



From silent listeners to confident speakers: Strategies for promoting oral fluency in EFL settings




 Aayesha Sagir Khan¹

 Ameera Ali Alkohli²

Ismail Mohamed

Hamid Rushwan²

Mohsin Raza Khan¹

 Mohammad A. Tashtoush^{3,4*}

¹Department of English, College of Languages and Translation, King Khalid University, Abha, KSA.

¹Email: aasakhan@kku.edu.sa

²Email: mokhan@kku.edu.sa

²Applied College Khamis Musheit, King Khalid University, KSA.

²Email: alkholi@kk.edu.sa

²Email: lrushwan@kku.edu.sa

³Department of Basic Sciences, Al-Huson University College, Al-Balqa Applied University, Salt, Jordan.

⁴Faculty of Education and Arts, Sohar University, Sohar, Oman.

⁴Email: tashstoushzz@su.edu.om



(+ Corresponding author)

ABSTRACT

Article History

Received: 23 October 2025

Revised: 30 December 2025

Accepted: 14 January 2026

Published: 22 January 2026

Keywords

Classroom

CLT

Communication

EFL

English

Learner

Oral fluency

Silent

Speaking.

Oral fluency refers to the ability to speak smoothly and meaningfully, with appropriate speed, limited hesitation, and coherent message delivery. This study examines the influence of communicative instructional strategies on the oral fluency of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, with particular attention to reluctant or silent students. Specifically, it investigates the perceived effectiveness of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) techniques, peer interaction and group activities, and fluency-focused speaking tasks. The study adopts a quantitative design using a structured questionnaire administered to 101 EFL learners from multiple educational institutions; the instrument was validated for reliability before distribution. The findings suggest that interaction-rich, student-centred classroom practices are associated with stronger perceived oral fluency and speaking confidence. The study highlights oral fluency development as a core component of instruction for silent EFL learners and offers practical implications for designing curricula that prioritise real-life communication.

Contribution/Originality: This study analyzed the common barriers to oral fluency in EFL settings. The study also evaluated teaching strategies that encourage verbal participation. In addition, the study identified the effectiveness of interactive and student-centered approaches in improving speaking confidence.

1. INTRODUCTION

Oral fluency refers to the ability to speak with an appropriate rate, minimal hesitation, and coherent message delivery, supported by intelligible pronunciation and natural prosody. In EFL contexts, oral fluency is a key dimension of communicative competence because it enables learners to participate effectively in authentic interactions. "Oral fluency is an essential part of communicative competence in EFL contexts, and yet, oral fluency remains one of the most difficult aspects for EFL learners to achieve" (Pratolo, Gustriani, Bao, & Priadi, 2023). Creativity, defined as the ability to generate novel and meaningful ideas and to form relationships through critical thinking, can support language development (Chen, Mohammadi, & Izadpanah, 2024). Many EFL learners, although they have sufficient grammatical and vocabulary understanding, still lack opportunities to use their language abilities and lack confidence to speak, hence affecting oral fluency.

Oral skills are speech enhancers used to produce phrases that an audience can understand. Improved voice clarity is necessary for effective communication, and oral skills help attain this. However, as per Axmedova (2024), over the past few decades, there has been a notable change in the way “English as a Foreign Language” (EFL) is taught. Traditional teacher-centred systems, such as the grammar-translation method, have given way to more student-centred approaches that emphasise engagement and communication. In different classrooms, learners adopt the role of silent listeners, passively absorbing language input, but rarely engage in spoken interactions (Zulfikar, Hasibuan, Rahmati, & Nasution, 2024). Strategies such as the use of multimedia tools, peer collaboration, communicative language teaching (CLT), and task-based learning (TBL) show promise for enhancing learners' fluency.

There is a significant relationship between students' engagement and their silence because academic success depends on silence. Coming up with ideas, remembering words, writing, using linguistic principles, watching and correcting language use, picturing communication with others, and having internal conversations are the seven primary components of the learning process that engage learners' brains in different ways. The ultimate goal is to provide an evidence-based perspective that helps educators create a more communicative and interactive learning environment in which students feel motivated and capable of using English confidently (Hamel, 2023).

1.1. Research Aim

The research aims to evaluate and explore strategies that effectively promote oral fluency among reluctant or silent EFL learners.

1.2. Research Objective

- To analyse the common barriers to oral fluency in the EFL settings.
- To evaluate the teaching strategies that encourages verbal participation.
- To identify the effectiveness of interactive and student-centred approaches in improving speaking confidence.
- To assess the practical methods for integrating fluency-building techniques for EFL classrooms.

1.3. Research Question

RQ1. How to analyse the common barriers to oral fluency in the EFL settings?

RQ2. What are the teaching strategies that encourage verbal participation?

RQ3. How to identify the effectiveness of interactive and student-centred approaches in improving speaking confidence.

