

## Enhancing Oral Proficiency: A Systematic Review of EFL Speaking Strategies

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### ABSTRACT

Extant literature on oral pedagogy remains restricted to isolated institutional evaluations, creating a gap regarding the structural evaluation of global speaking interventions. To address this deficit, this review evaluates EFL speaking strategy literature published between 2015 and 2025 adhering to PRISMA 2020 guidelines. Out of 119 records, 18 articles focusing on strategy interventions with full-text availability were selected based on indexing criteria. Methodological auditing indicates a dominance of quantitative and experimental research designs. Thematic extraction establishes an interconnected four-cluster strategy taxonomy: Digital Technology and AI-Based Learning, Cooperative Strategy and Social Interaction, Instructional Pedagogy, and Affective Strategies. Synthesized findings show a shift from traditional protocols toward interactive instructional ecosystems. Immersive technology-mediated tools autonomously lower students' affective filters while cooperative designs maximize talking time. However, intervention success remains moderated by regional infrastructure readiness and educational levels. Meanwhile, teacher feedback safeguards structural accuracy, shifting oral pedagogy from error minimization toward communicative competence.

**Keywords:** *EFL Oral Proficiency, Cooperative Learnings, Speaking Anxiety, Generative AI, PRISMA Protocol, Research Gap*

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## INTRODUCTION

Mastering English speaking skills is central to today's era of global communication. In fact, language learning success is fundamentally measured by how fluently and accurately students can express their ideas, thoughts, and arguments orally (Hengki et al., 2017). Because of this reality, educational institutions worldwide continue to prioritize oral proficiency as a key learning outcome. This clear priority drives educators to deploy student-centered teaching strategies and interactive pedagogical interventions (Teng & Zhang, 2016; Hwang et al., 2016). Many of these modern interventions are grounded in Krashen's Affective Filter and Input Hypotheses to help optimize the speaking process by lowering students' anxiety and providing comprehensible input within a psychologically stress-free, language-rich environment (Afzal, 2019). Previous studies have frequently reported that appropriate learning strategy interventions can improve students' fluency and accuracy in speaking, showing localized surges in oral scores during collaborative activities like role-playing or focus group discussions (Hengki et al., 2017).

However, developing robust oral communicative competence within English as Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms remains severely impeded by two chronic pedagogical hurdles: pervasive foreign language speaking anxiety (FLSA) and a systemic, institutional lack of student exposure to authentic target-language communication outside formal classroom hours (Afzal, 2019; Alharbi, 2015). Under conservative educational structures, learners routinely develop high affective filters due to an excessive instructional focus on immediate

error correction and mechanical rote memorization. This dynamic actively suppresses spontaneous verbal production and undermines learner self-efficacy (Chou, 2018), highlighting an urgent need to prioritize functional communicative competence over passive grammatical mastery in global contexts (Teng & Zhang, 2016).

A closer look at the broader literature base reveals that most research on speaking skills remains fragmented, localized, and restricted to single-method evaluations within isolated educational institutions, making it difficult for policymakers to determine universal efficacy (Kehing & Yunus, 2021). Furthermore, the data collection and synthesis methodologies used in traditional literature reviews often neglect rigorous screening standards. They frequently mix highly diverse qualitative and experimental designs without applying strict methodological quality weighting, thereby injecting substantial selection bias into their final conclusions (Kohnke & Moorhouse, 2021).

To contextualize the necessity of this study, it is critical to evaluate what previous literature reviews have examined and where they have fallen short. Historical traditional reviews and smaller meta-analyses in the EFL domain up to the mid-2010s have heavily concentrated on classical mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) frameworks, basic classroom task designs, and traditional communicative activities (Kehing & Yunus, 2021). However, these previous syntheses failed to examine several critical operational dimensions. Firstly, they overlooked the direct operational friction and equity divide between advanced digital strategies and local regional infrastructure constraints. Secondly, they failed to account for how age-based demographic variations and developmental educational tiers radically alter student resilience to autonomous oral tasks. Lastly, they ignored the shifting epistemological boundary between conventional teacher-led corrective feedback and contemporary peer-facilitated or automated, AI-mediated evaluation.

Therefore, a new systematic review covering the 2015–2025 period is necessary to address these gaps. This decade represents a critical period of change in educational history. It captures the stable baseline of mobile-assisted language learning from 2015, tracks the forced remote digital migration caused by the global pandemic (2020–2022), and integrates the immediate emergence of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) and automated speech-recognition ecosystems up to 2025. Evaluating this specific ten-year window is essential to map how oral pedagogy has transitioned from traditional hybrid setups into highly adaptive, AI-mediated conversational ecosystems, providing an evidence-based roadmap for 21st-century oral curriculum design. Beyond these technological shifting, this synthesis deficit becomes highly critical when viewed through Kirkpatrick's Educational Program Evaluation Theory, as the vast majority of existing studies focus almost exclusively on immediate participant reactions or short-term grade increases, leaving the long-term impact of teaching strategies on spontaneous speaking retention outside the classroom largely unexamined (Crompton et al., 2024).

