies were employed:

1. Triangulation: Interview data were cross-checked with photo documentation and peer testimony.

2. Member checking: The participant reviewed the interpreted narrative and confirmed its accuracy.
3. Peer debriefing: Research team discussion was conducted to validate theme categorisation.
4. Thick description: Direct excerpts were included to preserve narrative authenticity.

Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to ethical standards for qualitative research. The participant signed an informed consent form prior to data collection. A pseudonym (“Kala”) was used to ensure anonymity. The participant had the right to withdraw at any stage of the research process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The forthcoming section explores the narrative gathered related Kala’s stories in using language learning strategies and how she deals with speaking anxiety. Furthermore, to elicit meanings from a series of repeated events, the researcher presents the data in the form of five essential elements of the narrative analysis framework in the following order: (1) abstract, (2) orientation, (3) complicating actions, (4) evaluation, (5) results, (6) coda (Labov, 1972).

Abstract: The Early Motivation

Kala (pseudonym), a 19-year-old English Education student at a university in West Java, began her narrative with early and meaningful exposure to English during childhood, which later shaped her long-term engagement with the language. Her initial interaction with English was mediated by her grandmother, a former English teacher, who introduced English informally in daily interactions.

“I started learning English when I was around five years old. I learned English with my grandmother. She used to be an English teacher at a junior high school.” (Excerpt 1)

This early exposure enabled Kala to develop familiarity and interest in English prior to formal schooling. Early language exposure during childhood plays a critical role in shaping learners’ linguistic sensitivity and learning orientation (Na’imah, 2022). Furthermore, family support as an environmental factor substantially affects children’s language acquisition in learning English (Afzali & Izadpanah, 2021; Fandiño et al., 2019). In Kala’s case, her grandmother’s guidance created a supportive learning environment that shaped her positive attitudes toward English.

Orientation: A Supportive Environment as the Starting Line

Kala's English learning journey continued within a supportive home environment, particularly through informal activities facilitated by her grandmother, often by listening to English songs and conversations, which Kala frequently imitated even without fully understanding the meaning:

"I learned alongside my grandmother by listening to English songs and conversations. I also used my smartphone for learning, such as Duolingo and Facebook." (Excerpt 2)

Noticeably, Kala also utilised digital tools to facilitate her learning, such as Duolingo and Facebook. Previous studies have shown that digital platforms can support language development by providing accessible and engaging learning opportunities (Ajisoko, 2020; Ullah & Bacha, 2020). This finding aligns with Marzuki and Santiana (2021), who emphasised that innovations in technology and applications are beneficial to helping students learn English. Moreover, Kala's interest grew further in junior high, inspired by teachers and peers delivering speeches in English:

"My initial interest probably started because I saw my teacher and seniors who conveyed speeches, and their speaking skills were good. So, I also want to be able to speak like that." (Excerpt 3)

Despite joining an English club in high school, she left because the activities were ineffective and repetitive:

"During high school, I once joined the English club, but there were too many members and the learning process was not effective, so I decided to leave. The learning process was just memorising vocabulary without much else." (Excerpt 4)

This reflects that environmental support, while essential, needs to be structured and goal-oriented to foster real language improvement (Kim, 2023; Najim, 2020). Kala decided to focus on developing fluency and confidence in speaking.

Complicating Action: Facing Fear in English Speaking

Regardless of her growing interest in English, Kala encountered significant emotional and psychological challenges, particularly related to speaking anxiety that arose in her junior high school years:

"That happened when I was in junior high school. We had an English speech assignment. Back then, the teacher was really sensitive. Every time someone had to present, if there was even a small mistake, like mispronouncing a word or a little grammar error, he would get really mad. He would act as if the person was really bad or stupid just for not doing it perfectly. So, the feedback wasn't very nice." (Excerpt 5)

Omar (2023) stated that most EFL learners struggle to speak English despite its essential role in communication. Kala's negative experiences reflect the fear of negative evaluation that can trigger speaking anxiety (Agata & Anindyastuti, 2019; Gabe et al., 2020). However, students may also consider oral corrective feedback from teachers as motivation and error awareness (Syakira & Nur, 2022). In Kala's case, receiving painful feedback also boosted her motivation to improve her speaking skills:

"It was a bit of a mix of feelings back then. Sad, I got really angry, disappointed too. But strangely, I don't know why, from there, it is like I started studying even harder to get better." (Excerpt 6)

