

STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING SPEAKING PROFICIENCY THROUGH INDONESIAN CULTURE IN ILFL CLASSES

¹ASMA RIANI

Universitas Bengkulu, Bengkulu
ar6991931@gmail.com

²SYAFRYADIN SYAFRYADIN

Universitas Bengkulu, Bengkulu
syafryadin@unib.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This study examines strategies for improving speaking proficiency in Indonesian Language for Foreign Learners (ILFL) through culturally integrated instruction. Using qualitative data from interviews with 15 learners and 10 instructors, five key strategies were identified: task-based learning, cultural immersion, peer interaction, constructive feedback, and multimedia use. These methods provide learners with real-life contexts, reduce speaking anxiety, and build confidence. Cultural immersion, in particular, enhances learners' understanding of Indonesian society and supports meaningful communication. Peer activities promote collaboration and fluency, while multimedia resources expose learners to natural speech and varied accents. The findings confirm the value of integrating cultural content into ILFL teaching practices. This study recommends incorporating these strategies into ILFL curriculum and teacher training programs to foster both linguistic and intercultural competence among learners.

Keywords: ILFL, Speaking skills, Culturally-integrated teaching, Interactive learning

INTRODUCTION

Speaking competence in Indonesian Language for Foreign Learners (ILFL) presents some unique challenges for learners. While speaking is a critical component of successful communication and an effective confidence-builder (Goh & Burns, 2012; Harmer, 2019), the development of speaking skills faces several obstacles. Differences at the phonological level, such as glottal stops and vowel harmony, present difficulties for learners with diverse linguistic backgrounds, affecting both pronunciation and fluency (Harmer, 2019).

Moreover, the sociolinguistic complexity of Indonesian, including formal and informal registers, regional dialects, and borrowed terms, can be overwhelming for learners who come from environments where there is little linguistic diversity (Goh & Burns, 2012). Cultural nuances, such as politeness levels and non-verbal cues, may also be challenging, as they are vastly different from those in

learners' native styles of communication (Harmer, 2019).

Limited opportunities for immersion and psychological barriers, such as fear of making mistakes or "losing face," further impede fluency development. Recognizing these challenges is important for ILFL teaching, which needs to be carried out with culturally appropriate teaching methods and supportive learning environments that enable learners to surmount these obstacles and achieve successful communication.

One of the most important roles of ILFL is to teach Indonesian to international students. ILFL programs are meant to provide non-native speakers with the necessary language ability to manage everyday interactions in Indonesian-speaking contexts. Effective communication in Indonesian requires both linguistic competency and cultural sensitivity; as observed by Rukmini & Sari (2020). However, the current methodologies of ILFL teaching practices often fail to these two integrate these two essential aspects. While necessary, a primary

focus on the rote memorization of grammar and vocabulary cannot adequately prepare learners for the challenges of real-life communication. Traditional programs often emphasize reading and writing more than speaking and listening, limiting opportunities to develop oral fluency and conversational confidence. Furthermore, cultural instruction, if provided as a supporting element rather than an integrated part of language teaching, results in a superficial understanding of cultural norms and practices, leaving learners ill-equipped to navigate sociocultural nuances.

As Indonesia continues to expand as a global player, the demand for competent speakers of Indonesian language among overseas learners has risen, underscoring the necessity for improved teaching methodologies within ILFL programs (Kusumaningrum & Sari, 2021).

The main goal of this research is to identify and examine effective ways to improve speaking skills among ILFL students. By investigating different pedagogical techniques and their influence on learners' speaking abilities, this study aims to provide significant insights for educators and curriculum developers engaged in ILFL education.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emphasizes interaction as the primary method of language learning. It focuses on helping learners to speak swiftly and eloquently in real-life scenarios. CLT emphasizes the use of actual materials and activities that duplicate language use in everyday situations, which is particularly effective for improving speaking competence (Richards and Rodgers, 2014). Recent research has shown that using CLT in language classes significantly enhances students' speaking skills by offering a more engaging and dynamic learning environment (Priasih, M. A., 2024). This strategy pushes learners to practice speaking via dialogues, role-plays, and group discussions, which are vital for gaining confidence and fluency.

