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EXPLORING LEARNING STRATEGIES AND HABIT FORMATION IN DEVELOPING ENGLISH-SPEAKING FLUENCY: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY

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ABSTRACT

English-speaking fluency is a critical competence for academic, professional, and interpersonal success, yet many learners encounter persistent linguistic, affective, and social barriers. This study employed a qualitative narrative inquiry to examine the learning strategies and habits formation of a highly proficient Indonesian EFL learner, selected through purposive sampling based on her achievements in debate and public speaking. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using Miles et al.'s (2014) iterative model. The findings revealed four deliberate strategies, self-talk, overcoming fear of mistakes, social interaction, and self-monitoring, that collectively enhanced confidence, resilience, and sustained oral practice. In parallel, two major dimensions of habits formation, early exposure to English through parental support and media input, and integration of English into daily life across school, professional, and familial contexts, emerged as decisive in sustaining fluency development. Unlike prior studies that emphasize group-level outcomes, this research provides a nuanced account of an individual learner's trajectory, demonstrating how strategies and habits formation converge to embed fluency as a lifelong practice. The study contributes to the field by enriching limited research on highly proficient Indonesian EFL learners and offering pedagogical insights into how deliberate strategy use and consistent routines can be cultivated to foster enduring fluency growth.

Keywords: Fluency, Habits, Learning Strategies, Narrative Inquiry, Speaking Skill

INTRODUCTION

Mastering English speaking proficiency is pivotal for effective communication in both personal and professional contexts. Strong speaking skills foster positive interactions and relationships by enabling clarity, confidence, and respect in speech, which in turn establishes rapport and earns respect from others. In the business world, English proficiency enhances workplace communication, supporting entrepreneurs and managers in negotiations, meetings, and customer interactions (Ismail & Pek, 2023). In education, it empowers learners to succeed in group discussions, debates, public speaking, and future career opportunities, thereby increasing confidence and improving job prospects (Rao, 2019). Moreover, speaking skills determine one's success in communication, as they allow individuals to easily convey ideas and thoughts to a wider audience (Gangal, 2012). Among

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the components of speaking, fluency plays a crucial role in ensuring smooth oral performance. Fluency, characterized by the natural flow of speech without repetition, hesitation, or false starts, engages audiences more effectively (Ghufron, 2017; Samifanni, 2020). It also strengthens social connections by enabling learners to collaborate, share ideas confidently, and build interpersonal relationships.

Many students still find it challenging to gain fluency due to linguistic factors, which are fundamental to speaking performance. Vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation form the basis of smooth communication, and without sufficient mastery, learners struggle to achieve fluency (Abrar et al., 2018). A lack of practice and limited exposure in language classrooms often restricts input, creating a cycle that diminishes confidence and discourages participation (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). Beyond linguistic challenges, affective and social issues also hinder fluency development. Fear of mistakes, low confidence, lecturer pressure, monotonous teaching strategies, and social embarrassment contribute to anxiety, making students overly cautious and less willing to engage in speaking activities (Zakaria, 2025). This reluctance further weakens their ability to communicate naturally and smoothly. Moreover, traditional teaching methods that rely heavily on memorization and the scarcity of English resources negatively affect learning outcomes, reinforcing negative perceptions of English and impeding skill development, including fluency (Fikri et al., 2025). Nevertheless, some students appear to acquire speaking skills with relative ease, likely because they consistently apply appropriate language learning strategies and cultivate habits (Aziez et al., 2024).

Based on the preceding arguments, the assertion that appropriate language learning strategies play a crucial role in improving students' speaking fluency is consistent with the findings reported in several previous studies. Language learning strategies can be understood as deliberate actions chosen by learners to regulate and control their own language learning processes (Griffiths, 2008). Research conducted by Sawitry et al. (2026) showed that students in Batang Hari rely on several strategies, such as peer support, self-recording, imitation, and multimedia aids, to overcome barriers to achieving speaking fluency. Efforts to create a supportive environment, implement self-directed strategies, and utilize multimedia align with research conducted by Septiany and Zuraida (2025) as well as research by Kholmurodovna (2024). Septiany and Zuraida (2025) found that students at Sriwijaya University developed their speaking fluency by practicing with peers, watching English-language videos or movies, and practicing independently (such as speaking in front of a mirror, repeating dialogues, or singing English songs), and using language learning apps like Duolingo. Meanwhile, research by Kholmurodovna (2024) showed that students used strategies, such as practicing with native speakers, joining conversation clubs, engaging in interactive classroom activities such as role-plays and discussions, integrating speaking tasks into daily routines, and using technology-enhanced tools like apps and online speaking platforms to develop their speaking fluency. These students' conscious choices of strategies are consistently positive and effective for enhancing speaking fluency. By deliberately engaging in enjoyable, supportive, and authentic activities, students reduce anxiety, build confidence, and create sustainable progress in oral communication. Furthermore, students' conscious efforts in selecting learning strategies reflect the influence of a supportive