Kala highlighted that unpleasant feedback can evoke sadness, anger, and disappointment, which led to the presence of speaking anxiety. Kala's fear of speaking itself is stemmed from multiple factors, such as her introverted personality, limited mastery of the subject matter, and apprehension of others' perceptions:

"The factors that made me anxious is primarily due to being introverted. It's hard for me to speak up in conversations, especially in public speaking situations. Socialising itself can be difficult for me. Being in a large crowd like in front of multiple classes or a campus-wide audience, can trigger severe anxiety. However, speaking in front of a smaller group is usually not a problem." (Excerpt 7)

Kala's introversion frequently made her feel shy and nervous about speaking in front of large groups, even interacting with a few people could be intimidating. This is supported by Hanifa (2018) that introverted students tend to have more problems in speaking, such as low self-confidence, feeling shy while speaking in front of others, or incapacity to express the words. In addition, she also feared inadequate preparation:

"And there is also the concern about not mastering the material. Well, students like to do overnight rush. So, when faced with assignments or exams, there's inevitable nervousness. The fear is that if someone asks a question, we won't be able to answer because we have not fully mastered the material." (Excerpt 8)

Furthermore, Kala's speaking anxiety was also a result of the fear of not mastering the material enough. Students hesitate to speak English because of insufficient speaking abilities, preparation, and a lack of understanding of the material (Damayanti & Listyani, 2020; Kenoh, 2021). Moreover, being the centre of attention when speaking also increased her nervousness:

"Apart from being in the spotlight, sometimes I also worry about what others think of us during a presentation." (Excerpt 9)

Kala feared being the centre of attention and worried about others' judgement of her performance. Tekşan et al. (2019) found that when students are afraid to be judged, mocked, and laughed at, it can lead to the emergence of speaking anxiety. Accordingly, the speaking anxiety manifested emotionally and physically, including nervousness, fear, sweating, and fidgeting:

"Emotionally, I think it's unclear. It was a mix. I get nervous and it feels like fear. It's like getting goosebumps. Maybe I am afraid of what people might think." (Excerpt 10)

"If it is about physical reactions, well, sweating and all that. But sometimes, the hands or the feet move on their own, like tapping on the floor or fidgeting with the fingers." (Excerpt 11)

Kala's speaking anxiety disrupts both her emotional stability and physical control, which ultimately interferes with her learning process and speaking performance. Her fear, nervousness, and involuntary physical reactions reflect the negative impact of anxiety on students' body sensations and mental state (Gallego et al., 2022). Therefore, speaking anxiety not only affects students psychologically but also visibly weakens their speaking performance and confidence.

Resolution: Strategy Adoption as Emotional Regulation

In overcoming her speaking anxiety, Kala managed to find her solution: to use language learning strategies, including memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, social, and affective strategies:

"I have tried many strategies. Starting from note-taking, there were times when I took a lot of notes. But sometimes, when I feel lazy, I just listen to lecturer's explanation. However, there are also courses where we are required to imitate native speakers. So if there is a speech, I put it on a specific website. Then, let the native speaker say it, and I just follow. I also practice with friends." (Excerpt 12)

This excerpt illustrates Kala's active engagement in multiple strategy domains, reflecting what Oxford (1990) conceptualises as the integration of direct and indirect strategies. Moreover, she used a vocabulary bank to support memory strategies:

"In terms of vocabulary, I tend to write down the vocabulary in a book-like format. For example, if it's a verb, I list the base form, past tense, and past participle next to it. It's like having a notebook. It has a significant impact for me because I get to know the meanings. So, when I am having a conversation, I do not talk inaccurately." (Excerpt 13)

This practice enhanced her lexical access, which is critical for reducing anxiety caused by vocabulary limitations. Consistent with Wahyudin et al. (2021), vocabulary recording facilitates retention and retrieval, allowing learners to communicate more accurately and

confidently. In addition, Kala also relied heavily on cognitive strategies, including self-practice, imitating native speakers via ToPhonetics, and note-taking:

“Before the speech, I usually create a script first. Then, I often read the script repeatedly until I can recite it by heart. Note-taking and imitating have a significant impact because they help me to be aware of the correct pronunciation of certain words. Now, I feel confident because I know the right way to pronounce them.” (Excerpt 14)

These strategies enabled Kala to increase her familiarity with speaking tasks, thereby reducing uncertainty and enhancing perceived competence. This finding aligns with Hidayat et al. (2024), who emphasised that pronunciation modelling tools such as ToPhonetics support learners’ speaking accuracy and confidence. However, Kala had to face blank moment when speaking, where she utilised compensation strategies like using gestures:

“It often happens that I forget the script. So, I just improvise and use gestures. Then, I remember the words I said before and try to find something related to it. Or maybe I look for material that's still connected to what I am explaining at the moment. I use gestures during speaking presentation to reduce nervousness and to enhance clarity in explanations. Personally, I believe it's improving, but it's best to keep it moderate and not overly excessive.” (Excerpt 15)

These behaviours allowed her to maintain communicative continuity despite momentary linguistic gaps. As identified by Pertiwi and Suwartono (2019), improvisation can be done using gestures and quick brainstorming. Moreover, Kala’s metacognitive strategies were particularly significant in transforming her anxiety into manageable performance readiness:

“Monitoring and evaluating the learning outcomes, does have a clear impact in reducing my speaking anxiety, because the preparation is really well-prepared.” (Excerpt 16)

Through planning, monitoring, and evaluating her preparation, Kala developed greater control over her learning process. Wael et al. (2018) highlighted that metacognitive can assist students to prepare, plan, and organise their learning. In addition, affective strategies played a crucial role in regulating Kala’s emotional conditions:

“Self-reward for me is frequent, it’s taking a break, so the speaking anxiety doesn't become too severe. It is not too intense.” (Excerpt 17)

By engaging in positive self-talk and self-reward, Kala actively managed her emotional responses, preventing anxiety from becoming overwhelming. This supports Putri et al. (2020), who found that affective strategies help learners maintain psychological readiness and confidence during speaking tasks. Lastly, social strategies also contributed to Kala’s development. As Karim (2019) observed that social interaction enhances learners’

speaking competence through collaborative feedback and support, Kala found that peer feedback given her new perspectives that helped refine her performance:

“My experience with peer speaking practice is usually with friends. They give me spot-on feedback that really helps because I become aware of my weaknesses when speaking. It allows for some improvement and a step in the right direction.” (Excerpt 18)

Kala experimented with multiple language learning strategies before constructing a personalised regulatory routine. Her strategies were not applied randomly; they were activated in response to specific anxiety triggers.

For example:

Fear of forgetting → script memorisation (memory strategy)

Fear of mispronunciation → imitation via ToPhonetics (cognitive strategy)

Fear of blankness → gestures and topic shifting (compensation strategy)

Fear of public exposure → positive self-talk (affective strategy)

This pattern indicates that strategies functioned as adaptive tools within emotionally charged speaking contexts. Rather than merely improving linguistic proficiency, the strategies operated as mechanisms of emotional self-regulation. Her metacognitive routine, including planning, practising, monitoring, and revising demonstrates increasing learner autonomy. Anxiety gradually shifted from overwhelming experiences to manageable performance challenges.

Taken together, Kala’s experience demonstrates that language learning strategies functioned as tools for both skill development and anxiety regulation. Through the integration of direct and indirect strategies, she gradually transformed speaking from a huge fear into a handy task. Even when the anxiety did not completely disappear, it slowly reduced and became more manageable. This reflects the positive influence of strategic learning on her speaking development.

Evaluation: From Avoidance to Agency

Over time, Kala has enhanced her speaking proficiency and gained increased self-assurance by implementing language learning strategies. Her language learning strategies are visualised in the following table:

Table 1.
Participant's Language Learning Strategies

No	Learning Strategies	Techniques
1.	Memory strategies	Making vocabulary bank
2.	Cognitive strategies	Practice, note-taking, and imitating
3.	Compensation strategies	Using gestures and related topics
4.	Metacognitive strategies	Sets of learning activities
5.	Affective strategies	Positive self-talk and self-reward
6.	Social strategies	Peer-practice and asking for suggestions