Proficiency in speaking encompasses several essential elements that support effective communication. These include:

- **Pronunciation:** The ability to pronounce words correctly, which affects intelligibility and listener comprehension.

- **Vocabulary:** A good vocabulary allows learners to explain their opinions clearly and appropriately.
- **Grammar:** Understanding grammatical structures is crucial for developing meaningful sentences and transmitting meaning effectively.
- **Fluency:** The ability to communicate easily and at a natural speed without undue hesitation.
- **Body Language:** Non-verbal clues such as gestures, facial emotions, and eye contact play a key part in communication (Goh & Burns, 2012).

Each of these components is interconnected and adds to total speaking competency, making it vital for instructors to cover them fully in ILFL programs.

Numerous studies have studied successful ways to develop speaking abilities in language instruction, especially within ILFL situations. For example, research by Rukmini and Sari (2020) emphasized the effectiveness of task-based learning in improving students' speaking skills through collaborative activities that promote peer engagement. Another study by Kusumaningrum and Sari (2021) found that introducing cultural components into speaking exercises enhanced language proficiency and increased learners' interest and engagement in ILFL sessions. As learners interact with the cultural complexities of the Indonesian language, they become more proficient at managing social relationships and expressing themselves effectively in diverse contexts. Research suggests that incorporating cultural material into language training boosts students' speaking abilities by presenting them with appropriate settings for their language use. As learners interact with the cultural complexities of the Indonesian language, they become more proficient at managing social relationships and expressing themselves effectively in diverse contexts. Research suggests that incorporating cultural material into language training boosts students' speaking abilities by presenting them with appropriate settings for their language usage (Chung, D. T. K., & Long, N. T., 2024).

Cultural immersion activities are foundational in ILFL instruction, as they provide learners with opportunities to put their language skills into practice in real-life

situations. Examples of such activities include attending local festivals, cooking traditional dishes, and engaging in cultural storytelling sessions, which provide learners not only with speaking opportunities but also cultural insights into norms, values, and etiquette (Chung, D. T. K., & Long, N. T., 2024). Activities of this nature make it possible for learners to take part in a variety of role-plays simulating real-life situations, such as bargaining at markets or asking for directions, enabling the practice of vocabulary and grammar that brings learners to an idiomatic aspect of Indonesian politeness and context-specific expressions (Harmer, 2019).

Moreover, incorporating culture artifacts, such as traditional music, dance, and literature, deepens learners' understanding of the cultural background underlying language use and thus brings a holistic and applied experience beyond basic linguistic skills (Rukmini & Sari, 2020). By placing learners into cultural practices and actively engaging them in conversations that represent the diversity of Indonesian social life, teachers will be able to close the gap between linguistic knowledge and cultural sensitivity, thus enabling more effective and meaningful language learning.

To guide the investigation, the following research questions have been formulated:

1. What specific strategies can improve speaking skills in ILFL classes?
2. How do cultural factors influence speaking proficiency in ILFL learners?

These questions aim to address both the practical aspects of teaching speaking skills and the broader cultural contexts that influence language use.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research methodology, as it is an excellent approach to investigate the subjective experiences of both learners and instructors concerning the learning and teaching of ILFL. This approach enables the examination of strategies, challenges, and effective practices surrounding speaking proficiency within ILFL classrooms.

The sample comprises 15 ILFL intermediate level learners and 10 ILFL teachers. The sample consists of 25

participants: 15 ILFL learners at an intermediate level, originating from Hungary, the Philippines, South Korea, and Thailand, who were deliberately selected to ensure variation in prior experiences and proficiency levels, ranging from basic to intermediate based on their pre-test scores. The sample also includes 10 ILFL teachers, all native speakers of Indonesian language, with teaching experience ranging from 3 to 15 years. Insights into effective teaching strategies, classroom management, and cultural integration were gathered from these instructors. Learners with diverse backgrounds enrich the data, and the teachers' varied cultural and linguistic experiences contribute to identifying effective teaching practices and understanding learner responses.

Data collection involves semi-structured interviews conducted with both learners and teachers. Each interview lasts approximately 30-45 minutes. The interviews cover experience, problems, and methods regarding ILFL speaking skills, such as any problem they have had when trying to speak, how their mother country influences them, classroom practice, and motivation.

