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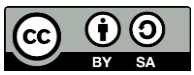

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EFL Students' Metacognitive Strategies in Learning Speaking

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Abstract

This research aims to identify the metacognitive strategies students apply in learning to speak. These strategies include planning, monitoring, information management, debugging, and evaluation. The study uses a quantitative approach and distributed questionnaires via Google Forms to 157 respondents. However, only 110 English education students from four different semesters (two, four, six, and eight) at Muhammadiyah University of Kendari were willing to participate. The results show that 41% of students sometimes planning their speaking lessons by reading the instructions carefully before starting the task. Additionally, 39% of students often monitor their comprehension to improve their speaking skills, such as checking whether the presentation objectives are achieved and considering alternative ways to solve speaking problems. For the Information Management strategy, 40% of students often try to translate their talks into their own words for better understanding. Furthermore, 43% of students often follow the Debugging strategy, which involves stopping and repeating when unsure in speaking. In terms of evaluation, 43% of students sometimes evaluate their speaking learning by assessing their performance after speaking comprehension tests and identifying areas for improvement.

Keywords: *Metacognitive Strategies, Speaking*

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Introduction

The learning process inherently requires the adaptation of methods or strategies to achieve primary learning objectives. Central to this process are the questions of "what will be used" and "how to use it," which are critical considerations for effective learning. Rubin (1975) argued that learning strategies are tools employed by students to acquire knowledge, allowing them to use one or more strategies to reach their learning goals. Building on this idea, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) identified three primary categories of learning strategies: metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, and socio-affective strategies.

In this context, metacognitive strategies have become a vital component of modern educational paradigms (Donndelinger, 2008). Metacognition is simply defined as thinking about one's own thinking processes. According to Flavell (1979), metacognitive strategies involve the understanding and control of one's cognitive processes during learning activities. In the context of learning to speak, this can involve planning before speaking, monitoring during speaking, and evaluating after speaking. Brown (1990) highlighted that metacognitive strategies, along with affective and social strategies, fall into the category of indirect strategies. He argues that a successful language learner must engage in some metacognitive processes before engaging in speaking activities, underscoring the importance of applying various learning strategies to enhance the overall effectiveness of language acquisition.

Speaking is a complex skill that requires extensive experience and practice. Luoma (2004) emphasizes that "speaking in a foreign language is very difficult, and competence in speaking takes a long time to develop." This complexity arises from the fundamental differences between speaking and writing, particularly in terms of grammatical, lexical, and discourse structures. Therefore, the adoption of appropriate learning strategies, particularly metacognitive strategies, is essential for effective language learning, especially in mastering the skill of speaking.

Several studies have explored the role of metacognitive strategies in learning to speak a foreign language. For instance, Zeng and Goh (2018) investigated the metacognitive awareness of EFL learners in China, finding that students who actively employed metacognitive strategies exhibited better performance in speaking tasks. Similarly, a study by Zhang and Qin (2020) highlighted that metacognitive strategy training can significantly enhance speaking proficiency among EFL students.

However, despite the extensive research on metacognitive strategies, there remains a gap in understanding how these strategies are specifically applied by EFL students in different cultural and educational contexts. For example, the specific metacognitive strategies used by EFL students at Muhammadiyah University of Kendari and their effectiveness have not been thoroughly examined.

Additionally, the role of semester progression in the adoption and effectiveness of these strategies remains underexplored.

This study aims to fill this gap by investigating the metacognitive strategies employed by EFL students in learning to speak, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of effective language learning strategies in the unique educational context of Muhammadiyah University of Kendari.

Metacognitive Strategies

Metacognition has been itemized into two primary components, namely, knowledge about cognition and regulation of cognition. Schraw & Dennison (1994). Knowledge about cognition was made up of three variables that serve the metacognitive reflection section. They include declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge, and conditional knowledge.

