

Adaptive Teaching Strategies to Enhance Speaking Fluency: A Photovoice Study on English Teachers' Support for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder

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ABSTRACT

Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) frequently encounter difficulties in English-speaking activities due to communication anxiety, limited social interaction, and challenges in responding to unpredictable classroom situations. These challenges require adaptive teaching practices that accommodate learners' diverse communication needs within inclusive English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. This study aimed to explore the adaptive teaching strategies implemented by an English teacher to enhance the speaking fluency of a student with ASD through a Photovoice approach. A qualitative single-case study design was employed involving one English teacher at an inclusive senior high school in Medan, Indonesia. Data were collected through Photovoice documentation, semi-structured interviews, reflective journals, and non-participant classroom observations. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, while photographs were systematically examined through visual description, symbolic interpretation, and contextual integration with participants' reflections and interview data. The findings revealed four interconnected adaptive teaching strategies: structured and predictable speaking routines, visual scaffolding, reduced communicative pressure through individualized interaction and extended wait time, and positive reinforcement. These strategies collectively reduced communication anxiety, increased speaking confidence, and promoted more active participation in classroom speaking activities. The study concludes that speaking fluency among students with ASD is fostered through adaptive instructional practices that integrate emotional support, structured learning environments, and responsive teacher–student interaction. The novelty of this study lies in positioning Photovoice not only as a reflective tool but also as a visual qualitative methodology that provides deeper insights into adaptive teaching practices within inclusive EFL classrooms.

Keywords: adaptive teaching; autism spectrum disorder; inclusive EFL; photovoice; speaking fluency.

INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education seeks to ensure equitable access to meaningful learning opportunities for all students, including those with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) (Eleni Karagianni & Anna Maria Driga, 2024; Petersson-Bloom & Holmqvist, 2022). In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, inclusive practices extend beyond physical placement by requiring teachers to accommodate learners' diverse cognitive, communicative, and social characteristics

(Escobar Garcés et al., 2022; Molina Contreras & Castro Bungacho, 2026). Among the four language skills, speaking presents one of the greatest challenges for students with ASD because successful oral communication depends not only on linguistic knowledge but also on spontaneous interaction, emotional regulation, and social responsiveness (de Saint-Seine et al., 2026; Gomes et al., 2021; Molina Contreras & Castro Bungacho, 2026). Consequently, many autistic learners experience barriers to active participation in classroom speaking activities, making the development of appropriate instructional support a central concern in inclusive EFL education (Escobar Garcés et al., 2022; Maysuroh et al., 2024; Nascimento et al., 2025).

Previous research has consistently reported that learners with ASD often experience communication anxiety, difficulty initiating conversations, restricted social interaction, and limited flexibility in responding to unpredictable communicative situations (Isroyati et al., 2025). These characteristics frequently reduce students' willingness to participate in oral tasks, even when they possess sufficient vocabulary or grammatical knowledge (de Saint-Seine et al., 2026; Isroyati et al., 2025). Therefore, difficulties in speaking among autistic learners should not be viewed solely as linguistic limitations but also as consequences of interactional and emotional challenges that emerge during classroom communication. Recent studies further emphasize that inclusive language learning environments should promote psychological safety, predictable learning experiences, and meaningful participation to enable autistic learners to engage more confidently in spoken English activities (Petersson-Bloom & Holmqvist, 2022).

Responding to these challenges requires instructional approaches that are sufficiently flexible to accommodate individual learner needs (Lindner & Schwab, 2025; Maulidah & Mufalakhah, 2024). Rather than expecting all students to achieve learning objectives through identical instructional procedures, teachers in inclusive classrooms are expected to modify classroom interactions, learning materials, task structures, and communication strategies according to learners' characteristics and learning profiles (Lindner & Schwab, 2025; Maulidah & Mufalakhah, 2024). Such responsive instructional practices are commonly conceptualized as adaptive teaching, which emphasizes continuous pedagogical adjustment based on classroom realities instead of standardized instructional delivery (Jennifer G. Oyan et al., 2024). For learners with ASD, adaptive teaching may involve predictable classroom routines, multimodal visual supports, individualized interaction, gradual speaking opportunities, extended wait time, and positive reinforcement, all of which have been reported to reduce communication anxiety while encouraging greater classroom participation (Jennifer G. Oyan et al., 2024; Nthibeli et al., 2022; Oktavia et al., 2025; Wardani & Nurhayati, 2026).