Data analysis in this research utilizes a thematic analysis approach, which aids in identifying major themes related to speaking strategies, cultural influences, and effective teaching practices. The process includes reading transcripts and observational notes to become familiar with the data, coding the data into meaningful segments, identifying patterns to form themes, reviewing themes for accuracy, and defining and naming themes that address the research questions. This results in the development of a coherent narrative that summarizes key findings on effective speaking practices in ILFL classrooms.

A number of validity techniques were employed to ensure that findings obtained reflect the true position of the research. These include member checking, where participants review interview transcripts and preliminary findings to confirm the accuracy of data collected, thus reinforcing the trustworthiness of the results.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The examination of the interview data indicated numerous successful ways for

boosting speaking skills among ILFL students. The important results are stated below:

Table 1. Participant Demographics

Demographic Variable	Description	Count	Percentage
Total Participants	Total number of interviewees	25	100%
Gender	Male	10	50%
	Female	15	50%
Age Range	18-25 years	10	40%
	26-30 years	8	35%
	31-35 years	7	25%
Countries Represented	Asia (Indonesia - Korea)	20	90%
	Europe (Hungary)	5	10%

Table 1 highlights the demographics of the 25 volunteers who participated in the study, providing key insights into their gender, age, and regional representation.

A total of 25 participants contributed their perspectives on developing oral proficiency in ILFL lessons.

The gender distribution relatively balanced, with 10 male and 15 female participants, ensuring equal representation.

Age Range: Participants were classified into three age categories:

- 18–25 years: 10 participants (40%)
- 26–30 years: 8 participants (35%)
- 31–35 years: 7 participants (25%)

This age range reflects perspectives from a diverse group of adult learners.

Regional origin: Participants came from two regions:

- Asia (Indonesia and South Korea): 20 participants (80%), indicating the primary audience for ILFL activities
- Europe (Hungary): 5 participants (20%), showing interest from learners in non-Asian contexts

In summary, Table 1 indicates a diversified yet well-balanced pool of participants, with an equal representation of genders, a variable age distribution, and a majority of learners from Asia—particularly Indonesia and South Korea. This demographic profile provides a strong foundation for exploring strategies to enhance oral proficiency in ILFL lessons.

Tabel 2: Effective Strategies for Enhancing Speaking Proficiency

Strategy	Description	Participant Feedback
Task-Based Learning	Having conversations and role-plays that are based on actual circumstances	"It made speaking feel more natural."
Cultural Immersion	Participating in local activities to practice English in context	"I learned so much from interacting with locals."
Peer Interaction	Communication-enhancing collaboration activities for teenagers	"Speaking with friends helped me gain confidence."
Feedback and Correction	Accepting constructive criticism to strengthen linguistic ability	"Feedback helped me see my mistakes."
Use of Multimedia Resources	Employing movies and podcasts to increase exposure to diverse dialects	"I could hear how native speakers talk."

Table 2 offers five major techniques discovered for boosting speaking skills in ILFL trainees. These tactics are meant to deliver practical, immersive, and engaging language learning experiences, with participant feedback highlighting their effectiveness:

Task-Based Learning

Description: Role plays and conversations based on real-life scenarios enable learners to practice speaking in authentic settings.

Feedback from Participants: “It made speaking feel more natural,” said one participant, highlighting the strategy’s goal of promoting more authentic and meaningful language use.

Cultural Immersion

Description: By participating in local events, students can practice their language skills in real cultural contexts, enhancing their understanding and application.

Feedback from Participants: A learner observed, “I learned so much from interacting with locals,” underscoring the benefits of immersion for contextual and cultural language learning.

Peer Interaction

Description: Interactive classroom activities help learners practice speaking with peers, creating a supportive learning environment.

Feedback from Participants: A participant said, “Talking with friends helped me gain confidence,” illustrating how peer interaction can enhance fluency and reduce anxiety when speaking.

Feedback and Correction

Description: Constructive feedback helps learners identify and correct errors, improving their speaking performance.

Feedback from Participants: One participant observed, “Feedback helped me see my mistakes clearly,” emphasizing the importance of clear and timely guidance for progress.