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environment, in which imitation, reinforcement, and practice shape the development of their language proficiency. This aligns with Nurture theory by Skinner (1957). According to Skinner nurture in language learning emphasizes the role of environmental factors. In the context of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), this perspective aligns with Krashen (1982)'s idea of learning, which he distinguishes from acquisition. While acquisition is subconscious and tied to nature, learning is a conscious process shaped by instruction, correction, and reinforcement, precisely what Skinner highlights in his theory. For example, a student who receives correction on their learning will be encouraged to adopt learning strategies that work best for them.

Moreover, the development of speaking fluency is also influenced by learners' habits formation. The more individuals consistently engage in habits that support English acquisition, the greater their fluency development in communication becomes (Arianti et al., 2020). Early habit formation is vital in developing fluency because it establishes consistent routines of practice and reinforcement during the most formative stages of language growth. A study by Arung (2016) showed that language acquisition began in the womb, where the fetus responded to sounds and developed early auditory patterns, laying the foundation for later speech. After birth, the child gradually moved from silent observation and imitation of mouth movements at 0-6 months to producing words at 7 months to nearly 2 years, and producing sentence by the age of 3 and 4 confidently even the pronunciation was not correct, showing a natural progression shaped by repeated exposure. These repeated practices, such as imitating sounds, responding to instructions, and later producing words and sentences, illustrate the formation of habits that strengthened fluency development step by step. In essence, the study demonstrates that consistent reinforcement and habitual engagement with language are central to transforming early sound recognition into effective communication. Similarly, a study by Purnama (2017) showed early habit formation of a child accelerates second language acquisition, making fluency development more natural, confident, and lasting. In her study, the child's fluency grew because she consistently engaged in daily routines of practice, imitation, correction, and turn-taking. This aligns with Chomsky (1965)'s nature theory, which posits that children are born with an innate Language Acquisition Device (LAD) that enables them to subconsciously internalize linguistic structures; early habits serve to activate this natural capacity, allowing fluency to unfold as part of human development. In Second Language Acquisition, this natural ability aligns with Krashen (1982)'s idea of acquisition. Both emphasize that humans are biologically predisposed to acquire language through subconscious processes. Chomsky's concept of the Language Acquisition Device (LAD) explains that learners naturally recognize linguistic structures and patterns, while Krashen's acquisition highlights how language develops subconsciously through meaningful exposure rather than formal instruction. In practice, this natural ability may encourage students to build habits that reinforce fluency, such as watching English-language programs to increase exposure or regularly speaking with native speakers or language partners.

Research on language learning strategies and habit formation for developing speaking fluency has received limited attention in the Indonesian EFL context, especially one that focusing on a student categorized as a highly proficient EFL learner. Most prior research

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emphasizes group-level findings or general student populations; there is little exploration of individual cases of highly proficient learners in Indonesia, which could reveal deeper insights into how strategies and habits converge in successful fluency development. Given that good language learners are characterized by their awareness and deliberate use of language learning strategies and that they select strategies suited to their personality, age, motivation, and learning context (Oxford, 1990), focusing on a highly proficient Indonesian EFL learner provides a valuable lens for analysis. They also demonstrate autonomy by finding their own ways, taking charge of their learning, and employing strategies to sustain communication (Rubin & Thomson, 1982, as cited by Kusumayanthi, 2019). At the same time, effective learners cultivate strong study habits, as Jones et al. (1992) as cited in Kamel et al. (2020) found that students with higher academic achievement tend to possess more effective habits than their lower-achieving peers.

Therefore, this study aims to examine learning strategies and habits formation of a student categorized as a highly proficient Indonesian EFL learner. The contribution of this study lies in enriching the limited research on the intersection of strategies and habits in the Indonesian EFL context. This study highlights how conscious strategic choices and habit formation can strengthen and sustain the development of speaking fluency. The findings are expected to strengthen theoretical perspectives by linking strategy use and habit formation with established language acquisition theories. Moreover, the study offers practical implications for educators and learners by demonstrating how effective strategies and consistent routines can be cultivated to foster long-term fluency development.

METHODS

Narrative inquiry was the qualitative research design chosen for this study, as it allowed the researcher to retell information chronologically from certain participant(s). According to Creswell and Creswell (2023), narrative inquiry is an inquiry design in which the researcher studies the lives of human beings and asks participant(s) to give their stories about their lives. Then, the researchers will organize the information obtained chronologically into a narrative. This study, aligned with this, collected the participant's personal life or stories that built her fluency in speaking English, and then the researcher restored the information needed into a narrative.