Within this context, speaking fluency should be understood as a multidimensional construct encompassing smooth, meaningful, and confident oral communication rather than merely rapid or grammatically accurate speech. Contemporary perspectives suggest that fluency develops through repeated communicative practice within supportive learning environments where learners feel sufficiently secure to take communicative risks (Fernández Sesma et al., 2025; Namaziandost et al., 2020; Wulandari & Salsabilla, 2026). For autistic learners in particular, fluency development is closely associated with instructional conditions that minimize uncertainty while providing explicit communicative guidance (Nthibeli et al., 2022; Wardani & Nurhayati, 2026). Consequently, adaptive instructional support and affective classroom environments become equally important in facilitating successful oral communication in inclusive EFL settings (Fernández Sesma et al., 2025; Karimova et al., 2026; Ode et al., 2025; Petersson-Bloom & Holmqvist, 2022).

Although adaptive teaching has received increasing scholarly attention within inclusive education, empirical evidence explaining how English teachers adapt speaking instruction for learners with ASD remains limited, particularly in EFL contexts (Petersson-Bloom & Holmqvist, 2022; Sandra & Kurniawati, 2021). Existing studies have primarily examined differentiated instruction, classroom management, or inclusive pedagogical principles in

general, while providing relatively little detail about how teachers make instructional decisions during speaking activities (Maulidah & Mufalakhah, 2024; Nthibeli et al., 2022; Sandra & Kurniawati, 2021). Moreover, previous investigations have tended to emphasize student outcomes rather than the pedagogical reasoning that underpins teachers' adaptive practices (Jennifer G. Oyan et al., 2024; Sandra & Kurniawati, 2021). Consequently, the instructional processes through which teachers respond to communication anxiety, participation barriers, and diverse learner needs during speaking instruction remain insufficiently understood (Sandra & Kurniawati, 2021; Wardani & Nurhayati, 2026).

To better understand these instructional processes, researchers have increasingly recognized the importance of reflective inquiry in examining teachers' classroom practices (Cook, 2024; Kelly, 2025). Reflection enables teachers to evaluate instructional decisions, identify challenges encountered during learning activities, and refine pedagogical strategies based on classroom experiences (Kelly, 2025; Lin, 2025). Within qualitative educational research, Photovoice has emerged as a participatory visual methodology that allows participants to document meaningful experiences through photographs while constructing interpretations of those experiences using reflective narratives (Kelly, 2025). Unlike conventional interview-based qualitative approaches, Photovoice positions photographs as primary sources of evidence that capture contextual realities, instructional interactions, and pedagogical practices that may not be fully articulated through verbal descriptions alone (Lin, 2025; Wang, 2020). By integrating visual documentation with participant reflection, Photovoice enables researchers to explore not only what teachers do, but also how instructional practices are visually enacted and interpreted within authentic classroom contexts (Kelly, 2025; Lin, 2025).

Despite its methodological potential, the application of Photovoice in inclusive EFL research remains relatively limited (Kelly, 2025). Previous studies have predominantly employed Photovoice to explore teacher beliefs, professional identity, or general classroom experiences (Cook & Quigley, 2020; Darbyshire & Raven, 2021), whereas considerably fewer investigations have examined adaptive teaching practices designed specifically to support speaking fluency among learners with ASD (Kelly, 2025; Wang, 2020). Furthermore, existing studies frequently treat photographs as complementary illustrations accompanying interview findings rather than as primary visual data requiring systematic analysis (Wang, 2020). As a result, limited attention has been devoted to understanding how visual evidence can reveal the pedagogical meanings embedded within adaptive instructional practices implemented in inclusive language classrooms (Kelly, 2025; Lin, 2025).