RQ4. What are the practical methods for integrating fluency-building techniques in EFL classrooms?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Barriers towards oral Fluency in the EFL Settings

Different barriers affect the development of oral fluency for silent EFL learners, often resulting in silence or reluctance during speaking activities. The most common obstacles are language anxiety, where the fear of making mistakes and being judged discourages students from speaking. Similar speaking difficulties, including hesitation and low motivation, were also reported among Chinese EFL learners (Amoah & Yeboah, 2021). This is consistent with findings from Jordanian EFL learners, where speaking anxiety was identified as a major barrier to oral performance (Salameh, 2022). Similar findings were reported by Kulsum, Acep, Uyun, and Widianingsih (2025), who identified anxiety, lack of confidence, and limited vocabulary as major difficulties affecting EFL students' English speaking ability. As per Hijra, Rahim, and Syarif (2024), psychological factors such as nervousness, shyness, hesitancy, and lack of confidence impact English speaking. It is essential to comprehend the nature of inhibition, especially when identifying how it affects language learners (Cherry, 2021). Students who struggle with inhibition are essentially exercising self-control, and their linguistic ego has a significant impact on how willing they are to take risks when

speaking. However, cultural factors play an important role, as students from high power-distance societies may feel uncomfortable initiating conversations or expressing opinions in class. Furthermore, teacher-centred approaches prioritize written and grammar skills over communicative competence to discourage verbal participation.

2.2. Teaching Strategies that Encourage Verbal Participation

Effective teaching strategies are important for encouraging verbal participation among EFL learners and overcoming the silence observed in classrooms. Students' verbal engagement is obviously crucial for democratic and pedagogical reasons, and concerns regarding the performance expectations placed on students in the classroom in light of performativity merit more consideration (Tenglet, 2023). Scaffolded conversational support has also been shown to enhance learners' communication skills and promote more active verbal participation (Spies & Xu, 2018). There are significant learning benefits associated with involving students verbally within the classroom setting. It is also important to note that the structure of whole-class interaction can influence how students participate verbally in the classroom (Nguyen, 2024). Research also shows that factors such as creative thinking, emotional intelligence, and academic enthusiasm significantly influence learners' speaking accuracy and fluency (Wang, Rezaei, & Izadpanah, 2024). Although structuring whole-class interaction may follow other patterns, for instance, assigning tasks, whole-class interaction within the classroom setting was historically accomplished through the "initiate-response-evaluate" (IRE) framework, where students raising their hands indicates their willingness to respond. The raising of hands by students signifies their readiness to contribute to discussions within the classroom setting. This method is useful for the teacher, especially as an evaluation tool, as well as for classroom control.

2.3. Effectiveness of Interactive and Student-Centred Approaches in Improving Speaking Confidence

Interactive and student-centred approaches have proven highly effective for enhancing speaking confidence among silent EFL learners. These methods also shift focus from teacher-led instruction to active learner participation, which encourages students to take ownership of their language learning. Student-centred learning approaches are not a one-size-fits-all curriculum given from above, in contrast to passive instruction (Musabal & AbdAlgane, 2023). This aligns with findings that emphasize balancing fluency and accuracy to optimize oral expression in EFL classrooms (Soraya, 2023). Recent evidence also demonstrates that interactive and student-centred environments significantly contribute to measurable gains in speaking fluency (Aziez, Nita, Istikharoh, & Sotlikova, 2024). Instead, it is an ongoing process wherein educators and learners are entwined, converting the passive observer into an active participant in the acquisition of learning. Curiosity, autonomy, and collaboration are the ingredients of SCL's rich weave. Assisted by a facilitator rather than by the dominating presence of authority, it allows learners to control their learning by encouraging them to explore issues they are curious about and navigate through the "landscape of knowledge" together. It aids in fostering autonomy and accommodating different learning styles, thus enabling learners to actively participate and attain oral proficiency for effective communication. Collaborative group work has been shown to significantly support oral fluency development and improve learners' spontaneous language use in communicative EFL settings (Abbasil & Anthony, 2022).

2.4. Practical Methods for Integrating Fluency-Building Techniques for EFL Classrooms

Incorporating activities for building fluency in EFL classes demands efficient and flexible approaches to involve students in constant and significant opportunities for pronunciation practice. This is consistent with findings showing that university EFL students develop fluency through repeated speaking practice and structured time-based activities (Aziez et al., 2024). The 4/3/2 fluency development activity is useful for English as a Second Language speakers to provide them opportunities to practice their fluency (Pastini & Lilasari, 2023). Following this activity, the speakers discuss a topic with their friend for four minutes that they are well-versed in. Then, they both reverse their positions and talk about the same topic for three minutes. In two minutes, they must speak to a third person on the same topic.

Since all the students can take part in this activity simultaneously, Maurice argues that the 4/3/2 activity is very useful for handling large classes (Parvathi, 2021). The students in the experimental group performed self-evaluation based on the rubric after completing the activity in four, three, and two-minute segments. Then they presented their evaluations to the whole class. At last, they obtained feedback on their self-evaluation from the teachers, see Figure 1 that illustrates the Conceptual Framework.