To address these interconnected gaps, this study utilizes a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach based on the PRISMA 2020 protocol to screen and synthesize global scientific findings published over the past decade (2015–2025) (Page et al., 2021). While the SLR protocol ensures high validity by eliminating low-quality data and minimizing researcher bias, a hybrid theoretical lens combining Social Constructivism (Vygotsky's ZPD), the Affective Filter Hypothesis, and Cognitive Load Theory serves as the primary analytical framework to classify and interpret the effectiveness of the discovered strategies (Afzal, 2019; Khalil & Elkhider, 2016). Accordingly, this systematic review is guided by three specific research questions: 1) RQ1: What are the primary taxonomic clusters of English learning strategies used to improve EFL speaking skills in the last decade (2015–2025)? 2) RQ2: How effective are these strategies in enhancing fluency and accuracy, and mitigating affective barriers? 3) RQ3: How do contextual, demographic, and technological variables influence the success of these pedagogical interventions?

Ultimately, the output of this systematic review is designed to bridge the gap between theory and classroom reality. By establishing an evidence-based practice model for language

educators (Lee, 2016), this study contributes to the development of highly adaptive, efficient, and communication-oriented English curricula globally.

## METHOD

### Research Design

This study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method to identify, evaluate, and synthesize previous empirical research findings. This approach was selected to provide an objective, rigorous, and transparent analysis of the operational effectiveness of English language learning strategies on advancing oral proficiency. To ensure adherence to international reporting standards, this systematic review strictly follows the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA, 2020) guidelines (Page et al., 2021). Utilizing the PRISMA framework guarantees that every stage of the article selection pipeline is meticulously documented, auditable, and replicable. This systematic tracking spans from initial identification through screening and eligibility assessments to the final determination of the included corpus, thereby minimizing potential researcher subjectivity and selection bias.

### Search Strategy and Target Databases

To guarantee maximum indexing coverage and comprehensive data retrieval, electronic literature searches were executed across five primary global academic databases: Scopus, Web of Science (WoS), ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center), Google Scholar, and Dimensions. The metadata tracking, extraction, and software-mediated de-duplication were managed utilizing the Publish or Perish (PoP) advanced interface. To maintain semantic precision and capture targeted pedagogical interventions, the search syntax within the database engines was restricted to titles, abstracts, and keywords using a transparent, advanced Boolean search string: ("EFL" OR "English as a Foreign Language") AND ("speaking skills" OR "oral communication" OR "oral proficiency") AND ("strategy" OR "intervention" OR "pedagogy")

### Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To establish a high-quality corpus for synthesis, the initial records were manually and automatically screened against explicit, pre-determined eligibility criteria.

#### *Inclusion Criteria*

**Research Typology:** Only peer-reviewed empirical studies utilizing quantitative experimental, qualitative narrative, or mixed-methods frameworks were included. **Pedagogical Scope:** Studies must operationalize an explicit learning strategy or pedagogical intervention directly targeting EFL oral production skills (e.g., interactive role-plays, structured peer interaction, collaborative learning communities, or task-based communication protocols). **Target Outcomes:** Articles must provide clear empirical data, statistical values, or narrative insights regarding speaking competence indicators (fluency, accuracy, pronunciation) or affective filter fluctuations (speaking anxiety mitigation, self-efficacy surges). **Data Accessibility:** Only full-text articles published in English with complete availability were selected.

#### *Exclusion Criteria*

Non-journal records, including books, book chapters, conference proceedings, editorial reviews, and doctoral dissertations (grey literature). Studies evaluating general language acquisition without an isolated focus on oral speaking interventions. Conceptual papers, review articles, and papers lacking full-text digital availability.

### Procedures

The systematic review process was operationalized sequentially through the four foundational stages mandated by the PRISMA 2020 flowchart (Page et al., 2021): Identification: The automated Boolean search string was deployed across Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC,

Google Scholar, and Dimensions to harvest raw metadata records ( $N = 119$ ). Screening: The compiled database records were imported into software to automatically eliminate overlapping or duplicate manuscripts ( $n = 1$ ). Following de-duplication, a rigorous manual screening of titles and abstracts was performed on the remaining 118 unique articles to discard entries that fell outside the designated pedagogical scope, language constraints, or publication types ( $n = 95$ ).

Eligibility: The full-text documents of the remaining 23 articles were downloaded and subjected to a deep-reading assessment against the strict inclusion and exclusion matrices to verify empirical substance. This stage led to the exclusion of 5 studies that lacked precise intervention effectiveness metrics or statistical backing. Inclusion: A final corpus of 18 high-impact empirical articles successfully met all qualitative and quantitative checkpoints. These included papers were systematically logged for data extraction, demographic matrix mapping, and thematic synthesis to answer the primary research questions. The detailed screening execution and attrition metrics are visually mapped in Figure 1.