1. Declarative Knowledge
   The factual knowledge that a learner requires before being able to process or apply critical thinking related to the topic; knowing about, what, or that; knowledge of one's skills, intellectual resources, and abilities as a learner; students can acquire knowledge through presentations, demonstrations, and discussions.
2. Procedural Knowledge
   The application of knowledge for the purpose of completing a procedure or process; knowledge about how to implement learning procedures (e.g., strategies); requires students to understand the process as well as when to apply it in different situations; students can obtain knowledge through discovery, cooperative learning, and problem solving.
3. Conditional knowledge
   refers to understanding when and why specific processes or skills should be transferred, as well as applying declarative and procedural knowledge under specific conditions. Simulations can also be used to gain knowledge.

Meanwhile, there are five components to cognitive regulation: planning, comprehension monitoring, information management strategies, debugging strategies, and evaluation.

4. Planning
   The planning facilitates students to reflect on the goal setting and plan arrangement before learning.
5. Comprehension Monitoring
   Comprehension monitoring means the students assess their learning or strategy use, such as pausing regularly to check their comprehension.
6. Information Management Strategies
   Using information management strategies improves students' ability to organize, elaborate, select, and process information efficiently. For example, they know when to slow down when looking for important information or drawing diagrams to better understand a topic.

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7. Debugging Strategies
   Debugging strategies are strategies to fix comprehension and performance mistakes by asking for help when they think they do not understand or stop and reread when they get confused.
8. Evaluation
   While the evaluation process includes the analysis of effectiveness of the strategies used after a learning process, for example by asking themselves if there was an easier way to do things after finishing a task.

Speaking

According to Harmer (2007) Speaking skills involve more than just uttering words. They encompass the ability to communicate effectively, organize thoughts, convey messages clearly, and interact with others in conversation.

1. Connected Speech: The ability to connect sounds and words naturally in speech.
2. Expressive Devices: The use of intonation, stress, rhythm, and pitch to convey meaning.
3. Lexis and Grammar: The appropriate use of vocabulary and grammatical structures.
4. Negotiation Language: The use of language to clarify, confirm, and correct misunderstandings.

Method

In this research, researcher used a quantitative descriptive research design. According to Kasiram (2008) Quantitative research can be interpreted as a process of searching for knowledge using data in the form of numbers as a tool for analyzing information about what you want to know. About the Subjects This research involved 157 students from four different semesters but 110 respondents were willing to answer. This research used questionnaire-based research to explore EFL students' insights about students' metacognitive strategies in speaking. Researchers adapted and developed this statement based on knowledge about cognition regarding regulation from Schraw & Dennison (1994) Metacognition has grouped the components of cognitive regulation, namely planning, monitoring understanding, information management strategies, debugging strategies, and evaluation. There are 27 statements in this questionnaire.

Data collection was carried out by distributing questionnaires to students. At this stage the researcher used an online questionnaire called Google Form. The author went through several stages, starting with creating a questionnaire using Google Form. Second, after developing the questionnaire, the researcher will provide students with a link to the Google Form. After the students fill out the questionnaire, the researcher will receive the data. After all questionnaires are filled in, each student's answers are checked and analyzed. This assessment is

guided by a Likert scale with four rating scales, namely always, often, sometimes and never.

Descriptive analysis was carried out on questionnaire answers from students. The collected data is displayed in graphical form for each aspect. Next, the percentage results are added up and divided based on the number of statements. The final step is to draw conclusions from the data analysis that has been carried out.

Results

This part discusses the results gained from the questionnaire. There are 27 statements that consist of Planning, comprehension monitoring, information management strategies, debugging strategy, and evaluation.