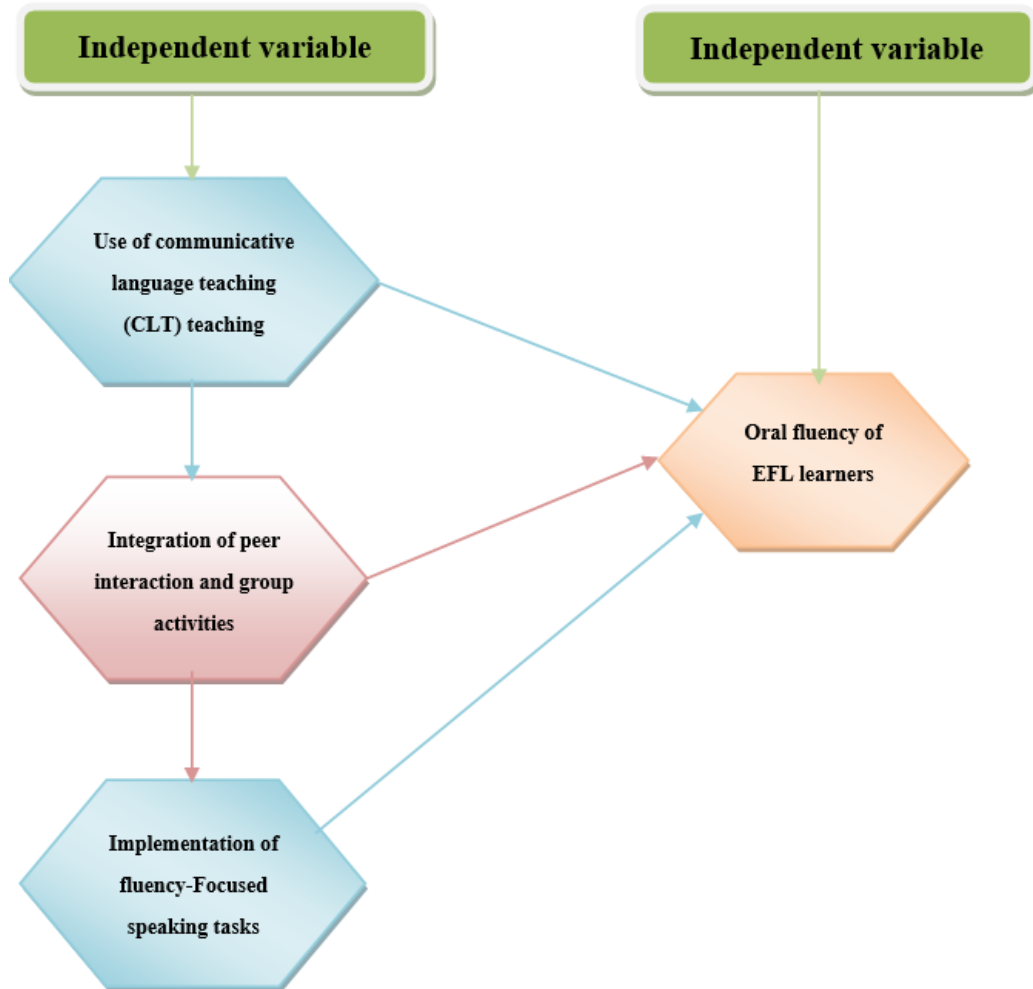


Figure 1. Conceptual framework.

Source: Self-developed based on reviewed literature.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a quantitative research design by using primary data collection through a structured questionnaire administered to 101 EFL learners from different educational institutions through the survey. The participants were from three major Saudi Arabian universities: King Khalid University, King Saud University, and King Abdulaziz University. One popular tool for gathering data is the questionnaire, which consists of a list of questions and secure responses that participants must provide (Taherdoost, 2021). Simply put, a survey is a suitable way to ascertain sentiments, viewpoints, and ideas. The participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure that they had prior experience in English learning environments. The collected data were analyzed and coded using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) (Soluade, Idowu, & Sofadekan, 2022). Reliability test for evaluating the reliability of the survey questionnaire for the study, frequency descriptive statistics involving means and standard deviation, which are used for summarizing participant responses, while inferential statistics, such as

regression analysis and correlation analysis, allow for the determination of relationships among teaching strategies and improvements in oral fluency.

Table 1. Reliability test.

Cronbach's alpha	Cronbach's alpha based on standardised items	N of items
0.939	0.939	19

4. RESULTS

4.1. Reliability Test

The reliability of the research instrument is assessed by using Cronbach's Alpha to determine internal consistency. As shown in Table 1, the overall Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.939, indicating an excellent level of reliability. This confirms that the 19 items used to evaluate various strategies and perceptions related to oral fluency in EFL settings consistently measure the intended construct, supporting the credibility of the dataset.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics.