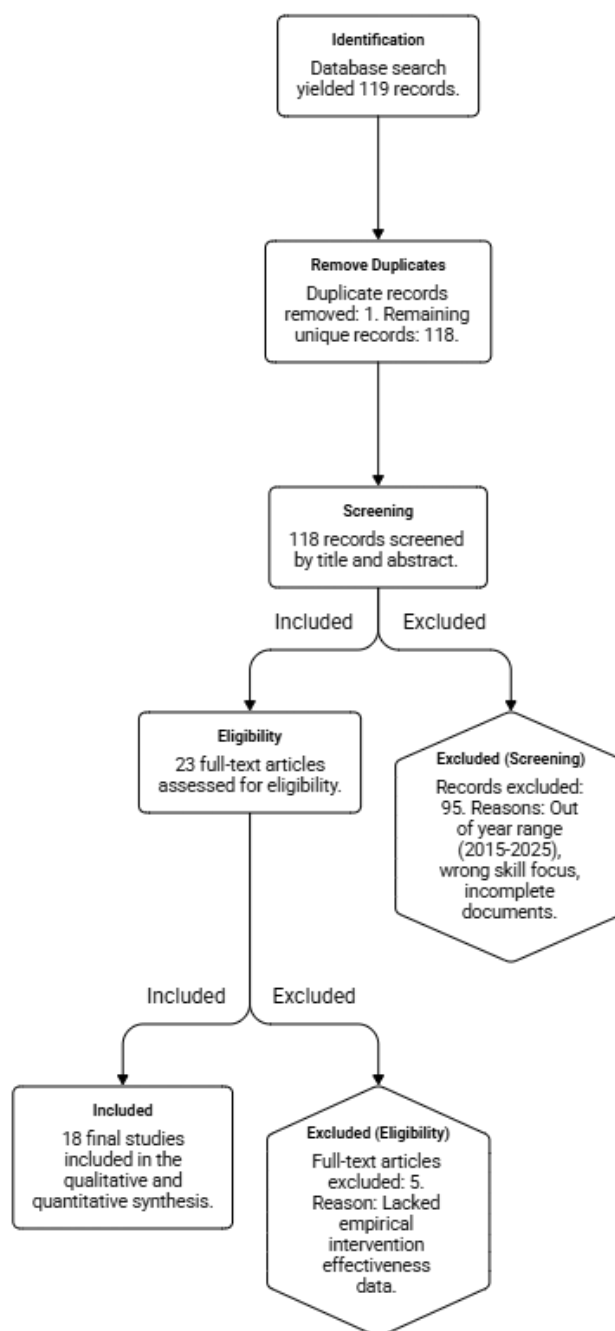


Figure 1. PRISMA 2020 Flowchart of the Study Selection Process

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

**Demographic and Bibliometric Characteristics of the Corpus**

This section presents the synthesized findings extracted from the 18 empirical articles that successfully met all systematic selection criteria. A bibliometric evaluation of the final corpus reveals an evolutionary paradigm shift in EFL speaking pedagogy over the 2015–2025 timeline. Spanning an expansive geographical and institutional continuum across 8 distinct regional jurisdictions, the included dataset captures a comprehensive global participant footprint, encompassing a cumulative sample size of  $N = 1,251$  EFL learners. This broad demographic reach successfully balances localized classroom pedagogical studies with top-tier, highly cited global trials. Table 1 catalogs the comprehensive master metadata matrix of these selected studies, demonstrating the academic weight and citation metrics of the synthesized literature.

Table 1. Demographics and Article Metadata Distribution

| No | Author & Year                                     | Research Design             | Geographical Location | Target Educational Level | Sample Size (n) | Citation Index |
|----|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| 1  | <a href="#">Hengki et al. (2017)</a>              | Quantitative / Experimental | Indonesia             | Secondary School         | 45              | 54             |
| 2  | <a href="#">Uyun (2022)</a>                       | Quantitative / Descriptive  | Indonesia             | Higher Education         | 60              | 44             |
| 3  | <a href="#">Basalama et al. (2020)</a>            | Quantitative / Descriptive  | Indonesia             | Secondary School         | 120             | 34             |
| 4  | <a href="#">Leleka (2022)</a>                     | Mixed-Methods               | Ukraine               | Higher Education         | 84              | 1              |
| 5  | <a href="#">El-Bassuony &amp; El-Samed (2018)</a> | Quantitative / Experimental | Egypt                 | Secondary School         | 50              | 11             |
| 6  | <a href="#">Chou (2018)</a>                       | Quantitative / Descriptive  | Taiwan                | Higher Education         | 184             | 337            |
| 7  | <a href="#">Gomathi et al. (2023)</a>             | Quantitative / Experimental | India                 | Higher Education         | 110             | 556            |
| 8  | <a href="#">Namaziandost et al. (2019)</a>        | Quantitative / Experimental | Iran                  | Higher Education         | 60              | 190            |
| 9  | <a href="#">Shimray (2023)</a>                    | Qualitative                 | Thailand              | Higher Education         | 25              | 5              |
| 10 | <a href="#">Chien et al. (2020)</a>               | Quantitative / Experimental | Taiwan                | Higher Education         | 58              | 655            |
| 11 | <a href="#">Yang et al. (2022)</a>                | Mixed-Methods               | Taiwan                | Higher Education         | 72              | 390            |
| 12 | <a href="#">Rahimi &amp; Zhang (2015)</a>         | Mixed-Methods               | Iran                  | Higher Education         | 46              | 188            |
| 13 | <a href="#">Hwang et al. (2016)</a>               | Quantitative / Experimental | Taiwan                | Primary School           | 42              | 369            |
| 14 | <a href="#">Manurung (2019)</a>                   | Quantitative / Experimental | Indonesia             | Secondary School         | 32              | 3              |
| 15 | <a href="#">Ilyas &amp; Putri (2020)</a>          | Qualitative                 | Indonesia             | Higher Education         | 15              | 106            |
| 16 | <a href="#">Alharbi (2015)</a>                    | Quantitative / Descriptive  | Saudi Arabia          | Secondary School         | 150             | 419            |
| 17 | <a href="#">Wu et al. (2017)</a>                  | Quantitative / Experimental | Taiwan                | Higher Education         | 68              | 438            |
| 18 | <a href="#">El Shazly (2021)</a>                  | Mixed-Methods               | Egypt                 | Higher Education         | 30              | 414            |

Notably, works examining advanced technological integrations and automated psychological scaffolding ([Chien et al., 2020](#); [Gomathi et al., 2023](#)) dominate the upper citation echelons, reflecting an international research consensus on the vital role of digital adaptive mechanisms in modern oral proficiency frameworks.