1. Planning

Table. 1 Percentage of planning metacognitive strategy

No.	Item	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
1.	I pace my time when learning to speak so that I have enough time	11%	21%	59%	9%
2.	Before starting a task, I think carefully about what I need to learn about speaking skills	24%	36%	39%	1%
3.	I set a specific goal before starting a speaking task	19%	37%	40%	4%
4.	I think of several ways to solve a speaking problem and choose the best solution	20%	46%	32%	2%
5.	I read the instructions carefully before starting a speaking task	38%	44%	18%	-
6.	I organize my time well to achieve the goal of speaking effectively	16%	29%	52%	3%

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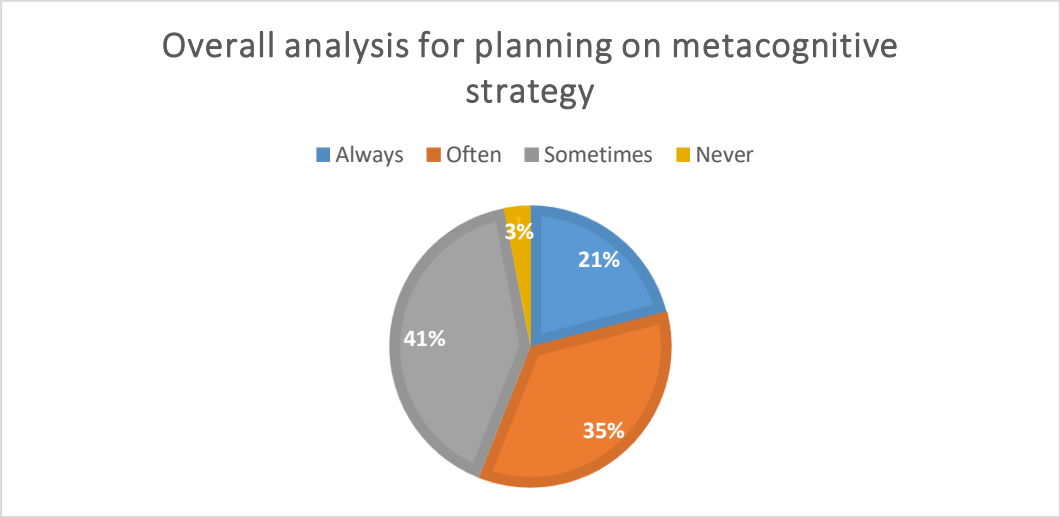

Chart. 1 Overall analysis for planning on metacognitive strategy

It can be seen from the total results that the highest percentage, namely 41%, students sometimes make plans when learning to speak (Chart. 1). Based on the statements, it can be seen that some students plan consistently with the type of statement "I read the instructions carefully before starting the speaking task".

2. Comprehension Monitoring

Table. 2 Percentage of comprehension monitoring on metacognitive strategy

No.	Item	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
7.	When giving a presentation, I check whether I have achieved the goal of improving my speaking.	29%	40%	30%	1%
8.	Before answering, I think of some other ways to solve the speech problem, so that I can give the best answer.	25%	44%	28%	3%
9.	I ask myself if I have considered all options when solving problems related to speech comprehension, this helps me to ensure that I make the right decisions.	19%	33%	45%	3%
10.	I regularly repeat the material I have learned to understand the important relationship between speaking.	11%	29%	53%	7%

11.	I think about how learning strategies can help me speak better.	21%	40%	35%	4%
12.	I pause to make sure that I really understand what I'm talking about, so that I can follow along properly.	16%	46%	36%	2%
13.	I ask myself how well I learn new things in speaking.	23%	36%	33%	8%