Item	Mean	SD
1. "Oral fluency for EFL is a crucial component of overall speaking proficiency and is often measured by factors such as speech rate, pauses, errors, and the use of formulaic language."	2.81	1.214
2. "The use of real-life communication tasks in class has helped improve speaking fluency and confidence over time."	2.83	1.242
3. "Teachers using role-plays and dialogues in lessons encourage students to speak more fluently in English during and outside class."	2.88	1.373
4. "Regular pair and group conversations based on real situations allow one to feel fluent and spontaneous when speaking English."	3.18	1.268
5. "The communicative teaching approach used in the EFL class has reduced hesitation and improved spoken English skills."	3.03	1.179
6. "When the teacher focuses more on communication than grammar, I feel more confident in expressing myself fluently in English."	3.02	1.233
7. "Interactive classroom activities like information-gap tasks improve the ability to speak English with better flow and fewer pauses."	2.86	1.421
8. "Participating in small group discussions with classmates has made me feel more comfortable and fluent when speaking in English."	2.80	1.327
9. "Peer-led speaking activities allow practicing of English more freely and have improved fluency through repeated exposure."	2.89	1.248
10. "Feel more fluent and confident in English when regularly engaging in collaborative speaking tasks with peers."	2.84	1.347
11. "Frequent interaction with classmates in group work helps reduce anxiety and improve spoken English performance."	2.98	1.208
12. "Speaking with peers during class activities motivates one to express thoughts fluently without fear of making mistakes."	2.98	1.265
13. "The opportunity to practice English with classmates through peer interaction has positively impacted speaking fluency."	3.06	1.207
14. "Role-plays and storytelling exercises in class have helped organize thoughts and speak more fluently in English."	3.22	1.128
15. "Regular participation in fluency-building tasks like debates has significantly boosted the ability to speak clearly and confidently."	2.92	1.332
16. "Fluency-oriented speaking activities provide a structured way to improve spoken English without focusing too much on mistakes."	2.99	1.284
17. "Speaking tasks that emphasise fluency help speakers speak more smoothly and with fewer interruptions during conversations."	2.95	1.236
18. "Activities like TED speaking and story sequencing help develop better flow and automaticity in English speech."	3.05	1.203
19. "The focus on fluency rather than accuracy in speaking tasks has encouraged taking more risks and speaking more English."	3.00	1.225
Valid N (listwise)	101	

4.2. Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics in Table 2 allow an understanding of the perceptions of participants on the fluency-building practices in silent EFL classes. The mean values for the 19 items ranged between 2.80 and 3.22, indicating

moderate agreement with the statements. The highest mean value of 3.22 was obtained for the item concerning role-play and storytelling in organizing one's thoughts and enhancing fluency, reflecting positive perceptions of their effects. Meanwhile, mean values for group discussions and participation in joint speaking activities were moderately high, averaging 3.18 and 3.06, strongly suggesting the value of these activities in encouraging fluent and confident communication. In contrast, mean values for items related to activities conducted by fellow learners were lower, averaging 2.80 to 2.89, but still reflected positive perceptions. The standard deviations ranged from 1.128 to 1.421, indicating moderate dispersion in the observations. Overall, the data suggest that communication and interactive approaches moderately and significantly promote speakers' fluency in EFL settings.

Table 3. Correlation Analysis between DV and IV1.

1. "Oral fluency for EFL is a crucial component of overall speaking proficiency and is often measured by factors such as speech rate, pauses, errors, and the use of formulaic language."	Pearson correlation	0.675**
2. "The use of real-life communication tasks in class has helped improve speaking fluency and confidence over time."	Pearson correlation	0.675**
3. "Teachers using role-plays and dialogues in lessons encourage students to speak more fluently in English during and outside class."	Pearson correlation	0.592**
4. "Regular pair and group conversations based on real situations allow feeling fluent and spontaneous when speaking English."	Pearson correlation	0.509**
5. "The communicative teaching approach used in the EFL class has reduced hesitation and improved spoken English skills."	Pearson correlation	0.570**
6. "When the teacher focuses more on communication than grammar, I feel more confident in expressing myself fluently in English."	Pearson correlation	0.443**
7. "Interactive classroom activities, such as information-gap tasks, enhance the ability to speak English with better fluency and fewer pauses."	Pearson correlation	0.396**

Note: ** Statistically significant at the significance level ($p < 0.05$).

4.3. Correlation Analysis

The following table, Table 3, illustrates the correlation analysis carried out between the dependent variable, oral fluency, and the first independent variable, the utilization of communication strategies used within the classroom. The evidence emerging indicates very high and significant positive correlations overall. The most significant positive correlation, as shown, is between oral fluency and the utilization of real communication tasks within the classroom ($r=0.675^{**}$), signifying the significant positive contribution of this activity towards greater language fluency and confidence. Other significant positive correlations shown are those of role-playing and dialogue activities ($r=0.592^{**}$), as well as group conversations on a regular basis ($r=0.509^{**}$), signifying the positive contribution of interactive and student-centered classes and activities, among EFL learners, in improving their language fluency. Significantly positive correlations are also shown by the utilization of the communication approach within the classroom lessons ($r=0.570^{**}$), as well as the emphasis on communication as opposed to grammar ($r=0.443^{**}$). The least, yet still significant, positive correlation is shown by information-gap activities, which are interactive in nature ($r=0.396^{**}$).

Table 4. Correlation analysis between DV and IV2.