Based on the existing literature, three interrelated research gaps can therefore be identified. First, empirical evidence describing how English teachers adapt speaking instruction for students with ASD in inclusive EFL classrooms remains limited, particularly regarding the pedagogical decisions made during classroom interaction (Petersson-Bloom & Holmqvist, 2022; Sandra & Kurniawati, 2021). Second, research investigating the development of speaking fluency among autistic learners has largely emphasized learning outcomes while paying comparatively little attention to the instructional processes that facilitate communicative participation (Sandra & Kurniawati, 2021; Yan et al., 2024). Third, although Photovoice has gained recognition as a participatory visual methodology, its application in inclusive EFL research has rarely incorporated systematic visual analysis to examine teachers' adaptive practices (Kelly, 2025). Consequently, there remains insufficient understanding of how visual documentation can contribute to interpreting instructional adaptations and teacher reflection within authentic classroom settings (Kelly, 2025; Lin, 2025).

Addressing these gaps, the present study investigates adaptive teaching strategies employed by an English teacher to enhance the speaking fluency of a student with Autism Spectrum Disorder in an inclusive EFL classroom through a Photovoice approach. Rather than

using photographs merely as supporting documentation, this study conceptualizes visual data as an integral source of evidence for understanding adaptive instructional practices (Lin, 2025; Wang, 2020). Photographs are interpreted alongside teachers' reflective narratives, classroom observations, and semi-structured interviews to construct a comprehensive understanding of how adaptive teaching is implemented, experienced, and reflected upon during speaking instruction (Kelly, 2025; Lin, 2025). This approach provides a richer representation of classroom practice by integrating visual and verbal forms of qualitative evidence (Lin, 2025; Wang, 2020).

Accordingly, this study aims to (1) identify the adaptive teaching strategies employed to support the speaking fluency of a student with ASD, (2) examine how the teacher reflects on these instructional practices through Photovoice, and (3) explore the pedagogical implications of adaptive teaching for inclusive EFL speaking instruction. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically to the literature on adaptive pedagogy, inclusive language education, and visual qualitative research by demonstrating how Photovoice can function not only as a reflective tool but also as a rigorous visual methodology for investigating classroom practices (Kelly, 2025; Khairullina et al., 2025). Practically, the study offers context-sensitive insights that may assist English teachers, teacher educators, and curriculum developers in designing more responsive speaking instruction for neurodiverse learners in inclusive educational settings (Gotling et al., 2024; Maulidah & Mufalakhah, 2024; Ubaque-Casallas, 2024).

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative single-case study design using a Photovoice approach to explore how an English teacher implemented adaptive teaching strategies to enhance the speaking fluency of a student with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in an inclusive English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom (Escobar Garcés et al., 2022; Wang, 2020). A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because it enabled an in-depth exploration of the teacher's experiences, pedagogical decisions, and reflective practices within a natural classroom context (Kelly, 2025). Photovoice was used as a participatory visual methodology that allowed the teacher to document instructional practices through photographs and reflective narratives, providing insights into how adaptive teaching strategies were implemented and interpreted (Kelly, 2025; Wang, 2020).

The participant was an English teacher from an inclusive senior high school in Medan, Indonesia, who had experience teaching students with ASD (Campbell et al., 2020; Escobar Garcés et al., 2022; Molina Contreras & Castro Bungacho, 2026). Purposive sampling was employed because the participant possessed direct experience implementing adaptive instructional practices relevant to the objectives of the study (Ahmad & Wilkins, 2025; Campbell et al., 2020; Nyimbili & Nyimbili, 2024). To maintain confidentiality, the participant's identity was protected through the use of a pseudonym (Denieffe, 2020). As this research adopted a single-case study design, the purpose of participant selection was to obtain an in-depth understanding of one particular instructional context rather than to achieve statistical generalization (Campbell et al., 2020).

Data were collected through Photovoice documentation, semi-structured interviews, reflective journals, and classroom observations (Ahmad & Wilkins, 2025). During the Photovoice process, the participant captured photographs representing adaptive teaching practices used to support speaking fluency among ASD learners (Kelly, 2025; Wang, 2020). Each photograph was accompanied by reflective captions based on the SHOWeD framework to facilitate critical reflection (Khoirun Nisa, 2021). Semi-structured interviews were

conducted before and after the Photovoice process to explore the teacher's experiences and interpretations of the photographs (Ahmad & Wilkins, 2025; Birt et al., 2016). In addition, the participant maintained a reflective journal throughout the study to document instructional decisions, emotional responses, and classroom experiences (Kelly, 2025; Khairullina et al., 2025). Non-participant classroom observations were also conducted to provide contextual evidence regarding the implementation of adaptive teaching strategies and student participation during speaking activities (Lin, 2025; Molina Contreras & Castro Bungacho, 2026).