In this study, the participant is an alumni student from English Education Department at a public university in Palangka Raya. She was selected through purposive sampling, a non-random technique employed to ensure that the participant met the specific criteria required for the study. The criteria of the participant were categorized as a highly proficient Indonesian EFL learner, a status demonstrated through both academic achievement and active engagement in English public speaking. Her recognition in English debate competitions further substantiates this categorization, as evidenced by her accomplishments: winning second place at the NSDC 2019 in Central Kalimantan, becoming the first runner-up at the English Medical Debate 2019 at the University of Lambung Mangkurat, serving as a breaking N1 adjudicator at UMDC 2021, reaching the novice semifinal at NUDC 2023, winning first place in the Mahasiswa Berprestasi competition in the Faculty of Education, and being selected as an N1 adjudicator at NUDC 2024 with a score of

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6.8. These achievements collectively affirm her suitability as the participant, aligning with the study's focus on exploring the relationship between learning strategies, habit formation, and speaking fluency. The decision to include only one participant in this study is warranted, as qualitative narrative inquiry privileges depth of analysis over breadth, enabling a nuanced understanding of the lived experiences of a highly proficient learner. Adhikari (2021) emphasizes the inherent flexibility of sample size in narrative research, asserting that the involvement of even a single participant is sufficient, as an individual's narrative can yield deep and meaningful insights into the phenomenon under study.

In this research, the researcher used interviews to collect data needed from the participant. The type of interview was a semi-structured interview in which the researcher interviewed the participant using the interview guide prepared. By applying this technique, the interview is more flexible, comfortable and natural, enabling in-depth interviews (Fontana & Frey, 2005). The participant was interviewed online for approximately 50 minutes to explore aspects of her personal life that contributed to English-speaking fluency. Conducted in a quiet, private setting to ensure comfort and focus, the session was audio-recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim for accuracy. Open-ended questions encouraged free reflection on her experiences, particularly regarding the learning strategies she employed and the habits she developed to support fluency.

In addition, the data of this study were analyzed using the iterative model by (Miles et al. (2014). The activities in the model that occurred simultaneously, namely data condensation, data display, and drawing conclusion. At first, in data condensation, the interview transcripts were first refined by selecting data aligned with the research objectives. Then, the transcripts were systematically analyzed to identify key words and codes, which were subsequently organized into categories and further distilled into emergent themes. To facilitate interpretation, the data were then displayed in the form of narrative descriptions derived from the field findings. Finally, the researcher concluded the study by synthesizing recurring themes that emerged about the learner learning strategies and habit formation in developing speaking fluency.

To enhance the trustworthiness and validity of the findings, multiple strategies were systematically employed. Member checking was conducted by inviting the participant to review the preliminary interpretations, thereby ensuring that her perspectives were accurately represented and allowing for revisions where necessary. This process strengthened the credibility of the analysis by incorporating participant feedback into the final account. Furthermore, detailed contextual descriptions were integrated into the reporting to situate the findings within the participant's specific educational environment, providing transparency and grounding the interpretations in lived realities. An audit trail was also maintained throughout the research process, documenting key decisions made during data collection and analysis. This record not only ensured transparency but also allowed the research procedures to be traced and evaluated, thereby reinforcing methodological rigor.

Ethical considerations were carefully observed to protect the rights and privacy of the participant. Informed consent was obtained prior to the interview, with the participant fully briefed on the study's purpose, the voluntary nature of her involvement, and her right

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to withdraw at any time without consequence. Confidentiality was safeguarded by removing all identifying information from transcripts and not mention her real name. The interview was conducted in a private setting to ensure comfort and focus, and audio recordings were made only with explicit consent. All data were securely stored and used solely for academic purposes. These measures ensured that the research was conducted responsibly, respecting the participant's autonomy, dignity, and privacy in accordance with established ethical guidelines for qualitative inquiry.

RESULTS

Strategies in Developing Fluency

The data analysis revealed four key themes; self-talk, overcoming fears of making mistakes, social engagement, and self-monitoring, derived from recurring references to deliberate practice, confidence-building, social interaction, and reflection. Self-talk provided continuous oral practice and strengthened argumentation skills, while embracing errors marked a shift from accuracy to communicative confidence, lowering the affective filter and enabling sustained speech. Community engagement highlighted the role of authentic contexts such as clubs, debates, and family interactions in providing input and feedback, and self-monitoring demonstrated metacognitive awareness through pronunciation checks and error analysis. These strategies illustrate that fluency development arises from the interplay of individual practice, social interaction, and reflective evaluation rather than reliance on a single learning strategy.