8. "Participating in small group discussions with classmates has made me feel more comfortable and fluent when speaking in English."	Pearson correlation	0.523**
9. "Peer-led speaking activities allow practicing English more freely and have improved fluency through repeated exposure."	Pearson correlation	0.369**
10. "Feel more fluent and confident in English when regularly engaging in collaborative speaking tasks with peers."	Pearson correlation	0.575**
11. "Frequent interaction with classmates in group work helps reduce anxiety and improve spoken English performance."	Pearson correlation	0.366**
12. "Speaking with peers during class activities motivates individuals to express their thoughts fluently without fear of making mistakes."	Pearson correlation	0.349**
13. "The opportunity to practice English with classmates through peer interaction has positively impacted speaking fluency."	Pearson correlation	0.369**

Note: ** Statistically significant at the significance level ($p < 0.05$).

The following is extracted from Table 4, and it concerns describing the relationship between the dependent variable and the second independent variable, peer interaction and group activities. The data obtained depicts positive and significant correlations for all variables. The high correlation value is shown by the relationship between oral fluency and participation in collaborative activities for speaking ($r = 0.575^{**}$), as this confirms that peer interaction and group activities play an important role in achieving high oral fluency and confidence levels. The other significant correlations are demonstrated by small group discussions ($r = 0.523^{**}$), reduced anxiety through regular group activities ($r = 0.366^{**}$), participation by peer group members in activities for speaking ($r = 0.369^{**}$), and free expression without fear of mistakes ($r = 0.349^{**}$), as all of these highlight the importance of a facilitative and communication-friendly environment. The opportunity to practice with classmates ($r = 0.369^{**}$) also plays an important positive role in oral fluency development. The data obtained provides clear evidence of the effectiveness and simplicity of peer interaction practices in developing oral fluency in EFL learners.

Table 5. Correlation Analysis between DV and IV3.

14. "Role-plays and storytelling exercises in class have helped organize thoughts and speak more fluently in English."	Pearson correlation	0.483**
15. "Regular participation in fluency-building tasks like debates has significantly boosted the ability to speak clearly and confidently."	Pearson correlation	0.436**
16. "Fluency-oriented speaking activities provide a structured way to improve spoken English without focusing too much on mistakes."	Pearson correlation	0.467**
17. "Speaking tasks that emphasize fluency help speakers speak more smoothly and with fewer interruptions during conversations."	Pearson correlation	0.340**
18. "Activities such as TED speaking and story sequencing help develop better flow and automaticity in English speech."	Pearson correlation	0.479**
19. "The focus on fluency rather than accuracy in speaking tasks has encouraged taking more risks and speaking more English."	Pearson correlation	0.484**

Note: ** Statistically significant at the significance level ($p < 0.05$)

The correlation matrix presented in Table 5 describes the relationship between oral fluency (Dependent Variable) and the third Independent Variable, which is involvement in debates, stories, and other activities centered on fluency. The findings show moderately high, positive, and significant correlations for all. In fact, role-play activities and story activities show $r = .483$, while debating regularly shows $r = 0.436$, suggesting increased thought organization and confidence for learners. Additionally, activities centered on fluency show $r = 0.467$, indicating improved flow without emphasizing accuracy. TED activities and storied activities are also beneficial for improved fluency, as shown by $r = 0.479$, whereas emphasis on fluency rather than accuracy acts as an imperative for risk-taking communication behaviors ($r = 0.484$). The implications and interpretations of the findings confirm that EFL learners benefit from involvement in meaningful activities as viable platforms for fluent, spontaneous speech, leading to improved English communication.

Table 6. Model summary.

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R-squared	Std. error of the estimate	Change statistics		
					R-squared change	F change	df1
1	0.782 ^a	0.611	0.525	0.836	0.611	7.152	18

Note: a. Predictors: (Constant), use of communicative language teaching (CLT) techniques, integration of peer interaction and group activities, implementation of fluency-focused speaking tasks

4.4. Regression Analysis

Table 6 presents the model summary for the multiple regression analysis examining the combined effects of CLT techniques, peer interaction/group activities, and fluency-focused speaking tasks on learners' oral fluency, indicating a strong positive association between the predictors and oral fluency, with $R = 0.782$. The model explains 61.1% of the variance in oral fluency ($R^2 = 0.611$), with an adjusted R^2 of 0.525, suggesting a moderately strong model fit after

accounting for the number of predictors. The standard error of the estimate (0.836) indicates reasonable prediction accuracy. Overall model significance is examined using the ANOVA results in Table 7. Additionally, the adjusted R-squared value of 0.525 confirms the moderately strong fit of the model. The standard error of the estimate of 0.836 indicates reasonable accuracy in predicting the outcome.

Table 7. ANOVA Analysis.

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	90.062	18	5.003	7.152	0.000 ^b
	Residual	57.364	82	0.700		
	Total	147.426	100			

Note: a. Dependent variable: Oral fluency of EFL learners
b. Predictors: (Constant), Use of communicative language teaching (CLT) techniques, integration of peer interaction and group activities, implementation of fluency-focused speaking tasks.