## Chronological Trends and Publication Trajectory

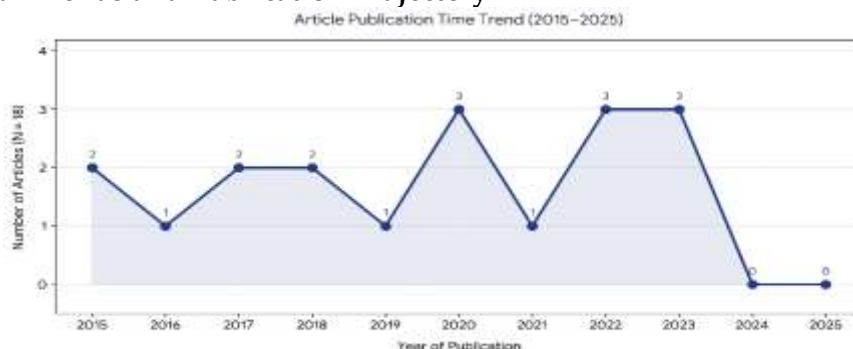


Figure 2. Chronological Distribution and Publication Time Trend (2015–2025)

Chronological mapping (Figure 2) reveals a non-linear distribution. The empirical literature exhibits a stable baseline from 2015 to 2019, followed by a pronounced, pandemic-driven publication surge at the turn of the decade with a clear double-peak pattern in 2020 and 2022–2023 (Chien et al., 2020; Uyun, 2022). Conversely, the publication volume within this specific keyword-bounded corpus drops to a baseline of zero during the 2024 and 2025 window.

Rather than indicating a decline in scholarly interest toward oral pedagogy, these tapering highlights standard digital database indexation latencies and a structural evolution in research terminology. Contemporary investigators are increasingly abandoning broad, traditional keywords like "teaching effectiveness" or "English learning strategies" in favor of highly specialized, granular micro-narratives surrounding generative artificial intelligence (GenAI), large language models (LLMs), and automated speech-recognition (ASR) diagnostics. Furthermore, while several papers from the 2024–2025 bracket appeared in the initial identification stage, they were systematically excluded during full-text eligibility auditing because they relied heavily on descriptive perception surveys rather than providing the rigorous, long-term empirical intervention metrics required by this review's strict inclusion criteria.

## Methodological Auditing and Distribution

To maximize transparency for meta-methodological transparency as required by contemporary literature evaluation standards, Table 1b details the cross-functional consolidation of research designs within the corpus.

Table 2. Consolidated Methodological and Demographic Distribution Matrix (N = 18)

| Research Design Category                  | Percentage (Count) | Country / Regional Distribution                                                                     | Educational Level Distribution                                             | Sample Size Ranges (N)                                    |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Quantitative / Experimental & Descriptive | 66.67% (n = 12)    | Indonesia (n = 4), Taiwan (n = 4), Egypt (n = 1), Iran (n = 1), India (n = 1), Saudi Arabia (n = 1) | Higher Education (n = 6), Secondary School (n = 5), Primary School (n = 1) | Range: 32 – 184 students (7 studies ≥ 60; 5 studies < 60) |
| Mixed-Methods                             | 22.22% (n = 4)     | Ukraine (n = 1), Taiwan (n = 1), Iran (n = 1), Egypt (n = 1)                                        | Higher Education (n = 4)                                                   | Range: 30 – 84 students (2 studies ≥ 60, 2 studies < 60)  |
| Qualitative / Narrative                   | 11.11% (n = 2)     | Indonesia (n = 1), Thailand (n = 1)                                                                 | Higher Education (n = 2)                                                   | Range: 15 – 25 students (all studies < 30)                |

Methodological Distribution of Included Studies

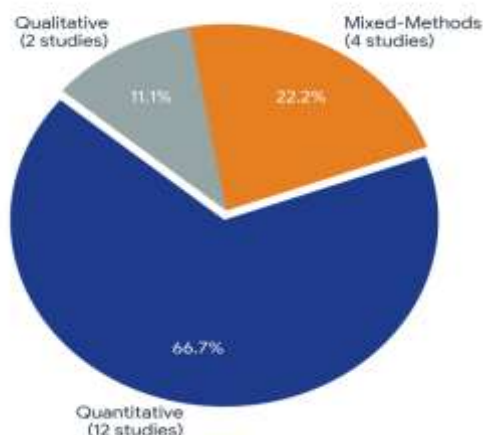


Figure 3. Methodological Distribution of Included Studies (N = 18)