One of the first strategy she relied the most on was speaking to herself. The participant's reliance on self-talk illustrates how fluency can be strengthened through deliberate, independent practice embedded in daily routines. By speaking to herself in front of the mirror or while riding her motorbike, she transformed ordinary moments into opportunities for oral production. This practice ensured that English was consistently spoken, reinforcing fluency through repetition. Her effort to expand a single sentence into longer elaborations also reveals a conscious attempt to train idea development and argumentation skills, preparing her for debate competitions where extended reasoning and clarity are essential.

Excerpt 1:

"... I like to talk to myself, sometimes in front of the mirror or while riding my motorbike. I always try to comment in English because language must be spoken to be learned ..."

"So, what enables me to debate is that I have to explain as much as I can. That's the practical way. I always try to talk to myself. Develop the arguments by myself. For example, I only write one sentence. I will try to describe as many as possible... even if there's nobody in this room."

Self-talk emerges as a cognitive strategy that sustains fluency development through autonomous and repetitive practice. By enabling learners to generate extended speech without external restrictions, it strengthens linguistic competence, including the capacity to comprehend and construct an unlimited range of sentences. At the same time, self-talk

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functions as an affective resource, creating a safe and low-stress environment that fosters confidence and reduces anxiety. In this way, self-talk integrates linguistic rehearsal with psychological support, positioning it as a powerful self-directed approach for embedding English into daily routines and sustaining fluency growth.

Another strategy she emphasized was overcoming the fear of making grammatical mistakes. She explained that fluency required courage, not perfection, and therefore she allowed herself to speak freely without worrying about correctness. This approach reflects a shift in mindset from accuracy to communication, enabling her to speak more confidently and without hesitation. By prioritizing expression over correctness, she was able to sustain speech and gradually improve through practice.

Excerpt 2:
"... I removed the mindset that grammar must always be correct. I just say whatever comes to mind, whether right or wrong ..."

Overcoming the fear of making mistakes can be understood as affective strategy that directly reduces anxiety and enhances learners' willingness to communicate. By shifting the focus from grammatical perfection to communicative confidence, learners create a mindset where speaking becomes an act of courage rather than a source of apprehension. This reframing lowers hesitation, encourages risk-taking, and normalizes errors as part of the learning process, thereby fostering resilience and self-assurance. As a result, learners become more willing to engage in authentic interaction, sustaining speech even under uncertainty, which ultimately expands opportunities for practice and fluency development.

The third strategy identified was the participant's effort to seek opportunities for practice in social settings, which highlights the sociocultural dimension of fluency development. By joining English clubs, participating in debates, and engaging in conversations with family members, she positioned herself within communities where English was naturally used. This strategy underscores the importance of interaction as a stimulus for fluency, showing that language learning is not only an individual cognitive process but also a socially mediated activity. Her engagement with communities complemented her individual strategies such as self-talk and removing fear of making mistakes, creating a balance between solitary practice and collaborative learning. This integration illustrates how fluency emerges from the interplay of personal initiative and social participation.

Excerpt 3:
"... I tried to find a community where I could speak English, whether with my parents, at school in the English Club, or in debate activities ..."

Social interaction enhances fluency by immersing learners in authentic communicative contexts where English is used as a functional tool rather than a classroom exercise. These contexts, such as conversations in clubs, peer discussions, and community activities, provide meaningful or real-life situations in which language must be applied to achieve real communicative goals, thereby reinforcing fluency through purposeful use. Exposure to

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diverse language input, including varied vocabulary, accents, and ways of speaking, further broadens learners' linguistic repertoire and helps them adapt to different communicative demands. Immediate feedback from interlocutors also plays a crucial role, as it allows learners to adjust, refine, and expand their speech in real time. Together, authentic contexts, diverse input, and responsive feedback create a dynamic environment that strengthens confidence, reduces anxiety, and accelerates the development of speaking fluency.

Finally, she relied on self-monitoring as a strategy to refine her speaking. After speaking, she would check her pronunciation and analyze possible mistakes. This reflective approach allowed her to identify weaknesses and gradually improve. Self-monitoring transformed her speaking practice into a cycle of production and evaluation, ensuring that each attempt contributed to her long-term development.

Excerpt 4:
"... I check myself whether my pronunciation is right or wrong. It improves my speaking skill because I don't just talk, I also analyses my mistakes ..."