The following is the result of the ANOVA test on the regression model used to forecast the oral fluency of EFL learners through the combined effect of three significant instructional techniques. The sum of squares of the regression is 90.062, with degrees of freedom of 18, signifying the margin of variation in oral fluency accounted for by the predictors. The sum of squares residuals is 57.364, with degrees of freedom of 82, signifying those accounted for by variation and error. The F-statistic value is 7.152, signifying the overall significance of the regression model. The p-value ($p < .001$) is well within the predetermined level of significance, which stands at 0.05. Significantly, this outcome indicates that the various techniques in CLT, peer interaction, as well as fluency-enhancement speaker activities, are significant and positive predictors of EFL oral fluency, thereby validating this research's hypothesis in full.

5. DISCUSSION

Oral fluency development necessitates extensive practice and is impacted by learners' motivation and feelings. Through using practical techniques, teachers can significantly contribute to the development of oral fluency. The study findings provide compelling evidence regarding the influence of instructional strategies on the oral fluency of silent EFL learners. Prior research has examined a number of tactics, which have all demonstrated notable gains in students' oral fluency (Hamel, 2023). These include cooperative learning activities, storytelling, free-talking conversations, interactive activities, and project-based learning (Rizqiyanti, 2023). The findings align with prior literature emphasizing communicative and interaction-based approaches in language learning. In particular, CLT encourages learners to use the target language in meaningful contexts and promotes fluency through real-life communication rather than isolated grammar drills. This is consistent with recent findings showing that digital materials, when clustered and contextualized, significantly increase learners' situational engagement and oral fluency (Salih & Omar, 2024). Inclusion of CLT techniques in the findings of the regression model emphasizes their value for developing an immersive, student-centered classroom environment conducive to the practice of speaking.

However, it might be challenging to distinguish between teaching approach, instructional strategy, and instructional technique. A teaching method is a collection of guidelines used in the classroom that includes activities and the responsibilities of teachers and students in order to accomplish language objectives. The direct approach and communicative language instruction are two well-liked teaching strategies that improve oral fluency. Integration of group activities and peer interaction appears to play a crucial role in enhancing the oral fluency of learners. Through encouraging learners to express themselves without fear of constant correction, fluency tasks allow for improving spontaneous speech and building confidence (Shi, Kassim, & Radzuan, 2024). The willingness of students to communicate and their overall speaking fluency are directly correlated with their pronunciation confidence. Amoah and Yeboah (2021) similarly, it was found that learners' motivation levels strongly influence their willingness to speak and overall fluency. According to Haerunnisa (2024), speaking anxiety caused by unclear pronunciation impedes

fluency. This indicates a shift from traditional, teacher-centered instruction to a dynamic, learner-centered approach that actively involves students in the language acquisition process.

The results of the present study strongly support and develop existing observations with empirical evidence from EFL learners. This aligns with findings from Octaberlina, Afif, and Rofiki (2022) who reported that college EFL learners face multiple speaking constraints but can improve fluency through targeted classroom strategies. The descriptive statistics in Table 2 reveal interesting information about learners' views, with very high means in terms of role-play exercises and storytelling (3.22) and frequent pair/group discussions based on real-life contexts (3.18), highlighting the effectiveness of these exercises. Such exercises are the most important tools in structuring thinking performance and developing extemporaneous speech, concerning both the mental complexity and the emotional deficits implicated in speech performance. Similar conclusions were reached by Spies and Xu (2018), who found that scaffolded conversational frameworks enhance learners' communicative abilities and support sustained oral interaction. Aziez et al. (2024) similarly reported that structured repetition and interactive speaking tasks noticeably improve university students' fluency development. Moreover, correlation analysis depicted in Table 3 provides strong support regarding these views, with a strong positive correlation existing among oral fluency and exercises involving genuine communication tasks ($r = 0.675^{**}$), role-playing and dialogue exercises ($r = 0.592^{**}$), and giving priority to communication over grammar rules ($r = 0.443^{**}$). The evidence depicted by these views collectively recommends the effectiveness of teaching exercises and setups that represent genuine communication contexts and significantly depart from typical teaching settings dominated by strict grammatical rules, obstructing learners' extemporaneous performance without hesitation concerning speech delivery directly related to everyday communicative contexts. This recommendation is related to the "Communicative Language Teaching" approach, considering authentic language use in clarified contexts, and significantly diverges from teaching methodologies dominated by a strict emphasis on grammatical knowledge, creating a significant problem for extemporaneous speech delivery performance. The moderate agreement depicted in Table 4, despite significant variations in standard deviations among the remaining items, tends to support learners' views about a wide variety of interactive teaching exercises being significantly important for oral performance skills improvement.

Besides these general instructional methods, the research critically highlighted the key importance of peer engagement and group work. Table 4 shows strong positive correlation coefficients, especially regarding joint speaking exercises among peers ($r = .575^{**}$). This indicates that the learning environment created by these group works provides a psychologically safe setting where performance pressure on teachers is minimized, and learners can engage in speaking without inhibitions, trying out numerous exploratory utterances in the process. This is supported by specific items such as "Interaction with classmates in group works helps alleviate anxieties and enhance speaking English performance" ($r = .366^{**}$) and "Speaking with classmates participating in class activity motivates one to communicate thoughts articulately without apprehensions related to errors" ($r = 0.349^{**}$), which reinforce the idea that peer-controlled lessons significantly contribute to learning by reducing inhibitory effects and fostering confident, adventurous speaking performance.