Feedback from Participants: One participant observed, “Feedback helped me see my mistakes clearly,” highlighting the necessity of clear guidance for growth.

Use of Multimedia Resources

Description: Videos and podcasts expose learners to various accents and natural speech, enhancing their listening and speaking skills.

Feedback from Participants: A student noted, “I could hear how native speakers talk,” demonstrating the role of multimedia in improving pronunciation and comprehension.

In summary, Table 2 indicates the value of these methods in increasing speaking proficiency in ILFL learners. The feedback reveals how practical, immersive, and engaging strategies increase learners’ confidence and skill in employing Indonesian language.

Gender Distribution of Participants

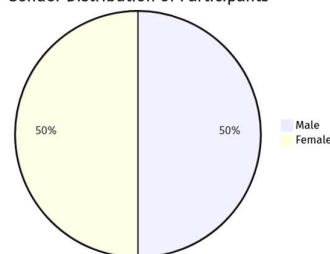


Figure 1: Gender Distribution of Participants

Age Range Distribution

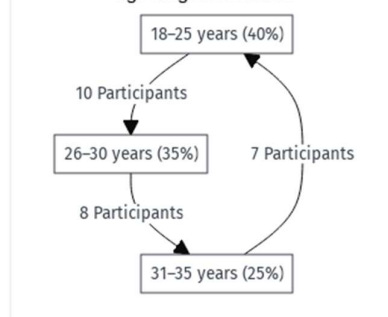


Figure 2: Age Range Distribution

Regional Representation of Participants

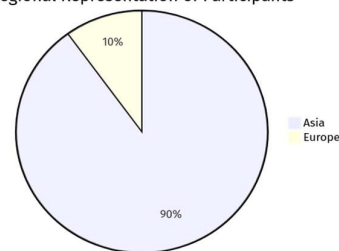


Figure 3: Regional Representation of Participant

Discussion

The results of this research identify various effective ways of improving the speaking proficiency of ILFL learners. In addition, the demographic information obtained in the course of the study from 25 respondents, including 15 learners and 10 instructors, is sufficient to support the analysis of how participants' backgrounds influence language learning outcomes. The equal gender representation, broad age bracket, and balanced representation of Asian and European countries make the study relatively representative and applicable to a wide audience.

Effective Ways of Developing Speaking Competence

Task-Based Learning was identified as one of the most effective strategies, according to the respondents, who noted that engaging in role plays and conversations based on real-life topics made speaking easier. Previous research supports this claim, indicating that learners need realistic contexts to communicate authentically and, in doing so, develop their speaking skills (Nakatani, 2010). Thus, by simulating real-life situations, students can practice speaking in contexts they are likely to encounter daily, helping them become more confident and proficient.

Another important approach cited by participants was cultural immersion. Involvement in local activities allowed learners to use the language in authentic cultural environments. As one participant said, "I learned so much from interacting with locals," which demonstrates that immersion helps learners gain both linguistic and cultural competence. This supports Goh and Burns' (2012) argument that exposure to the target culture provides meaningful contexts for language use.

Peer interaction also contributed to speaking fluency. Participants indicated that group activities in the classroom enabled them to converse with peers, creating a supportive environment that reduced speaking-related anxiety. One participant said, "Talking with friends helped me gain confidence," demonstrating how peer interaction supports fluency and reduces fear of making mistakes.

This aligns with previous research showing that social interaction is a key factor in language development (Elbaoui Shaddad, A. R., & Jember, B., 2024).

Feedback and Correction were found to be essential. Participants reported that constructive feedback highlighted their errors and helped them improve their speaking skills. A learner said, "Feedback helped me see my mistakes clearly," emphasizing the importance of clear and timely guidance for improvement. This agrees with Lightbown and Spada's (2006) view that feedback is a critical component of language learning.

Overall, this discussion highlights several effective strategies for improving speaking ability among ILFL learners. The findings' alignment with relevant literature enhances their validity and offers practical guidance for educators aiming to foster oral proficiency through culturally integrated teaching methods. By identifying immersive and learner-centered strategies that consider learner backgrounds, educators can create more supportive environments for developing confidence and communication skills in Indonesian language.