Self-monitoring enhances fluency by encouraging learners to pay close attention to their own speech, recognize inaccuracies, and make deliberate adjustments. Instead of passively repeating language, learners actively notice slips in pronunciation, grammar, or word choice and then refine their output through conscious correction. This reflective process transforms speaking into a cycle of production and improvement, where each attempt becomes an opportunity to strengthen accuracy and fluency. By cultivating awareness of their oral performance and applying immediate self-correction, learners gradually reduce recurring errors, build confidence, and sustain progress in spoken communication.

At the same time, she acknowledged several challenges that hindered her fluency development. The most prominent was vocabulary limitation, which often caused hesitation in speaking and made her pause to consider whether her grammar was correct. This difficulty was compounded by the dominance of her first language, Indonesian, which shaped most of her daily exposure. As a result, code-switching between Indonesian and English frequently occurred in her speech, creating interruptions in fluency.

Excerpt 5:
"Vocabulary limitation sometimes makes us hesitate when speaking, or we think whether the grammar is correct. Since our first language is Indonesian, exposure is mostly in Indonesian, so when speaking English, it often mixes. Indonesian-English, Indonesian-English ..."

Habits in Developing Fluency

The analysis of the interview data revealed two major themes in the participant's habits formation: early exposure to English and integration of English into daily life. These themes were identified through systematic coding of repeated references to early parental support, media input, and daily use of English across school, personal and professional contexts. They demonstrate that fluency development is not incidental but emerges from the

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interplay of environmental input and habitual practice, where early exposure establishes a foundation and daily integration ensures continuity and reinforcement over time.

Early exposure emerged as a foundational theme. This theme was derived through systematic coding of repeated references to parental support and media input, which together shaped her early linguistic environment. The participant explained that her earliest contact with English began at the age of three, when she spoke English more fluently than Indonesian due to her mother's consistent use of the language. Her mother not only incorporated English into daily communication but also introduced English-language media such as Barney and Teletubbies. These routines provided authentic input and normalized English as part of her everyday environment, embedding the language into her habits from an early age.

Excerpt 6:
"… *When I was about three years old, I started speaking more in English than in Indonesian. I was more fluent in English first, because of my mother* …".

Excerpt 7:
"… *My mother spoke English and also gave me English shows to watch, like Barney and Teletubbies* …"

Parental support, combined with consistent exposure to English-language media, provided sustained opportunities for authentic input that significantly promoted the development of fluency. By using English at home, parents created a natural communicative environment where language was employed for real purposes rather than simplified practice. Meanwhile, English-language media introduced learners to genuine vocabulary, expressions, and speech patterns originally intended for native speakers. Together, these sources of authentic input immersed the learner in diverse and meaningful language use, enabling her to internalize natural structures and rhythms of English, build confidence, and progressively enhance her speaking fluency.

In addition, the integration of English into daily life emerged as a result of the participants' early exposure. This theme was identified from repeated references to sustained use of English in school, professional, and familial contexts, which together created a natural environment for fluency development. From elementary school through senior high school, she consistently relied on English, which led to her frequent involvement in school events and competitions requiring English proficiency. As she grew older, English became embedded in her professional life through teaching, which required her to use the language consistently regardless of her students' comprehension. This daily practice not only provided input for her students but also reinforced her own fluency, as she was compelled to speak English continuously in instructional settings.

Excerpt 8:
"*In fourth grade, I told my mom, "I want to go back; I want to speak English again…" .... when I started middle school, I became known there because I could speak English, so I was often invited to participate … And finally, in high school, I discovered debate, and from that point on, debate became my goal as I grew older*."

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Excerpt 9:
"*... Now I teach English every day. Even if the children don't understand everything, they still get input, and I have to keep speaking English with them ...*"

In addition to school and professional communication contexts, she maintained the habit of speaking English with her mother in everyday interactions. These family conversations, often related to her teaching experiences or personal matters, further normalized English as part of her daily life. By embedding English into school, professional, and familial contexts, she sustained a holistic environment for practice and fluency development.

Excerpt 10:
"*... I always meet my mother every day, and on special occasions I speak English with her, for example when explaining about my students or other things ...*"

This finding shows that fluency development is reinforced when English is consistently integrated into multiple domains of daily life. School contexts provided opportunities for recognition and participation in competitions, professional teaching compelled continuous production, and familial interactions offered authentic opportunities for informal practice. Together, these experiences illustrate how fluency emerges not only from structured learning but from sustained habits that embed English into everyday communication. The integration of English across personal, academic, and professional spheres highlights the importance of continuity and authenticity in habit formation, demonstrating that fluency growth is most effectively supported when learners experience the target language as both a social resource and a professional necessity.

DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that the participant's English-speaking fluency developed through the interplay of deliberate strategies and sustained habits formation, reflecting both agency and contextual influences. Strategies such as self-talk, overcoming fear of mistakes, social engagement, and self-monitoring demonstrate how fluency emerges through conscious practice that integrates courage, reflection, and interaction. Habits formation, identified through thematic analysis as early exposure to English and integration into daily life, further sustained growth. Early exposure, shaped by parental support and English-language media, normalized English use from childhood, while integration into school, professional teaching and familial communication ensured continuous practice in natural contexts. Collectively, these findings underscore that fluency is not achieved through isolated techniques but through a holistic process where strategies and daily routines converge to embed English as a sustained practice across personal, familial, and professional domains.

Strategies in Developing Fluency

Self-talk emerged as the participant's most consistent strategy. This strategy was the most effective strategy to improve participant' for developing fluency. Self-talk enables learners to produce extended speech without external restrictions, giving them freedom to experiment with language and refine fluency through repetition (Zhang, 2008). This closely

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parallels the self-talk strategy examined by Huang and Liu (2023), which showed that self-talk strategy empowers learners to rehearse extended speech free from external restrictions, and both approaches demonstrate that autonomy, repetition, and time-pressured practice transform private language use into a powerful driver of fluency growth. Furthermore, self-talk went beyond simple repetition by serving as a confidence-building practice, allowing learners to reduce anxiety and strengthen their willingness to speak. As Septiany and Zuraida (2025) suggests, where independent practices such as speaking in front of a mirror and repeating dialogues were found to enhance oral fluency while gradually building self-confidence because it creates a safe and low-anxiety environments. This convergence shows that self-talk is not only a linguistic rehearsal technique but also an affective resource, creating a safe environment for learners to experiment with language, reduce anxiety, and normalize English use in daily routines. As a learners' language learning strategy, the individualized, contextualized, and repetitive practice of self-talk allows learners to strengthen their speaking fluency while simultaneously fostering confidence, positioning self-talk as a self-directed strategy through which learners embed English into everyday routines, experiment with language free from external constraints, and sustain fluency growth via meaningful and repeated production tasks (DeKeyser, 2017; Suzuki et al., 2019).

To overcome the limitation of self-talk, which risks recycling familiar vocabulary and structures, the participant also sought practice in social environments such as English clubs, debates, and family conversations. These communities provided authentic contexts for communication, exposing her to diverse input (varied vocabulary, accents, ways of speaking, etc.), and offering feedback that enriched her fluency. Engaging in social interaction offered genuine opportunities for communication, immersing her in authentic contexts that supported language use. This observation resonates with Ramadhani et al. (2025), who found that English Club activities, such as debates, group discussions, and presentations, functioned as structured yet supportive environments where learners could practice speaking freely in real-life contexts. Gradually, opportunities to practice across different situations help students build confidence in their communication skills, and this confidence directly enhances fluency by encouraging sustained speech, reducing hesitation, and enabling learners to adapt their language use to varied communicative contexts (Alzubi et al., 2024). In addition, her involvement in an English-speaking social environment makes it easier for her to be exposed to diverse and meaningful language input (varied vocabulary, accents, ways of speaking, etc.). As Almulla and Al-Rahmi (2023) suggests, social interaction was positively correlated with input which shape learners' ability to acquire knowledge and skill. This sustained exposure through social participation directly reinforced her fluency development by transforming input into continuous practice and authentic communicative competence. Furthermore, this strategy also promotes constructive and immediate feedback from others, which plays a pivotal role in enhancing her speaking fluency. As highlighted in Kafabih et al. (2026), consistent and timely feedback allows learners to identify specific areas for improvement while reinforcing their progress, thereby fostering confidence in oral communication. The study further emphasizes that interactive activities combined with feedback create supportive environments where students can practice language meaningfully without excessive anxiety, leading to more natural fluency development. In this

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way, feedback functions not only as error correction but also as scaffolding that sustains learners' fluency development over time. Furthermore, actively engaging in such environments resonates with Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, which emphasizes that language development occurs through interaction and collaboration with more capable peers. This perspective suggests that fluency growth is not merely the result of individual practice but emerges through socially mediated scaffolding, where learners internalize linguistic structures by participating in shared communicative tasks.