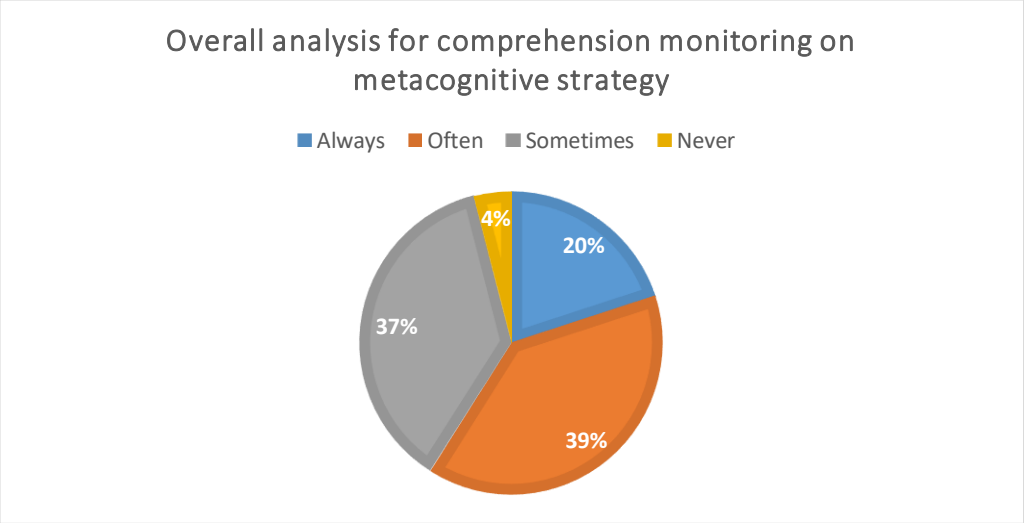

Chart. 2 Overall analysis for comprehension monitoring on metacognitive strategy

It can be seen that the overall results show that the highest percentage of students who often participate in comprehension monitoring improve their speaking skills by 39% of the total themes (Chart. 2). can be seen based on the statement with the highest percentage of students who frequently monitor "When giving a presentation, I check whether I have achieved the goal of improving my speaking ability". followed by "Before answering, I think of other ways to solve the speech problem, so that I can give the best answer.

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3. Information Management Strategy

Table 3 Percentage of Information Management strategies on metacognitive strategy

No.	Item	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
14.	When speaking, I deliberately focus only on the important information.	23%	41%	32%	4%
15.	When speaking, I focus on the meaning and importance of new information to ensure I can convey it clearly and effectively.	23%	43%	32%	2%
16.	I make my own examples short conversation in speaking so that it is more meaningful and easily understood by others.	14%	40%	39%	7%
17.	I make drawings or diagrams to build conversations, understand and improve my speaking.	6%	20%	39%	7%
18.	I try to translate my speaking in my own words.	23%	54%	20%	3%
19.	When speaking, I focus on the overall meaning and also the importance of good comprehension	21%	42%	35%	2%

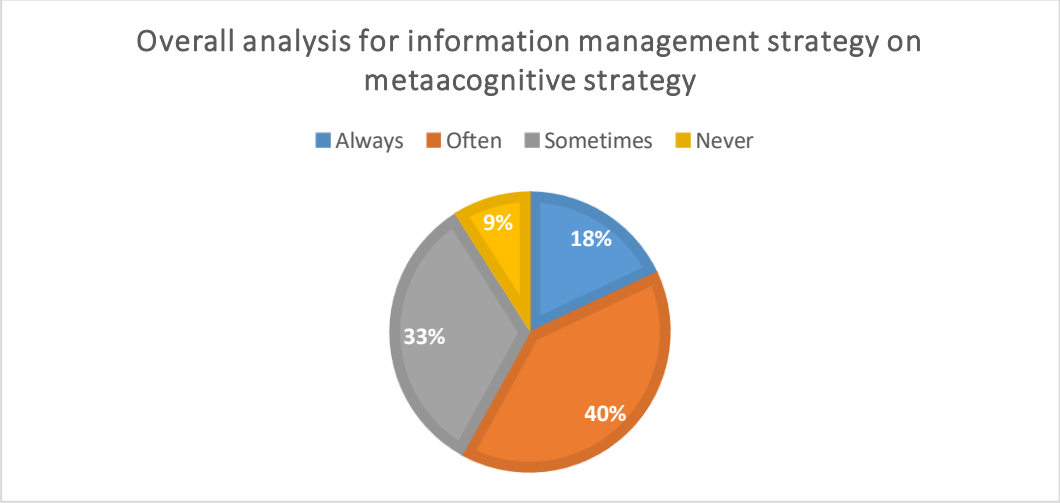

Chart.3 Overall analysis for information management strategy on metacognitive strategy

Based on the overall classification, it can be seen that the highest percentage in the category often follows Information Management strategies in improving their speaking skills, namely 40% of the themes (Chart. 3). based on the statement that shows the highest percentage in the frequent category, namely "I try to translate my speaking in my own words".