This performance is carried out in a setting where the main emphasis is shifted from one's specific language performance to a joint communicative need, providing an ideal learning atmosphere where learners' errors come within the scope of a learning process instead of becoming a source of shyness and inhibitory effects, with an emphasis on performance improvement. This strategy plays a critical role in handling the needs of silent EFL learners because it directly targets a learning need related to language anxieties and shyness, which always act as performance obstacles for active classroom engagement.

Similarly, working on fluency-oriented tasks (Table 5), such as debates, storytelling, and other fluency exercises structured in a classroom setting (Role-play and storytelling, $r = 0.483$; fluency-oriented speaking exercises, $r = 0.467$), played a crucial role in the study's design. Such approaches and exercises motivate learners to create a structured outline of what they want to communicate, do so succinctly, and in a smooth flow of words, with a

significant focus on expression rather than accuracy ($r = 0.484^{**}$). A 4/3/2 fluency exercise activity mentioned in the methods section is a proper example of how learners can be conditioned towards increased fluency levels with structured speech patterns and a time constraint imposed on them, nudging learners towards fluent speech rather than pauses for self-correction.

The quantitative data from the regression analysis in Table 6 and the ANOVA in Table 7 strongly support these diversified learning strategies. With an R of 0.782 and an R-squared of 0.611, it is clear that these diversified learning strategies cumulatively enable oral fluency attainment in EFL contexts by explaining over 61% of the variance in oral fluency achievement due to CLT-oriented learning strategies, peer learning, and fluency-enhanced speaking exercises. The significantly high F-statistic of 7.152 with a 'p' value of less than 0.000 reinforces the strong predictive value of this model, thus fully justifying the hypothesis proposed in the study. Rather than relying solely on these diversified learning approaches for instructional purposes, it can be argued that these approaches must be used cumulatively within the classroom setting to establish a dynamic learning environment where learners can communicate in English with confidence and fluency.

6. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that CLT techniques, integrated peer interaction and group activities, and fluency-focused speaking tasks are associated with stronger perceived oral fluency among silent or reluctant EFL learners. Overall, the findings emphasize the value of interaction-rich, student-centered instruction in reducing hesitation, increasing speaking confidence, and supporting more spontaneous oral production. Practical classroom implications include using authentic communication tasks, structured role-plays and storytelling, and time-based fluency activities (e.g., the 4/3/2 speaking task) to provide repeated, low-anxiety opportunities for meaningful speech. These insights support curriculum design that prioritizes real-life communication and sustained oral participation for learners who tend to remain silent in EFL classrooms. Future research could employ experimental or longitudinal designs to examine causal effects of specific communicative interventions on objectively measured oral fluency (e.g., speech rate, pause frequency, and repair). Additionally, incorporating classroom observations and teacher interviews may provide richer explanatory insights into how interactional conditions and affective variables shape silent learners' progression toward sustained oral participation.

Funding: This research was supported by the Deanship of Scientific Research at King Khalid University (Grant number: RGP.2 / 422/46).

Institutional Review Board Statement: The Ethical Committee of the King Khalid University, Saudi Arabia has granted approval for this study on 20 October 2024 (Ref. No. RGP.2 / 422/46).

Transparency: The authors state that the manuscript is honest, truthful, and transparent, that no key aspects of the investigation have been omitted, and that any differences from the study as planned have been clarified. This study followed all writing ethics.

Competing Interests: The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Authors' Contributions: All authors contributed equally to the conception and design of the study. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Disclosure of AI Use: The author(s) used OpenAI's ChatGPT to edit and refine the wording of the Introduction. All outputs were reviewed and verified by the authors.

REFERENCES

- Abbasil, I. A., & Anthony, E. M. (2022). A narrative literature review on oral fluency and language use in EFL classroom group work. *Development in Language Studies*, 2(2), 12-19.
- Amoah, S., & Yeboah, J. (2021). The speaking difficulties of Chinese EFL learners and their motivation towards speaking the English language. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 17(1), 56-69. <https://doi.org/10.52462/jlls.4>
- Axmedova, M. A. (2024). Case study approach in teaching English as a foreign language. *European Journal of Pedagogical Initiatives and Educational Practices*, 2(10), 39-42.