In addition, the participant's strategy for developing fluency was deliberately overcoming the fear of making mistakes. She confessed fluency required courage rather than perfection. This strategy enabled her to reduce anxiety and boosting her willingness to communicate, as fluency was prioritized over accuracy. This error-embracing strategy facilitated the alleviation of her anxiety by reframing mistakes as natural elements of the learning process. Asterina and Tahir (2025) reported that conviction strategies, such as positive self-talk and affirming that mistakes are part of learning, helped students reduce fear of making mistakes. Re (2025) similarly emphasized that foreign language anxiety often stems from fear of negative evaluation, and that mindset where mistakes are treated as learning opportunities encourage learners to reduce their fear of making mistakes. Such a mindset directly relates to Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis, which emphasizes that language acquisition is most effective when anxiety is low and confidence is high, allowing input to be processed more easily. Furthermore, by lowering anxiety and reframing errors as part of learning, she becomes more willing to communicate, thereby increasing opportunities for authentic practice and fluency development. (Sokolovska, 2025) confirms that a tolerant approach to error correction, particularly learners' delayed correction, reduces stress and helps learners overcome the fear of mistakes, thereby fostering confidence and active participation in English communication. Similiarly, Sultana and Jamin (2021) found that fear of making mistakes and negative criticism significantly reduces students' willingness to speak, while learners who normalize errors encourage them to participate more actively and confidently. This aligns to the Willingness to Communicate (WTC) theory, which posits that learners' readiness to initiate communication is shaped by affective factors such as anxiety and confidence; when fear is reduced and mistakes are reframed as part of learning, students' WTC increases, enabling them to engage more openly and consistently in authentic communicative interactions (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

Another strategy from the participant for refining fluency was self-monitoring. Even after removing the fear of making mistakes, she continued to encourage herself to evaluate the errors she produced. This reflective stance illustrates that confidence and error-tolerance did not lead to complacency; rather, they fostered a metacognitive readiness to monitor performance. Self-monitoring enabled her to identify mistakes in her speech and consciously correct errors, transforming each speaking attempt into a cycle of production and reflection that strengthened accuracy and fluency over time. Through this strategy, she could detect and address errors in her speech. Align with Velandia and López (2016) study, self-monitoring strategies helped learners identify weaknesses such as limited vocabulary, incomplete sentence production, long pauses, pronunciation difficulties, and grammatical inaccuracies, which became focal points for improvement in spoken fluency. Similarly, As

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Jameel (2023) found, self-monitoring strategies trained students to recognize both weak and strong aspects of their speaking performance, enabling them to identify shortcomings in vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and fluency and gradually improve their oral communication. Furthermore, by detecting and identifying weaknesses and errors in her speech, she can consciously engage in corrective action, transforming awareness into deliberate adjustment. This is aligned with Ariyani et al. (2024) findings, which demonstrate the effectiveness of self-monitoring by showing that the gradual implementation of this strategy enables students to systematically identify weaknesses in vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and fluency, and to consciously improve their performance, which in turn leads to measurable improvements in their narrative speaking skills and overall fluency. Krashen's Monitor Hypothesis provides a useful lens for interpreting how self-monitoring strategies contribute to fluency development. The hypothesis posits that conscious knowledge of language rules functions as a "monitor" that learners can employ to edit or refine their output, particularly when they have sufficient time and focus to reflect. In the context of fluency development, this means that when students detect weaknesses, such as inaccurate pronunciation, limited vocabulary, or grammatical errors, self-monitoring enables them to consciously apply explicit knowledge to correct these shortcomings. Although fluency is primarily driven by subconscious acquisition and repeated practice, the monitor acts as a safeguard against fossilization of errors, allowing learners to refine accuracy while gradually internalizing corrected forms.

Habits Formation in Developing Fluency

Besides strategies, the participant's fluency development was strongly shaped by her early exposure. Her initial exposure to English was influenced by parental support (speaking English at home) and English language media. This authentic input also known as the language data from real contexts, intended for native-speakers (Long, 2020), enhances fluency development by exposing learners to natural vocabulary, structures, and communicative patterns. Her mom support or facilitate her English fluency development by consistently used English at home. Previous studies have shown parental support in contributing to children fluency development. Align closely with findings in Nauvianti (2025) study, where parental support which is speaking English at home, plays a decisive role in shaping children's English proficiency, particularly by reinforcing vocabulary, pronunciation, and daily language habits. Similarly, Wulandari et al. (2022) demonstrated through the case of Acha that parental involvement, encouraging English use in daily interactions, directly fostered her English-speaking fluency. Furthermore, her mother not only integrated English into everyday communication but also enriched the learning environment by introducing English-language media, specifically children's programs such as Barney and Teletubbies. This practice aligns with findings in Christina (2025), which emphasize that children home-based language learning activities, watching videos and using online applications, contribute in fostering children's English-speaking abilities. Indeed, parents, as the child's first and most influential educators, carry a central responsibility in shaping early development. Within the family environment, children internalize foundational values, build character, and acquire positive habits and behaviours through

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daily interaction and guidance (Mahbubah et al., 2025). Therefore, parental involvement in the home learning process plays a crucial role in ensuring children achieve optimal educational outcomes (Deriyansah & Pramudiani, 2022).