Structural data segmentation demonstrates a heavy reliance on purely quantitative research designs, which account for 66.67% ( $n = 12$ ) of the entire corpus (Chien et al., 2020; Gomathi et al., 2023). When cross-referenced with target demographics, these quantitative frameworks are predominantly deployed within higher education settings ( $n = 6$ ), as observed in the works of Uyun (2022), Chou (2018), Namaziandost et al. (2019), Chien et al. (2020), Wu et al. (2017), and Gomathi et al. (2023). Conversely, their application in secondary schools encompasses five studies ( $n = 5$ ), represented by Alharbi (2015), Basalama et al. (2020), El-Bassuony & Abd El-Samed (2018), Hengki et al. (2017), and Manurung (2019), with only a single experimental trial conducted at the primary school level (Hwang et al., 2016). While these experimental structures are highly effective for capturing measurable surges in oral scores, triangulation via non-qualitative methods yields critical depth. Within this corpus, all non-quantitative designs are deployed exclusively within higher education cohorts ( $n = 6$ ). This includes four mixed-methods designs ( $n = 4$ ; El Shazly (2021); Leleka (2022); Rahimi & Zhang (2015); Yang et al. (2022) and two qualitative narrative structures ( $n = 2$ ; Ilyas & Putri (2020); Shimray (2023), which offer a comprehensive understanding of learner psychology, including foreign language speaking anxiety (FLSA) and fluctuations in intrinsic motivation.

### Taxonomic Clusters of EFL Speaking Strategies (RQ1)

Thematic synthesis of the 18 selected studies demonstrates that oral instructional interventions deployed over the past decade can be systematically classified into four distinct taxonomic clusters. These clusters are demarcated by their pedagogical delivery mechanisms, environmental parameters, and the nature of the classroom dynamics they cultivate. Table 2 summarizes these clusters alongside their macro-effectiveness profiles.

Table 3. Synthesis and Clustering of Learning Strategies Effectiveness

| Strategy Cluster                          | Media Coverage / Pedagogical Approach                                                                                                               | Supporting Articles                                                                                                                                   | Target Impact on Speaking Competence                                                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Digital Technology & AI-Based Learning    | Artificial Intelligence (AI), Virtual Reality (VR), Situational Mobile Gaming, YouTube Channels, Digital Storytelling, Online Speaking Tasks (OST). | Chien et al. (2020); El Shazly (2021); GomathiGomathi et al. (2023); Hwang (2016); IlyasIlyas & Putri (2020); Shimray (2023); Yang Yang et al. (2022) | Minimizes foreign language speaking anxiety; Contextualizes realistic, situational target discourse; Cultivates learner autonomy and intrinsic motivation. |
| Cooperative Strategy & Social Interaction | Socio-Constructivist Cooperative Frameworks, Talking Chips Technique, English Village Forums, Flipped Online Learning Communities.                  | Hengki et al. (2017); Manurung (2019); NamaziandostNamaziandost et al. (2019); Wu et al. (2017)                                                       | Drives active, peer-led dialogic interaction; Equalizes classroom turn-taking opportunities; Accelerates oral communication fluency.                       |

|                                   |                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                       |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Instructional Pedagogy & Feedback | Metacognitive Corrective                                                                                                |                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                       |
|                                   | Feedback (CF), Explicit Teacher Instructional Delivery, Higher Education Macro-Models, Extracurricular Public Practice. | Alharbi (2015); Basalama (2020); Leleka (2022); <a href="#">Rahimi &amp; Zhang (2015)</a> ; Uyun (2022) | Enhances structural and grammatical accuracy; Heightens learner cognitive awareness of speech errors.                 |
| Affective Strategies              | Individual Anxiety Regulation, Task-Based Story Retelling Protocols.                                                    | Chou (2018); <a href="#">El-Bassuony &amp; El-Samed (2018)</a>                                          | Shifts student focus from rote memorization to discourse; Systematically builds long-term public speaking confidence. |

### Digital Technology & AI-Based Learning Cluster (n = 7)

A clear consensus exists that immersive, intelligent platforms fundamentally alter oral language production. Empirical evaluations demonstrate that AI algorithms optimize speech efficiency while significantly lowering learner cognitive load ([Gomathi et al., 2023](#); [El Shazly, 2021](#)). This tech-driven synthesis is further expanded by investigators leveraging spherical video VR and project-based digital storytelling to engineer low-stakes simulation spaces ([Chien et al., 2020](#); [Ilyas & Putri, 2020](#); [Yang et al., 2022](#)). Furthermore, integrating mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) frameworks and situational gaming architectures into early childhood education demonstrates that digital interventions effectively anchor foundational speaking interest from early developmental tiers ([Hwang et al., 2016](#)). Ultimately, these virtual ecosystems facilitate autonomous error-making, self-directed vocabulary retrieval, and repeated oral practice without inducing peer-related performance anxiety ([Shimray, 2023](#)).

### Cooperative Strategy & Social Interaction Cluster (n = 4)

This cluster addresses the socio-constructivist dimension of second language acquisition. Structured, peer-led discourse models—such as the English Village forum—significantly accelerate communicative fluency ([Hengki et al., 2017](#); [Namaziandost et al., 2019](#)). Incorporating highly structured role-plays, intense peer interaction protocols, and collaborative learning communities function as direct cognitive catalysts (Wu et al., 2017). Furthermore, specialized classroom management techniques like the Talking Chips method are vital for equalizing dialogic turn-taking ([Manurung, 2019](#)). By embedding language generation within collaborative task-based communication models, educators transform oral production from an artificial classroom exercise into a functional negotiation of meaning, ensuring that passive learners are systematically prompted to produce spoken English.