The collected data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis (Byrne, 2022; Nowell et al., 2017). The analysis began with repeated reading of interview transcripts, reflective journals, classroom observation notes, and Photovoice narratives to achieve familiarity with the data (Byrne, 2022; Nowell et al., 2017). Initial codes were then generated before being organized into broader themes representing adaptive teaching practices that supported speaking fluency (Byrne, 2022; Nowell et al., 2017). Unlike conventional qualitative analysis that relies primarily on verbal narratives, the analysis of Photovoice data also involved systematic visual interpretation (Khairullina et al., 2025; Lin, 2025; Wang, 2020). Each photograph was first examined by describing its observable visual elements, including classroom setting, participants' positions, instructional materials, gestures, interaction patterns, and learning activities (Lin, 2025; Wang, 2020). These visual elements were subsequently interpreted to identify their pedagogical and symbolic meanings in relation to adaptive teaching practices (Khairullina et al., 2025; Wang, 2020). Finally, visual interpretations were integrated with participants' SHOWeD reflections, interview responses, classroom observations, and reflective journals to construct comprehensive interpretations while ensuring that the meanings assigned to each photograph remained grounded in the participant's own perspectives rather than solely in the researcher's interpretation (Birt et al., 2016; Lin, 2025). This procedure positioned photographs as primary visual evidence rather than merely illustrative documentation accompanying interview findings (Wang, 2020).

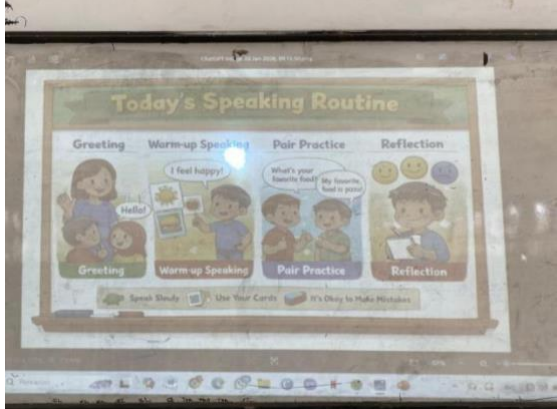
To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, triangulation was conducted by comparing evidence across Photovoice documentation, interviews, reflective journals, and classroom observations (Morgan, 2024; Morse, 2015). Member checking was also employed by inviting the participant to review preliminary interpretations of both visual and textual findings (Birt et al., 2016; Morse, 2015). In addition, detailed documentation of the research procedures and analytical decisions was maintained throughout the study to enhance credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability following Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria (Nowell et al., 2017).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

STRUCTURED AND PREDICTABLE SPEAKING ROUTINES

The first theme that emerged from the thematic analysis was the implementation of structured and predictable speaking routines as an adaptive strategy to support the speaking fluency of the student with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). This strategy consistently appeared across classroom observations, Photovoice documentation, interviews, and reflective journals, indicating that instructional predictability played an essential role in reducing communication anxiety before speaking activities were introduced.

TABLE 1. Structured Speaking Routine Displayed in the Classroom

	The first photograph captured a visual schedule displayed prominently at the front of the classroom before the speaking lesson began. The schedule illustrated a fixed sequence of learning activities consisting of greeting, warm-up, guided speaking practice, pair interaction, and reflection. The teacher stood beside the visual routine while directing the student's attention toward each instructional stage before oral participation was expected. Rather than immediately encouraging the student to speak, the teacher first oriented the learner to the visual sequence, allowing the student to anticipate the progression of classroom activities.
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From a visual perspective, several important elements could be identified. The visual schedule occupied the central position in the classroom, making it continuously visible throughout the lesson. The images and simple written instructions presented each activity in chronological order, reducing the cognitive demands associated with processing verbal explanations alone. The teacher's position beside the schedule further reinforced the function of the visual routine as a shared instructional reference rather than merely classroom decoration. Meanwhile, the student's sustained visual attention toward the routine suggested that the learner relied on predictable visual information before engaging in verbal interaction.