Thanks to the habits instilled in her from an early age, she able to integrate English into daily life as she grew older, and English has become an integral part of her life, whether at school, at home, or in his professional life. Habits instilled from childhood create a foundation for automaticity in speaking, which later supports fluency in personal, academic and professional contexts. Research consistently shows that early and sustained exposure enhances the significance development of fluency. Bedore et al. (2016) demonstrated that children exposed to English earlier achieved stronger vocabulary and morphosyntactic skills, directly supporting their academic performance. Similarly, Samudro and Amin (2023) highlighted that contextual and meaningful early exposure in family environments nurtured confidence and fluency, preparing learners for later school and professional demands. Longitudinal study by Tsang and Lo (2026) further revealed that family background and early home exposure significantly improved vocabulary growth and communicative competence, reinforcing success in school and beyond. These findings confirm that early exposure not only accelerates immediate acquisition but also equips learners with transferable skills. confidence, adaptability, and communicative competence, that sustain success across educational, familial, and professional layers of life.

The participant's fluency trajectory exemplifies the dynamic convergence of environmental conditioning and innate linguistic predisposition. Viewed through Watson's (1924) habit formation hypothesis, as cited by Islam (2013), the repeated cycles of parental communication, imitation, correction, and turn-taking functioned as systematic reinforcement, gradually transforming linguistic responses into automatic habits. This process underscores the principle that fluency is not incidental but the cumulative outcome of consistent stimulus–response conditioning embedded in daily routines. Yet, such conditioning alone cannot fully account for the learner's capacity to internalize complex linguistic structures. Chomsky' (1965) nature theory provides the complementary lens, positing that the Language Acquisition Device (LAD) equips children with an innate ability to subconsciously process and organize linguistic input. In this sense, habitual exposure and reinforcement serve as activating mechanisms that stimulate the LAD, enabling the natural unfolding of fluency. Critically, the participant's trajectory demonstrates that fluency development is neither purely environmental nor purely biological; rather, it emerges from the reciprocal relationship between external reinforcement and innate capacity. Early exposure and habitual practice supply the structured input necessary for conditioning, while the LAD transforms this input into enduring competence. This synthesis highlights that fluency is sustained through the dual mechanisms of behavioural automaticity and biological endowment, confirming that language development is best understood as an interdependent process where habit formation and innate predisposition mutually reinforce one another across personal, academic, and professional domains.

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CONCLUSION

The participant's fluency development demonstrates that strategies and habits are equally essential in shaping language growth. Strategic practices such as self-talk, overcoming fear of mistakes, social interaction, and self-monitoring illustrate how autonomy, affective regulation, and reflective awareness can transform language learning into a process of continuous growth. These strategies highlight the importance of learners' active role in shaping their communicative competence through intentional practice and self-directed regulation. At the same time, fluency development was reinforced by habits formed through early exposure and consistent integration of English into daily life. Parental support and media input created a language-rich environment that normalized English use from childhood, while subsequent integration into school and professional contexts ensured continuity of habits. This trajectory demonstrates how repeated exposure and habitual engagement establish automaticity in speaking. Overall, the participant's fluency development illustrates that language growth emerges from the dynamic interplay of deliberate strategies and sustained habits, which together embed English as a lifelong communicative practice across personal, academic, and professional domains.

The implications of this study suggest that fluency development in English is best understood as a holistic process where deliberate strategies and sustained habits interact to reinforce one another. The participant's ability to combine self-directed practices with consistent exposure highlights the importance of designing pedagogical approaches that cultivate both learner agency and supportive environments. This means that educators and curriculum designers should not only encourage strategic practices such as self-talk, error tolerance, and self-monitoring, but also create opportunities for habitual engagement with English in authentic contexts. Such integration ensures that fluency is nurtured through both conscious effort and automatic routines, offering a pathway for learners to sustain competence across personal, academic, and professional domains.

The study contributes to the field by advancing a dual-lens perspective on fluency development: one that recognizes the role of strategies as active drivers of growth while situating habits as the foundation for long-term automaticity. By evidencing how agency, affective resilience, and contextual exposure converge to embed English as a sustained communicative practice, this research enriches theoretical understandings of language learning and provides practical insights for pedagogy. It demonstrates that fluency is not the product of isolated techniques but emerges from the synergy of strategic autonomy and habitual reinforcement, offering a model for how learners can achieve enduring communicative competence across diverse life contexts.

However, the research is limited by its reliance on a single participant's narrative, which constrains generalizability and calls for caution in applying the results broadly. Future studies should expand to multiple participants across diverse contexts and compare learners with varying levels of fluency. Such investigations would deepen understanding of learner agency and strengthen implications for fostering fluency in English as a foreign or second language.

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