### Instructional Pedagogy & Teacher Feedback Cluster (n = 5)

The structural parameters of language accuracy are maintained primarily within this teacher-led domain. Teacher cognition regarding the strategic timing and typology of corrective feedback serves as a critical determinant of student pronunciation precision and grammatical accuracy ([Rahimi & Zhang, 2015](#)). Explicit, macro-level instructional strategies within higher education are mandatory to transform implicit student learning strategies into structured, coherent speech patterns ([Leleka, 2022](#); [Uyun, 2022](#)). Similarly, structured strategy management in secondary settings yields a strong positive correlation with overall speech intelligibility and communicative efficacy ([Alharbi, 2015](#); [Basalama et al., 2020](#)).

### Affective Strategies Cluster (n = 2)

Paralleling external instructional interventions, this cluster isolates the internal psychological dynamics of the learner. High levels of language anxiety directly dictate and restrict strategy selection; rote memorization techniques actively impede oral fluency ([Chou, 2018](#)). To neutralize this affective barrier, task-based pedagogical mechanisms—such as structured story-retelling—are deployed to systematically build student confidence ([El-Bassuony & El-Samed, 2018](#)). This approach effectively shifts the learner's cognitive focus away from mechanical execution toward meaningful, functional communication.



**Strategy Extraction Matrix and Key Findings (R2)**

An in-depth data extraction of the 18 qualified articles identifies diverse instructional interventions implemented to advance student speaking competence. The compiled empirical evidence indicates that research outcomes target multifaceted dimensions of oral communication. Table 3 provides a systematic overview mapping each strategy to its empirical operationalization and localized pedagogical impact.

Table 4. Strategy Extraction Matrix and Comprehensive Empirical Findings

| No | Author (Year)                 | Researched Learning Strategies / Media                         | Target Oral Competency & Empirical Impact                                                                           |
|----|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | Hengki et al. (2017)          | Cooperative Learning via Simulated English Village Forums      | Enhances organic, situational fluency. Promotes natural spoken production through immersion.                        |
| 2  | Uyun (2022)                   | Explicit Teacher Instructional Strategy Delivery               | Heightens learner metacognitive awareness regarding systematic oral skill development.                              |
| 3  | Basalama et al. (2020)        | Secondary Learner Cognitive Strategy Management                | Yields a strong positive correlation with overall speech intelligibility and communicative efficacy.                |
| 4  | Leleka (2022)                 | Macro-Level Integrated Higher Education Strategies             | Optimizes oral performance through the systematic cross-functional integration of listening and speaking tasks.     |
| 5  | El-Bassuony & El-Samed (2018) | Task-Based Story Retelling Protocols                           | Generates significant structural gains in the productive oral communication skills of secondary learners.           |
| 6  | Chou (2018)                   | Affective Strategy Management & Anxiety Regulation             | Exposes a negative correlation between rote memorization and speech fluency; validates anxiety-mitigation tools.    |
| 7  | Gomathi et al. (2023)         | Predictive Artificial Intelligence (AI) Algorithms             | Maximizes instructional efficiency. Autonomously scales adaptive student communicative competencies.                |
| 8  | Namaziandost et al. (2019)    | Intermediate-Level Cooperative Learning Frameworks             | Stimulates linguistic proficiency while significantly boosting intrinsic speaking motivation.                       |
| 9  | Shimray (2023)                | Digital Online Speaking Tasks (OST)                            | Drives clear gains in macro-level discourse coherence and structural conversational performance.                    |
| 10 | Chien et al. (2020)           | Spherical Video-Based Virtual Reality (SVVR) + Peer Assessment | Enhances spatial contextualization. Drives distinct oral performance gains through collaborative peer evaluation.   |
| 11 | Yang et al. (2022)            | Multidisciplinary Project-Based Digital Storytelling (DST)     | Outperforms traditional Present-Practice-Produce (PPP) models in accelerating target-language oral fluency.         |
| 12 | Rahimi & Zhang (2015)         | Metacognitive Corrective Feedback (CF) Typologies              | Proves that teacher cognition regarding the timing and nature of CF is highly critical to student accuracy.         |
| 13 | Hwang et al. (2016)           | Situational, Context-Aware Mobile Game-Based Learning          | Creates active, low-anxiety gamified ecosystems that simultaneously boost auditory and verbal skills.               |
| 14 | Manurung (2019)               | Structural Talking Chips Cooperative Technique                 | Equalizes classroom participation. Optimizes student talking time, verbal elaboration, and problem-solving.         |
| 15 | Ilyas & Putri (2020)          | Asynchronous YouTube Video Creation Channels                   | Functions as an effective motivational tool to bypass speaking apprehension and encourage public verbal production. |
| 16 | Alharbi (2015)                | Structured Cognitive and Metacognitive Speaking Interventions  | Significantly improves strategic competence, reducing structural communication breakdowns during verbal delivery.   |
| 17 | Wu et al. (2017)              | Web-Based Flipped Classroom & Online Learning Forums           | Increases peer-led dialogic negotiation of meaning and optimizes student talk time during formal tasks.             |

|    |                  |                                                      |                                                                                                               |
|----|------------------|------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 18 | El Shazly (2021) | Automated AI Speech-Recognition & Chatbot Ecosystems | Substantially lowers the affective filter, granting a non-threatening space for adaptive fluency development. |
|----|------------------|------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