Beyond its physical appearance, the photograph conveyed symbolic meanings regarding inclusive instructional practice. The structured routine represented more than classroom organization; it symbolized emotional predictability and instructional stability. For learners with ASD, whose communication is often influenced by unexpected environmental changes, the visible routine functioned as a form of emotional scaffolding that reduced uncertainty before speaking tasks began. Likewise, the teacher's close physical proximity reflected continuous pedagogical support instead of evaluative supervision, creating a classroom atmosphere that encouraged participation rather than performance pressure.

This interpretation was further reinforced through the teacher's Photovoice reflection using the SHOWeD framework:

"I see a structured speaking routine displayed in the classroom. The routine helps ASD students know when they need to speak. Predictable routines reduce anxiety in speaking activities. Sudden speaking tasks make ASD students anxious and silent. I will maintain consistent speaking routines."

The teacher's reflection demonstrated that the photograph represented deliberate pedagogical planning rather than routine classroom documentation. The visual schedule was intentionally designed to reduce communicative uncertainty by allowing the learner to mentally prepare before participating in oral activities.

Similar findings emerged during the semi-structured interview. The teacher explained:

"When speaking tasks suddenly happen, the ASD student usually becomes silent. It is not because he cannot do it, but because he feels shocked and anxious. That's why I keep the same sequence in every meeting. For example, greeting first, then warm-up, then pair practice. This way, he is more prepared. He knows, 'Okay, I will speak in this part.'"

The teacher further stated:

"When the routine is consistent, he responds faster. Even though he still speaks slowly, he is willing to try. But when the schedule changes too often, he tends to withdraw again."

These interview findings confirmed that instructional predictability reduced communication anxiety and increased the student's readiness to participate in speaking activities. Rather than focusing solely on language production, the teacher prioritized emotional preparedness as an essential prerequisite for successful communication.

Evidence from the reflective journals strengthened this interpretation. During the first week, the teacher recorded:

"Today I maintained the usual speaking routine. During the greeting session, the ASD student started to respond, even if the answer was short. He looked calmer because he was familiar with the sequence. I realized that structure does not make the class rigid. Instead, it helps the student feel safe."

A subsequent journal entry demonstrated a deeper pedagogical realization:

"I learned that even a simple routine can be a powerful adaptive strategy. I used to think routines were only for classroom discipline, but for an ASD student, routines function as emotional support during speaking."

When the visual evidence, Photovoice reflection, interview data, reflective journals, and classroom observations were interpreted collectively, they revealed that structured speaking routines served multiple pedagogical functions. They organized classroom activities, reduced emotional uncertainty, provided cognitive preparation, and gradually strengthened communicative confidence. The photographs illustrated how predictability was physically embedded within the learning environment, while the accompanying narratives explained why these visual structures were meaningful for the student's participation.

These findings support who argued that predictable instructional environments facilitate emotional regulation among autistic learners. Likewise, Parsons and Guldberg (2021) emphasized that structured learning environments reduce cognitive overload by allowing learners to anticipate classroom expectations (Eleni Karagianni & Anna Maria Driga, 2024). The present study extends these findings by demonstrating visually how predictable routines become observable adaptive teaching practices within inclusive EFL classrooms (Eleni Karagianni & Anna Maria Driga, 2024; Escobar Garcés et al., 2022). Unlike previous studies that primarily relied on interview data, the Photovoice approach enabled the teacher to capture concrete classroom moments illustrating how instructional predictability functioned as an adaptive mechanism supporting speaking fluency (Kelly, 2025; Lin, 2025). Consequently, speaking fluency should not be viewed solely as an outcome of linguistic competence but also as the result of emotionally supportive and visually structured learning environments that foster communicative readiness among learners with ASD.