The strategies identified within this study are also consistent with the extant literature on the effective language teaching approach. For instance, task-based learning is widely regarded as the approach that encourages learners to be more engagingly active and connects with the real-life use of language skills (Nakatani, 2010). Cultural immersion has also been proven to enhance linguistic competence effectively since the use of language would be contextual (Goh & Burns, 2012). Furthermore, peer interaction has also been justified in studies that prove that collaborative learning environments bring in greater confidence and fluency amongst language learners (Elbaoui Shaddad, A. R., & Jember, B., 2024).

The result of this study can be connected with some fundamental theories of language acquisition. Vygotsky's Social Constructivism posits that the source of learning is social interaction; thus, the emphasis on peer interaction and collaborative tasks in this study confirms the importance of social context in developing speaking skills

(Vygotsky, 1978). In line with the above, Krashen's Input Hypothesis also establishes that comprehensible input is necessary in language acquisition; thus, the use of multimedia aids in providing learners with various forms of linguistic input may enhance comprehension and production in Indonesian language (Krashen, 1982).

Discussion has led to the identification of various strategies that have been found effective in improving speaking ability among ILFL learners. Correspondence of such findings with literature enhances the validity of the findings through appropriate support given to educators who will work on the attainment of oral proficiency through culturally integrated teaching methods. By identifying practical, immersive strategies that will be compatible with the needs and backgrounds of the learners, educators can hope for a better language learning environment conducive to the growth of confidence and acquired skills in using Indonesian language.

Participant Demographics

Table 1 displays the demographics of the 25 people engaged in the research, which includes equal gender representation and a broad age range.

The equal gender distribution (50% male and 50% female) ensures that the outcomes of this research represent a diversity of views, which is vital in understanding how people perceive language acquisition. The age range, with participants ranging from 18 to 35 years old, illustrates that the research collects ideas from a wide set of adult learners.

This diversity is important because it allows a broader understanding of the challenges that students face at different stages of their educational journey. The majority of participants (90%) come from Asia, especially Indonesia and Korea, which are the primary regions served by the ILFL program. The involvement of five individuals from Europe (Hungary) illustrates the interest in studying Indonesian language among non-Asian learners, thus highlighting the worldwide importance of this research. This demographic profile offers a great foundation for examining approaches targeted at

enhancing speaking skills in ILFL classes. One participant said, "Discussing with friends helped me gain confidence," which reflects how peer connection may ease the anxiety associated with speaking a foreign language. These findings are consistent with research suggesting that social interactions play a crucial role in language learning.

Effective ways for improving speaking

Table 2 displays the five primary strategies that were found as useful in developing the speaking abilities of ILFL trainees: task-based learning, cultural immersion, peer interaction, constructive feedback and the use of multimedia materials. Each method is verified by comments from participants attesting to its efficacy.

Task-Based Learning: Participants said that participation in role plays and conversations based on real-life experiences made speaking appear more natural. This strategy is in accord with contemporary language teaching techniques that emphasize practical application over memorisation. By emulating actual situations, students may develop their speaking talents in appropriate conditions, therefore boosting their confidence and fluency.

Cultural immersion is described as the process of immersing oneself in the culture of a foreign nation. The response suggests that involvement in local activities promotes the practice of language skills in an authentic cultural environment. One participant stated that they had learnt a great deal by engaging with the locals, which helps to underline the benefits of contextual learning. This strategy not only aids progress in linguistic skills but also increases cultural understanding, which is a critical part in assuring efficient communication.

Peer interaction: The study suggested that collaborative activities enable the formation of a supportive atmosphere in which students may practice speaking with their classmates. One participant said, "Discussing with friends helped me gain confidence," demonstrating how peer connection may ease the anxiety associated with speaking a foreign language. These findings are consistent with research suggesting that social interactions play a crucial role in language learning.

These results are consistent with studies suggesting that social interactions play a significant role in language acquisition.

Feedback and Correction: Constructive feedback was seen as crucial for identifying and addressing errors. As one participant said, "Feedback helps me to see my mistakes clearly," this reflects the value of timely and specific correction in language learning. This is in line with best practices, where feedback is an essential element of instruction.