- Aziez, F., Nita, A., Istikharoh, L., & Sotlikova, R. (2024). Analyzing the development of university English students' speaking fluency. *Journal of English and Education*, 10(2), 111-136. <https://doi.org/10.20885/jee.v10i2.36345>
- Chen, M., Mohammadi, M., & Izadpanah, S. (2024). Language learning through music on the academic achievement, creative thinking, and self-esteem of the English as a foreign language (EFL) learners. *Acta Psychologica*, 247, 104318. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2024.104318>
- Cherry, C. (2021). An investigation of the best practices to develop oral proficiency in adult English learners that are engaging and minimize anxiety. Unpublished Master's Thesis, School of Education and Leadership Student.
- Haerunnisa, H. (2024). Student's pronunciation confidence in speaking fluency. *Haga: Journal of Education, Linguistics, and Culture*, 2(1), 33-41.
- Hamel, F. (2023). Breaking the Wall of silence between EFL teachers and EFL students (The Role of classroom interaction). *Revista Universitară de Sociologie*, 9(1), 291-296.
- Hijra, H., Rahim, T. R., & Syarif, A. R. (2024). Barriers to oral proficiency: Exploring causes of speaking inhibition in EFL learners. *Klasikal: Journal of Education, Language Teaching and Science*, 6(2), 409-418. <https://doi.org/10.52208/klasikal.v6i2.1168>
- Kulsum, E. M., Acep, Y. J., Uyun, A. S., & Widianingsih, A. W. S. (2025). A study on the difficulties in English speaking for EFL students. *Journal on Education*, 7(2), 10648-10659. <https://doi.org/10.31004/joe.v7i2.8109>
- Musabal, A., & AbdAlgame, M. (2023). Exploring the obstacles EFL learners encounter in classroom oral participation from the perspective of tertiary level instructors. *Journal of Namibian Studies*, 33(S1), 1-10.
- Nguyen, T. D. (2024). Students' silence—redefining what it means to participate in EFL classrooms. *International Journal of TESOL & Education*, 4(4), 69-80. <https://doi.org/10.54855/ijte.24444>
- Octaberlina, L. R., Afif, I. M., & Rofiki, I. (2022). An investigation on the speaking constraints and strategies used by college students studying English as EFL learners. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 21(9), 232-249.
- Parvathi, V. (2021). Techniques to enable participation of slow learners in group discussions. *Teaching English in Multilingual Contexts*, 3, 180-190.
- Pastini, N. W., & Lilasari, L. N. T. (2023). Empowering EFL students: A review of student-centred learning effectiveness and impact. *Journal of Applied Studies in Language*, 7(2), 246-259. <https://doi.org/10.31940/jasl.v7i2.246-259>
- Pratolo, B. W., Gustriani, P. V., Bao, D., & Priadi, A. (2023). The investigation of in-class silence behavior among adult EFL learners: A case study at a private University in Yogyakarta. *Journal of Silence Studies in Education*, 3(1), 59-72. <https://doi.org/10.31763/jsse.v3i1.91>
- Rizqiyanti, R. (2023). Exploring teachers' instructional strategies to facilitate the oral fluency of EFL beginner level students. *English Learning Innovation*, 4(2), 109-121. <https://doi.org/10.22219/englie.v4i2.26785>
- Salameh, M. Y. A. B. (2022). Speaking anxiety: A study of Jordanian EFL learners. *Linguistics and Culture Review*, 6(S2), 693-707. <https://doi.org/10.21744/lingcure.v6nS2.2254>
- Salih, A. A., & Omar, L. I. (2024). Enhancing EFL learners' engagement in situational language skills through clustered digital materials. *Frontiers in Education*, 9, 1439104. <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2024.1439104>
- Shi, C., Kassim, A., & Radzuan, N. R. M. (2024). Improving EFL learners' English public speaking performance through project-based learning strategy at tertiary level. *Language Teaching Research Quarterly*, 42, 126-144.
- Soluade, O., Idowu, S. O., & Sofadekan, A. O. (2022). Attitudes of undergraduate teachers towards the application of statistical package for social science when teaching statistics in social studies. *Journal of Lexicography and Terminology*, 6(1), 134-144.
- Soraya, C. (2023). Fluency and accuracy in the EFL oral expression and comprehension classroom. *Journal of Language Education*, 1(3), 127-132. <https://doi.org/10.69820/jole.v1i3.118>
- Spies, T. G., & Xu, Y. (2018). Scaffolded academic conversations: Access to 21st-Century collaboration and communication skills. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 54(1), 22-30. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1053451218762478>

- Taherdoost, H. (2021). Data collection methods and tools for research; A step-by-step guide to choose data collection technique for academic and business research projects. *International Journal of Academic Research in Management*, 10(1), 10-38.
- Tenglet, E. (2023). Quiet in class? Exploring discourses on verbal participation. *Educational Research*, 65(2), 230-247. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131881.2023.2203138>
- Wang, W., Rezaei, Y. M., & Izadpanah, S. (2024). Speaking accuracy and fluency among EFL learners: The role of creative thinking, emotional intelligence, and academic enthusiasm. *Heliyon*, 10(18), e37620. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e37620>
- Zulfikar, Z., Hasibuan, S. W., Rahmati, R., & Nasution, D. S. (2024). Engaging the silent learners: Pedagogical strategies for supporting introverted EFL learners in the classroom. *Tamaddun*, 23(2), 227-241.

Views and opinions expressed in this article are the views and opinions of the author(s). International Journal of English Language and Literature Studies shall not be responsible or answerable for any loss, damage or liability etc. caused in relation to/arising out of the use of the content.