VISUAL SCAFFOLDING TO SUPPORT SPEAKING PRODUCTION

The second theme identified from the thematic analysis was the implementation of visual scaffolding as an adaptive instructional strategy to facilitate the student's speaking production. Evidence from the Photovoice documentation, classroom observations, interviews, and reflective journals consistently demonstrated that visual supports reduced the student's hesitation during speaking activities by providing concrete communicative references before oral language production occurred. Rather than functioning solely as instructional media, the visual materials served as adaptive communication tools that enabled the student to organize ideas and formulate verbal responses with greater confidence.

TABLE 2. Emotion Pictures and Sentence Starters on the Board

	One of the photographs documented the teacher introducing emotion cards, sentence starters, and picture prompts during a guided speaking activity. The visual composition showed the instructional materials arranged at the student's eye level while the teacher remained seated beside the learner instead of standing in front of the class. The student focused attention on the visual prompts before attempting to answer the teacher's questions, suggesting that the learner processed visual information prior to producing spoken language. The teacher simultaneously pointed to the emotion cards while providing simple verbal cues, creating a multimodal interaction in which visual and verbal supports complemented one another throughout the speaking task.
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The visual evidence revealed several important instructional elements. First, the emotion cards presented familiar facial expressions that enabled the student to associate emotions with vocabulary and communicative situations. Second, the sentence starters reduced linguistic demands by providing partially completed utterances that guided language production without requiring the student to generate complete sentences independently. Third, the teacher's physical proximity and seated position minimized the perception of formal evaluation, creating a more collaborative learning interaction. Collectively, these visual elements illustrated that speaking instruction was intentionally designed to reduce cognitive overload while gradually encouraging independent oral communication.

From a symbolic perspective, the photographs represented a shift from teacher-centred instruction toward learner-centred communication support. The emotion cards symbolized accessible pathways for expressing meaning, while the sentence starters represented structured linguistic bridges connecting visual understanding with spoken expression. Rather than expecting spontaneous speech production, the teacher provided successive layers of support that allowed the student to transform visual representations into verbal responses. The teacher's positioning beside the learner further symbolized partnership and guidance rather than authority, reinforcing an emotionally supportive classroom environment that encouraged participation instead of emphasizing performance.

The teacher's Photovoice reflection further explained the pedagogical significance of the photograph:

"I see the student looking at the emotion pictures before speaking. These pictures help him understand what he wants to say because he can connect the image with his own feelings. Without visual support, he usually hesitates for a long time. I realized that these pictures are not only teaching media but also communication bridges that help him organize his ideas before speaking."

This reflection suggested that the photograph represented more than the use of classroom materials. Instead, it illustrated how visual resources functioned as adaptive scaffolding that supported both cognitive processing and emotional regulation during speaking activities.

The interview data reinforced this interpretation. The teacher explained:

"When I used emotion pictures and sentence starters, the ASD student spoke faster. He did not pause as long as he usually does. Even though his sentences were still simple, he could produce complete responses more confidently."

The teacher further added:

"Visual supports reduce the student's thinking burden. He does not need to imagine everything by himself because the pictures already give him clues. That makes him less afraid of making mistakes."

These interview findings indicated that visual scaffolding reduced processing demands during speaking tasks by transforming abstract linguistic concepts into concrete visual representations. Consequently, the student could allocate greater cognitive resources to language production instead of struggling to organize ideas internally.

The teacher's reflective journal provided additional evidence supporting these observations:

"Today I noticed that the student immediately pointed to one of the emotion cards before answering my question. Although his response was still short, he no longer remained silent as he often did during previous lessons. The pictures appeared to help him arrange his thoughts before speaking."

Another journal entry documented the teacher's developing understanding of visual scaffolding:

"I realized that visual supports are not simply classroom media. They function as adaptive teaching strategies that reduce communication anxiety and help students express themselves with greater confidence. The student became more willing to speak because he knew the pictures would guide him if he forgot the vocabulary."

The integration of visual evidence, Photovoice reflections, interview responses, classroom observations, and reflective journals demonstrated that visual scaffolding functioned as an essential adaptive teaching strategy supporting speaking fluency among learners with ASD. The photographs illustrated how visual materials mediated communication by providing concrete references before oral production occurred, whereas the teacher's reflections explained the pedagogical reasoning underlying their implementation. Unlike conventional language instruction, which frequently depends on verbal explanations alone, the adaptive use of emotion cards, picture prompts, and sentence starters created multiple communication pathways that accommodated the learner's cognitive and linguistic characteristics.