Use of multimedia resources: Exposure to diverse dialects via multimedia goods such as films and podcasts was proven to increase listening and speaking abilities. A learner commented, "I can hear how native speakers talk," illustrating the usefulness of multimedia in delivering real language exposure. This method improves the development of pronunciation and comprehension abilities by exposing children to varied dialects and speech patterns.

Implications for the ILFL programme

The findings of this research underscore the need to adopt a comprehensive cultural immersion. Feedback reveals that taking part in local events helps students to develop their language abilities in a genuine cultural milieu. A participant said, 'I learnt a lot from this'.

This technique not only enhances language abilities in authentic cultural contexts but also builds learners' confidence in real communication.

Peer interaction: This research indicated that collaborative activities offer a supportive atmosphere where students may practice communicating with their peers. One participant commented, "Talking to my friends helped me gain confidence," indicating how social connection may alleviate the anxiety associated with speaking a foreign language. These results are consistent with research demonstrating that social interactions play a major role in language acquisition.

Feedback and correction: constructive feedback emerges as a fundamental component in the development of speaking abilities. Participants underlined that precise instructions enabled them to identify and rectify problems: "Feedback helps me to see my mistakes clearly," suggesting that timely

and thorough feedback is critical for student growth. This is in keeping with best practice in language instruction, where feedback is an integral element of the learning process.

Use of multimedia resources: Exposure to diverse dialects through multimedia resources such as films and podcasts were proven to increase listening and speaking abilities. One participant commented, "I can hear how native speakers talk," illustrating the usefulness of multimedia in delivering real-language exposure. This method improves the development of pronunciation and comprehension abilities by exposing children to varied dialects and speech patterns.

These findings suggest the need for a holistic approach that mixes interactive and immersive methodologies with cultural awareness to build language skills in ILFL sessions. By applying these tactics, instructors may better prepare students for real-world interactions in Indonesian-speaking environments, therefore enhancing their communication skills and general confidence.

In addition, these results are essential for educators and curriculum makers attempting to fulfil the rising need for skilled Indonesian speakers in an increasingly globalised society. As past studies have demonstrated, successful communication is not just about knowing language and grammar but also about recognizing cultural subtleties and communicating meaningfully with others.

In conclusion, this research provides useful information to the area of language acquisition by proposing practical ways for increasing the speaking abilities of ILFL learners. The focus on learners' experiences and instructors' observations offers a rich environment for future research and curriculum development targeted at building effective communication skills in Indonesian language. By focusing these tactics in ILFL courses, educators may create more interesting and effective learning environments that allow students to become proficient Indonesian speakers.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated approaches to the enhancement of Indonesian language speaking proficiency through cultural inclusion. Based on data collected from

interviews with 15 intermediate learners and 10 ILFL teachers, the paper identifies effective practices and dilemmas in ILFL instruction.

Cultural immersion is highly effective in developing the student's proficiency in the target language. The respondents reported being able to engage in real-life cultural experiences, such as communicating with locals and being exposed to cultural practices, which enhanced their speaking skills and created further awareness of Indonesian culture and its social realities. This finding supports the work of scholars like Goh & Burns (2012), who emphasized the importance of cultural context in language acquisition.

Another critical set of strategies included task-based learning, peer interaction, constructive feedback, and the use of multimedia learning resources. These strategies are relevant because they bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and actual language use—promoting effective communication, building learner confidence, and exposing students to diverse linguistic and cultural inputs, as supported by Nakatani (2010) and Krashen.

These findings have significant implications for ILFL programs. Curriculum

development should integrate cultural elements, design culturally rich activities, and utilize authentic materials. Teaching methodologies must introduce task-based learning, encourage collaboration, and provide regular feedback. These practices should also be included in teacher training—focusing on culturally sensitive pedagogy and the creation of immersive learning environments. This aligns with the aim of developing both linguistic proficiency and cultural competence.

Given the limited number of participants involved in this study, further research is highly encouraged. Future studies could implement these strategies in more diverse contexts, with larger participant groups and over extended periods, to further examine their impact on learners' speaking proficiency and cultural awareness.

This research demonstrates how culturally integrated teaching methodologies can be transformative for ILFL education. An ILFL program that prepares learners for intercultural interaction and effective communication as global citizens is only possible through the creation of authentic, engaging, and culturally rich learning environments in Indonesian language education worldwide.

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