Table 2.
Participant's Documentations of Language Learning Strategies

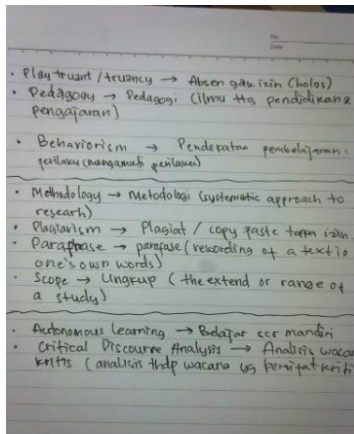


Figure 1. Vocabulary Bank

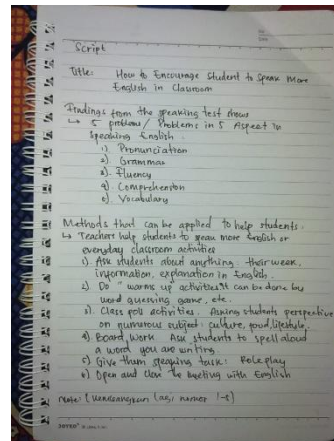


Figure 2. Note-taking

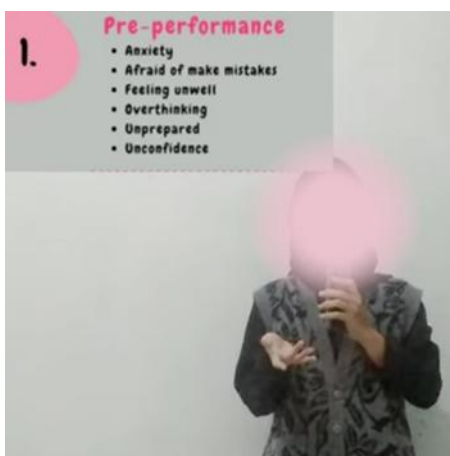


Figure 3. Speaking performance with gestures



Figure 4. Peer practice

After utilizing the language learning strategies above, Kala conceded that language learning strategies have a crucial effect on her speaking anxiety. Each strategy combined to create a perfect routine that made her more confident and better in her speaking skills and reduced her speaking anxiety. As supported by Pabro-Maquidato (2021), using language learning strategies enables students to be more confident and motivated, which leads to overcoming speaking anxiety. Therefore, Kala has established herself as be a better English speaker in both academic and public speaking context.

Over time, Kala's identity as an anxious speaker evolved into that of a strategic and confident communicator. The turning point was not the disappearance of anxiety, but her ability to regulate it. Importantly, anxiety did not vanish entirely. Instead, it became functional as a reminder to prepare thoroughly. This transformation from emotional vulnerability to strategic agency highlights the dynamic interplay between affect and self-regulation. Her narrative extends previous quantitative findings by illustrating the temporal process through which strategies reshape emotional responses to speaking.

Coda: Rediscovering Joy in Speaking

Kala's journey reflects a significant shift in how she perceives English speaking. The significant shift from fear to excitement highlights the substantial impact of effective language-learning strategies on her journey. This is in line with Pan and Zhang (2023), that students who exerted tremendous effort in language learning are found to enjoy speaking more. This enjoyment will make students more confident, which will lessen speaking anxiety. Even though it has not completely disappeared yet, it has improved significantly. As supported by Widhayanti (2018), language learning strategies can help students minimize their speaking anxiety. Ultimately, it reinforces the idea that with the right tools and support, significant improvements in confidence and performance are achievable.

"I think it's the result of my practice sessions. Because if I don't practice, it feels different. If I practice, it's easier when explaining things. I become more comfortable when teaching and presenting." (Excerpt 19)

"In the past, even if it was in front of the class or just a few friends, I could not avoid feeling anxious. But thankfully, it's not like that now." (Excerpt 20)

Kala's closing reflections reveal a shift from fear-based participation to enjoyment-based engagement. Her achievements in conference participation and teaching experience serve as narrative evidence of this transformation. However, within the scope of this single case, these outcomes represent personal growth rather than universal patterns.

Table 3.

Participant's Documentations of Speaking Experience



Figure 5. International conference experience



Figure 6. Teaching experience

CONCLUSION

This narrative inquiry presents an in-depth account of how one English Education student navigated speaking anxiety through strategic language learning practices. Within the bounded context of this single case, the findings illustrate how cognitive, affective, social, and metacognitive strategies were dynamically employed to transform anxiety into gradual confidence. Kala's story demonstrates that anxiety may evolve from a debilitating obstacle into a manageable performance response when learners develop reflective and adaptive strategic routines.

Theoretically, this research enriches literature on speaking, speaking anxiety, and language learning strategies. Practically, it provides insights for teachers and students: students can use strategies to manage anxiety, and teachers can integrate them into instruction. However, this study does not claim generalisability. As a one-case narrative inquiry, it provides interpretive insight rather than predictive conclusions. Future studies employing multiple-case designs or longitudinal approaches may offer broader understanding of how language learning strategies interact with speaking anxiety across diverse learner contexts.

DECLARATION OF AI AND AI-ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES

In developing this work, the authors utilized ChatGPT to support information retrieval. The authors have carefully reviewed, revised, and refined the content as necessary and take full responsibility for the final manuscript.

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