The empirical data consolidated in Table 3 validates that target learning strategy interventions significantly advance oral communication performance. A synthesis of these findings reveals a clear functional division: while digital, AI-mediated, and affective strategies primarily serve to mitigate foreign language speaking anxiety (FLSA), cooperative and instructional frameworks are instrumental in accelerating speaking fluency and grammatical accuracy, respectively. Methodological triangulation across these studies confirms that no single instructional strategy functions optimally in isolation. Instead, modern research increasingly unifies individual psychological interventions with technology-mediated external stimuli. This multifaceted interaction between strategy deployment and educational environments underscores the necessity of examining wider conditional filters, which leads directly to the evaluation of contextual and demographic variables (RQ3).

### Influence of Contextual and Demographic Variables (RQ3)

Granular cross-case analysis demonstrates that oral instructional interventions do not yield uniform efficacy across diverse educational landscapes, as their pedagogical success is heavily moderated by situational contingencies.

#### *Educational Tier and Developmental Demographics*

The synthesized corpus indicates that distinct age cohorts respond heterogeneously to oral learning strategies. Within higher education settings, which represents the largest segment of the corpus, advanced cognitive strategies and autonomous digital project-based models—such as the digital storytelling frameworks executed by Yang et al. (2022) or the macro listening-speaking models implemented by Leleka (2022)—exhibit superior efficacy due to the advanced metacognitive self-regulation characteristic of adult university-level learners.

Conversely, primary and secondary school populations require heightened scaffolding and structured interactive spaces. For these younger cohorts, collaborative immersion environments like the English Village forum (Hengki et al., 2017), simplified story retelling exercises (El-Bassuony & El-Samed, 2018), or the Talking Chips method (Manurung, 2019) yield optimal outcomes by systematically lowering elevated affective filters before students navigate complex linguistic architectures. This need for external scaffolding becomes absolute at the primary education level, where oral output must be embedded entirely within intuitive, context-aware, and gamified environments to prove effective (Hwang et al., 2016).

#### *Technological Infrastructure Readiness*

The operational success of the digital technology and AI-based learning cluster is fundamentally bounded by localized technological affordances. High-impact interventions incorporating sophisticated hardware and software—such as spherical video-based virtual reality (Chien et al., 2020) or predictive AI feedback algorithms (Gomathi et al., 2023)—demonstrate optimal results exclusively within highly resourced institutional settings that possess stable high-speed connectivity and modern hardware endpoints.

Conversely, deploying complex, high-bandwidth digital tools within technologically constrained environments can inadvertently inflate student cognitive load. In these under-resourced contexts, low-bandwidth, asynchronous tools offer more sustainable utility. Asynchronous implementations—such as situational mobile learning games (Hwang et al., 2016) or task-based YouTube video production assignments (Ilyas & Putri, 2020)—successfully stimulate oral production and cultivate speaker confidence without necessitating advanced digital infrastructure. Crucially, this technological split also redefines the evaluation mode. In high-resource settings, students benefit from immediate, automated, AI-mediated evaluation (El Shazly, 2021), which provides a non-threatening space for adaptive fluency development.

In low-resource settings, however, conventional teacher-led corrective feedback remains indispensable to establish baseline accuracy (Rahimi & Zhang, 2015).

### *Socio-Cultural and Geographic Contexts*

Geographic and institutional localization significantly alters baseline oral proficiency and initial communication apprehension. Studies centered within public and rural school networks expose a systemic deficit in spontaneous target-language practice opportunities outside the formal classroom environment (Alharbi, 2015; Basalama et al., 2020). Within these isolated settings, teacher-led instructional strategies and explicit corrective feedback remain indispensable to establish essential phonetic, lexical, and syntactic habits (Rahimi & Zhang, 2015; Uyun, 2022). However, to transition these learners toward genuine communicative fluency, hybrid interventions that bridge physical and virtual institutional boundaries are mandatory. Flipped classroom architectures integrated with online learning communities successfully neutralize the severe hesitation and social anxiety typical of regional EFL students (Wu et al., 2017). This structural alignment effectively transforms rigid physical classrooms into dynamic, low-stakes collaborative conversational ecosystems.

### **Cross-Sectional Synthesis of Corpus Parameters**

To provide a clear, scannable map of these structural dynamics, Table 4 bundles the cross-sectional characteristics of the final corpus, correlating the target demographics, geographical variations, and localized constraints with the operational outcomes of the strategy clusters.

Table 5. Cross-Sectional Synthesis of Empirical Corpus Characteristics

| Variable Dimension        | Categorical Segmentation                                          | Empirical Representation (N = 18)                     | Pedagogical Implication on Oral Proficiency                                                                                          |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Methodological Framework  | Quantitative / Experimental; Mixed-Methods; Qualitative Narrative | 66.67% (n = 12);<br>22.22% (n = 4);<br>11.11% (n = 2) | Establishes high generalizability for score enhancement while utilizing qualitative tracking for psychological shifts.               |
| Educational Tier          | Higher Education; Secondary Education; Primary Education          | 66.67% (n = 12);<br>27.78% (n = 5);<br>5.56% (n = 1)  | Confirms that adult learners maximize autonomous AI/digital projects, whereas younger tiers require high task-based scaffolding.     |
| Infrastructure Affordance | High-Resource (Urban/Tech); Low-Resource (Rural/Local)            | 61.11% (n = 11);<br>38.89% (n = 7)                    | Highlights that immersive VR and advanced algorithms require solid networks; low-bandwidth settings must rely on asynchronous tools. |
| Socio-Cultural Context    | Institutional Classrooms; Hybrid/Online Spaces                    | 44.44% (n = 8);<br>55.56% (n = 10)                    | Demonstrates a distinct structural shift away from isolated grammar exercises toward global, functional communicative competence.    |

