

Developing Students' Fluency in Speaking through the Use of the 4/3/2 Technique

Arniel Paler Bangalao

Faculty, College of Education
PHINMA Cagayan De Oro College
Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines

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Abstract: Achieving fluency in speaking is a critical challenge for learners of English as a Second Language (ESL). This study examines the effectiveness of the 4/3/2 technique in enhancing students' oral fluency. Selected eleventh-grade students from a private institution in Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines, participated in this research during the second semester of the academic year 2022-2023. A descriptive-qualitative research design was utilized, incorporating an adopted speaking assessment rubric and an unstructured interview to assess students' progress and perceptions. Results demonstrated that the 4/3/2 technique significantly improved students' speech fluency. The majority of participants found this approach valuable for developing their communication skills. The implications for teaching strategies are discussed, along with recommendations for future studies. This research serves as a reference for ESL educators aiming to enhance students' speaking proficiency.

Keywords: Fluency, Speaking Skills, ESL, 4/3/2 Technique.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Developing speaking fluency is a complex process for ESL learners. Many struggle due to various cognitive and external factors, such as motivation, anxiety, and instructional methods [12]. Classroom observations in a private school revealed that eleventh-grade students exhibited limited speaking fluency despite receiving six hours of English instruction per week. Their speech frequently included hesitations, repetitions, and long pauses, suggesting a need for improved fluency-building techniques [7].

One approach that has been explored is the 4/3/2 technique, which emphasizes structured repetition and time pressure to enhance fluency. This method requires students to present the same speech three times, with progressively shorter durations (four minutes, three minutes, and two minutes). Repetitive practice reinforces memory recall, leading to improved speech delivery [6].

The theoretical foundation of this study is based on Automaticity Theory, which highlights the role of repeated practice in reducing cognitive load and facilitating automatic speech production [4]. Additionally, the Four Strands Framework supports fluency-based activities in language learning [10]. By incorporating these concepts,

the 4/3/2 technique is expected to help students articulate their thoughts more effectively.

This study aims to determine the extent to which the 4/3/2 technique enhances speaking fluency. The research question guiding this study is: How does the use of the 4/3/2 technique foster students' speaking fluency?

II. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

A descriptive-qualitative research design was adopted to explore the impact of the 4/3/2 technique on students' fluency. This method enabled an in-depth analysis of students' experiences and speech performance through assessment tools and qualitative feedback [11].

B. Research Participants

The study included seven eleventh-grade students from a private institution in Cagayan de Oro City. Convenience sampling was used, and participants voluntarily agreed to take part in the research after being informed of its objectives and procedures [4].

C. Research Instruments and Data-Gathering Techniques

Data were collected using two primary methods: (1) an adopted speaking assessment rubric and (2) an unstructured interview. The assessment rubric, structured on a three-point scale, evaluated fluency, coherence, and

topic development [5]. Students delivered their speeches three times with decreasing time limits, and their scores were compared. The interview gathered qualitative insights into their experiences and perceptions of the technique.

Table 1: Speaking Assessment Rubric

Score	Description
15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speaks fluently with only rare repetition or self-correction. Speaks coherently with fully appropriate cohesive features. Develops the topic fully and appropriately.
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speaks fluently with occasional repetition or self-correction; hesitation is usually content related and only rarely to search for language. Develops the topic coherently and appropriately.
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speaks at length with noticeable effort or loss of coherence. May demonstrate language-related hesitation or some repetition and/or self-correction.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings indicated that students' fluency scores improved between their first and final speech deliveries. Most participants demonstrated increased fluency and confidence as they progressed through the sessions.

Table 2: Students' Scores from Each Delivery

	Delivery 1 (4-minute talk)	Delivery 2 (3-minute talk)	Delivery 3 (2-minute talk)
Student 1	5	5	10
Student 2	10	10	15
Student 3	5	10	10
Student 4	10	15	15
Student 5	10	10	15
Student 6	5	10	10
Student 7	10	10	15

Interview responses supported these findings. While 57% of students found the technique beneficial in improving fluency, 43% reported feeling pressured by the time constraints. However, most acknowledged that repeated practice helped them overcome hesitation and build confidence in their speaking abilities [9].

Existing studies on the 4/3/2 technique align with these findings. Prior research suggests that structured repetition and gradual time reduction contribute to fluency enhancement [3]. Some studies, however, note that learners may disengage without interactive elements [2]. To address this, educators might consider incorporating peer feedback and collaborative speaking activities alongside the technique.

IV. CONCLUSION

This study underscores the effectiveness of the 4/3/2 technique in promoting speaking fluency among ESL learners. The structured repetition and time limitations foster improved fluency, confidence, and coherence in speech delivery [8].

For language educators, implementing the 4/3/2 technique in instruction can provide students with valuable opportunities for fluency development. Future research

should explore its applicability across different proficiency levels and assess the impact of additional interactive components.

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