4. Debugging Strategy

Table 4 Percentage of Debugging Strategies on metacognitive strategy

No.	Item	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
20.	I ask others for help when I don't understand something in a conversation.	31%	42%	25%	3%
21.	I change my study strategy when I fail to understand information in speaking.	11%	37%	43%	9%
22.	When there is new, unclear information in the conversation, I pause and double-check.	27%	42%	28%	3%
23.	I stop and re-read when I am doubt in speaking.	23%	50%	26%	1%

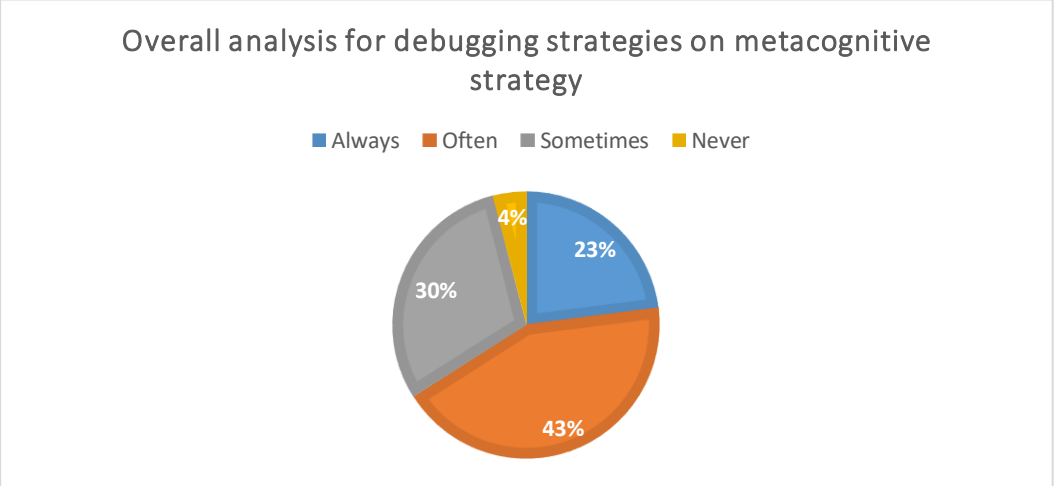

Chart. 4 Overall analysis for Debugging strategy on metacognitive strategy

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Based on overall student responses, it can be seen that the highest percentage of students often follow the highest Debugging Strategy with a percentage of 43% of the total theme (Chart. 4). seen from the statement with the highest percentage in the frequent category is "I stop and re-read when I am doubtful in speaking".

5. Evaluation

Table 5 Percentage of Evaluation on metacognitive strategy

No.	Item	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
24.	After completing the speaking comprehension test, I was able to assess how well I did and know which part needed improvement.	14%	46%	37%	3%
25.	I use various learning strategies according to the situation when speaking.	13%	30%	47%	10%
26.	After finishing, I summarized the speaking lesson I had learned.	15%	21%	50%	14%
27.	I ask myself questions about how well I am doing when I learn something new in speaking.	18%	36%	39%	7%