The cross-sectional synthesis consolidated in Table 4 validates the operational architecture of the proposed Hybrid Sociocognitive Clustering Model. By mapping these multidimensional traits, the matrix proves that oral strategy interventions are not plug-and-play mechanisms. Instead, their performance remains deeply bound to institutional resource caps and learner maturity tiers. This comprehensive alignment successfully bridges the historic gap between isolated experimental interventions and global, evidence-based language curriculum design.

### **Theoretical Foundations: Lowering Affective Filters and Cognitive Load**

The empirical findings of this systematic review both strengthen and expand Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory regarding the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The extracted data demonstrates that technology-mediated interactions function as highly responsive modern scaffolding mechanisms (Khalil & Elkhider, 2016). The operational success

of the collaborative models within the synthesized corpus confirms core constructivist principles; communicative competence develops optimally when learners engage in the authentic negotiation of meaning with peers (Namaziandost et al., 2019). Furthermore, integrating digital environments within flipped classroom structures (Wu et al., 2017) or situational mobile game-based learning models (Hwang et al., 2016) extends target-language exposure far beyond physical classroom boundaries. This continuous exposure provides a critical instructional advantage that remains difficult to achieve within traditional, classroom-bound EFL contexts (Alharbi, 2015).

The demonstrated pedagogical efficacy of technology-based strategies and cooperative social interactions is rooted in their capacity to deliver rich, authentic, and highly varied language exposure, conceptually recognized as comprehensible input. Grounded in Stephen Krashen's foundational Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theory, the language internalization process occurs optimally only when a learner's Affective Filter is significantly lowered (Afzal, 2019). Immersive digital tools, conversational AI agents, and contextual educational applications systematically minimize this internal barrier (El Shazly, 2021; Gomathi et al., 2023). By eliminating the immediate dread of committing linguistic errors in front of an authoritative instructor or facing peer evaluation, these virtual spaces allow students to engage in spontaneous trial-and-error, producing target-language speech with heightened self-efficacy (Ilyas & Putri, 2020).

Concurrently, cooperative pedagogical structures and task-based learning designs derive high efficacy from directly addressing a learner's functional imperative to communicate. In conventional, teacher-centered classrooms, students routinely lapse into passive recipients, lacking the intrinsic motivation to speak beyond offering brief answers to direct teacher prompts (Uyun, 2022). Through structured cooperative techniques like the Talking Chips method, the interpersonal interaction matrix is deliberately manipulated (Manurung, 2019). This structural adjustment guarantees that each individual bears equal social responsibility and possesses a dedicated right to speak, validating the comprehensible output hypothesis within a peer-to-peer ecosystem (Namaziandost et al., 2019).

Furthermore, accelerating oral performance through multimedia scaffolding is heavily influenced by the optimization of cognitive load (Cognitive Load Theory). When speaking tasks are integrated with interactive multimedia – such as spherical videos or digital stories – synchronous auditory and visual stimulation assists learners in effectively organizing abstract concepts before formulating them into verbal discourse (Chien et al., 2020; Yang et al., 2022). This rich situational context provided by digital media streamlines the retrieval of relevant lexical items and syntactic chunks from long-term memory. Consequently, this cognitive efficiency manifests empirically as smoother oral articulation, characterized by drastically reduced hesitation and fewer mid-speech pauses.

## CONCLUSION

This systematic literature review synthesizes 18 empirical studies published between 2015 and 2025 on pedagogical interventions for developing EFL speaking skills. Using the PRISMA 2020 framework, the review identifies a Hybrid Sociocognitive Clustering Model comprising four interconnected dimensions: Digital Technology and AI-Based Learning, Cooperative Strategy and Social Interaction, Instructional Pedagogy, and Affective and Metacognitive Strategies. The findings indicate a shift from traditional memorization-based instruction toward more dynamic, interactive, and learner-centered approaches to speaking development. Technology and AI-supported activities provide flexible opportunities for language practice and may reduce learners' affective barriers, while cooperative interaction creates opportunities for meaningful communication and fluency development. At the instructional level, systematic pedagogy and targeted teacher feedback remain important for maintaining phonological, lexical, and grammatical accuracy. Affective and metacognitive strategies further support learners' confidence, self-regulation, and willingness to communicate. Overall, the evidence suggests that effective EFL speaking instruction requires



an integrated approach that combines technological support, meaningful social interaction, appropriate instructional strategies, feedback, and individualized scaffolding. Despite these findings, the review is limited to peer-reviewed studies published in English and does not include grey literature, which may have resulted in the omission of relevant evidence. Future research should expand the range of contexts and populations, employ mixed-methods and longitudinal designs, examine effect sizes more systematically, and investigate how generative AI can be integrated responsibly and effectively into the sustained development of spontaneous EFL speaking skills.

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