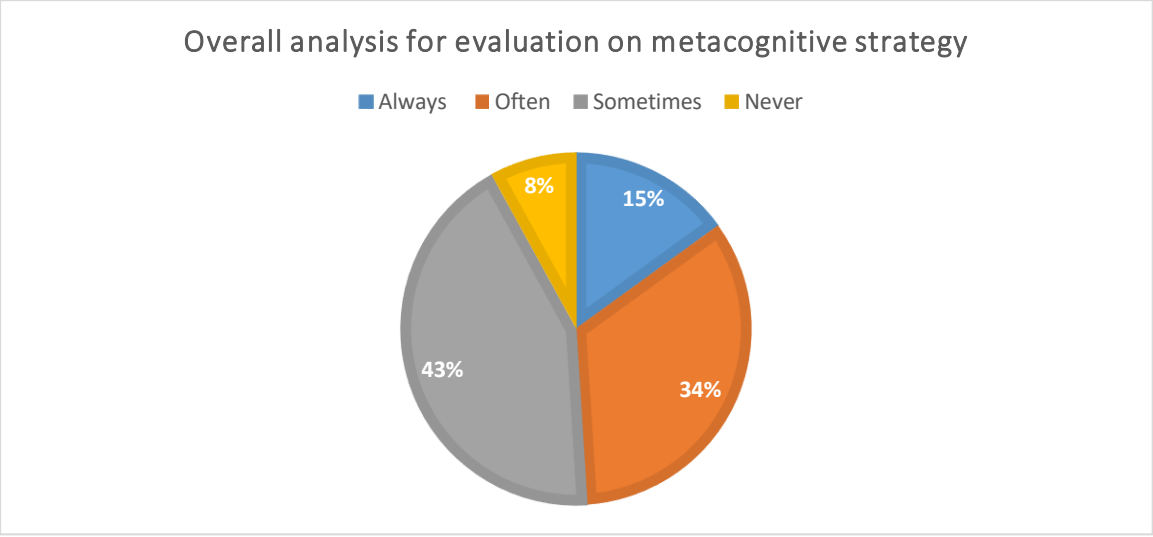

Chart. 5 Overall analysis for Evaluation on metacognitive strategy

From the overall results, it can be seen that the highest percentage, namely 43% of students, sometimes carry out evaluations in speaking learning (Chart. 5). Based on the statement, there are still some who apply the evaluation "After completing the speaking comprehension test, I was able to assess how well I did and know which part needs improvement".

Discussion

In this section, the research results that have been collected and analyzed will be discussed in depth to answer the results of the research. This research aims to determine the metacognitive strategies applied by EFL students in learning to speak in order to improve their speaking abilities. These findings will be analyzed in the context of existing literature, and will be compared with the results of previous research to assess the consistency and contribution of this research to existing knowledge.

Planning is an aspect of metacognitive strategy. planning is the process of thinking about the activities needed to achieve a desired goal. Planning in the context of metacognitive regulation is the ability to plan how a task or problem will be solved. According to Schraw and Dennison (1994), planning makes it easier for students to reflect on goal setting and planning before studying. Based on the overall data analysis in (Chart. 1), it can be concluded that the majority of research participants only sometimes plan their speaking learning (41%).

This may be caused by students' lack of understanding about how to plan learning or not yet understanding effective learning strategies and the positive impact of learning strategies in improving speaking skills. planning is the least utilized by students, they tend to ignore the planning process Dangin & Hartati (2022). However, there are still students who consistently pay attention to the plan in learning reading instructions before starting the speaking task. Based on the results of previous research, Lapele (2022). In his study, he found that the most useful strategy used by students was planning about strategies that might actually be needed before the learning process. This can refer to the fact that students tend to use practical strategies that can be used during the learning process.

In addition to planning, metacognitive strategies also include comprehension monitoring. Comprehension monitoring means students assess their learning or use of strategies, such as pausing regularly to check their understanding to Schraw and Dennison (1994). Based on the overall results of the questionnaire on monitoring understanding aspects (Chart. 2) obtained the highest percentage in the frequent category, namely 39%. This shows that the students' response to monitoring comprehension is quite good because some students still pay attention or use monitoring comprehension as their learning strategy in improving their speaking skills. There are also students who consistently monitor their understanding to check whether their goals have been achieved in improving speaking. Based on the results of previous research Metacognitive strategies show that the majority of participants always use comprehension monitoring as the

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main strategy in the learning process, which has a big impact and influence on students Basalama, et.al (2020).

metacognitive strategies also include information management strategies, according to Schraw and Dennison (1994) Using information management strategies improves students' ability to organize, describe, select, and process information efficiently. For example, they know when to slow down when looking for important information or drawing diagrams to better understand a topic. The results of the questionnaire on the information management strategy aspect provide an important picture of how students manage information during the speaking learning process. From the overall questionnaire results (Chart. 3), the dominant students often apply it, namely 40%. This shows that students have an awareness of the importance of managing information during the speaking learning process. There are also students who consistently try to translate their own words, it can be concluded that students tend to have a fairly high level of awareness about the importance of managing information during learning. This is not significantly different from previous research. Dangin & Hartati (2022) findings show that the information management strategy category is the one most widely applied by students.

In the metacognitive strategy aspect, debugging is also part of cognitive regulation, debugging strategy is to correct comprehension and performance errors by asking for help when they feel they don't understand or stopping and rereading when they are confused Schraw and Dennison (1994). Based on the overall analysis in (Chart. 4), the average number of students who apply this strategy is 43% for the frequent category. Most students consistently check their understanding when they feel uncomfortable about speaking. This shows that there is curiosity and awareness to increase understanding which is applied significantly in students' strategy selection. based on a previous study by Lapele (2022), the debugging strategy had the highest percentage of student responses, namely 92%. While previous research respondents tended to always rely on debugging strategies, the current research shows that although they are still frequently used, these strategies are not used consistently.

the evaluation process includes analyzing the effectiveness of strategies used after a learning process, for example by asking yourself whether there is an easier way to do something after completing a task. Schraw & Moshman provide metacognitive regulation skills, namely evaluation where students analyze and express themselves in facing and carrying out material or tasks. Based on the overall analysis of the data in (chart 5), it shows that the highest percentage of all student responses, namely 43%, shows that students feel that they sometimes use metacognitive strategies in learning speaking. However, students still pay attention and assess how well the results they have achieved and identify areas that need improvement.

This means that most students are aware of the importance of evaluating their progress but have not applied it consistently in each learning session. Dangjin & Hartati's (2022) findings also state that evaluation has the lowest percentage of use. Learning evaluations often show low usage over time due to various factors. Many students do not fully understand the importance of evaluation, considering it a formality rather than a tool for constructive feedback. However, what is different is the findings of Lapele (2022) which shows that the use of evaluation in metacognitive strategy shows that the percentage is most often carried out in each lesson. Evaluation of metacognitive strategies helps students become more aware of their own thinking processes, which in turn improves their ability to better organize their learning (Flavell, 1979).

Overall, although metacognitive strategies such as planning, monitoring comprehension, information management, debugging, and evaluation have been adopted by some students, the application of these strategies has not been uniform and consistent. This shows the need to increase understanding and learning about the importance of metacognitive strategies in improving students' speaking skills.

Conclusion

This research aims to find out what metacognitive strategies students apply in learning speaking. this research involved 110 students from four different semesters namely second, fourth, sixth, and eighth semester. Based on the results of the data analysis presented in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that the research participants did not consistently use metacognitive strategies in learning to speak. Most students only occasionally carry out planning (41%) and evaluation (43%), which may be caused by a lack of understanding about how to plan effective learning and the importance of learning strategies in improving speaking skills. Comprehension monitoring strategies were used frequently (39%), indicating that some students considered them important, while information management strategies were also applied quite frequently (40%).

Debugging strategies were used by 43% of students, indicating efforts to improve their understanding, but not always consistently. Evaluation is only carried out occasionally (43%), although many students are aware of its importance, they do not apply it regularly. Overall, although metacognitive strategies such as planning, monitoring comprehension, information management, debugging, and evaluation have been adopted by some students, the application of these strategies has not been uniform and consistent. This shows the need to increase understanding and learning about the importance of metacognitive strategies in improving students' speaking skills.

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