These findings indicate that visual scaffolding played a significant role in supporting the student's speaking production by reducing cognitive demands during speaking activities and providing accessible pathways for communication. The use of emotion cards, picture prompts, and sentence starters enabled the student to organize ideas before producing spoken responses, thereby increasing confidence and reducing hesitation during classroom interaction. These findings are consistent with (Wardani & Nurhayati, 2026), who reported that visual supports facilitate communication by reducing anxiety and promoting active participation among learners with Autism Spectrum Disorder in inclusive classrooms. Similarly, (Jennifer G. Oyan et al., 2024) emphasized that adaptive teaching requires teachers to integrate multimodal instructional supports that accommodate learners' cognitive and communicative characteristics rather than relying on uniform instructional practices. Furthermore, (Fernández Sesma et al., 2025) argued that speaking fluency develops more effectively when learners receive appropriate scaffolding within supportive learning environments that encourage meaningful communication. The present study extends these perspectives by demonstrating, through systematic visual analysis of Photovoice documentation, that visual scaffolding functioned not merely as instructional media but also as cognitive support, communication mediation, and emotional support that enhanced the student's readiness to participate in spoken English activities within an inclusive EFL classroom.

REDUCED COMMUNICATIVE PRESSURE THROUGH ADAPTIVE INTERACTION

The third theme emerging from the thematic analysis highlighted the teacher's efforts to reduce communicative pressure through individualized adaptive interaction. The findings

demonstrated that speaking fluency was facilitated not only by instructional materials but also by the manner in which classroom interaction was organized. Evidence from the Photovoice documentation, classroom observations, interviews, and reflective journals consistently indicated that the teacher intentionally minimized performance pressure by providing individualized support, extending wait time, and creating opportunities for gradual verbal participation. These adaptive interactional practices enabled the student to communicate at a pace consistent with individual learning needs while reducing anxiety associated with immediate oral responses.

TABLE 3. One-on-One Speaking Support (No Student Face Shown)

	One of the photographs documented the teacher sitting beside the student during an individual speaking activity rather than standing at the front of the classroom. Vocabulary cards and visual prompts were placed between the teacher and the learner, creating a shared instructional space where communication occurred through collaborative interaction instead of teacher-centred questioning. The student appeared to maintain visual attention toward the learning materials while pausing briefly before responding. Rather than interrupting the silence or immediately supplying the correct answer, the teacher remained seated calmly and allowed sufficient time for the student to formulate a response independently. The classroom environment shown in the photograph appeared quiet, with minimal distractions, enabling the learner to focus on the speaking task without external pressure.
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Several important visual elements were evident in the photograph. First, the teacher's seated position beside the learner reduced the physical and psychological distance typically associated with teacher-centred instruction. Second, the absence of evaluative gestures, such as pointing, correcting, or demanding immediate answers, suggested a supportive rather than judgmental interaction. Third, the shared use of vocabulary cards between the teacher and the student illustrated that learning was constructed collaboratively rather than imposed through direct instruction. Finally, the student's relaxed body posture and sustained attention toward the learning materials indicated a classroom atmosphere characterized by patience and emotional security.

Beyond these observable elements, the photograph conveyed important symbolic meanings regarding adaptive teaching in inclusive classrooms. The teacher's physical proximity represented partnership, empathy, and continuous instructional support rather than authority or evaluation. Likewise, the deliberate use of extended wait time symbolized respect for the learner's individual processing speed, acknowledging that communication develops through opportunities to think rather than through immediate performance. The absence of visible classroom pressure reflected an instructional philosophy in which successful communication was measured by meaningful participation rather than rapid or error-free speech. Consequently, the photograph illustrated that adaptive interaction involved modifying not only instructional materials but also the social dynamics of classroom communication.

The teacher's Photovoice reflection further clarified the meaning represented in the photograph:

"I see myself sitting beside the student instead of standing in front of him. I intentionally give him enough time before expecting an answer because he often needs longer to organize his thoughts. If I ask him to respond immediately, he usually becomes anxious and remains silent. Sitting beside him reminds me that my role is to support rather than pressure him."

This reflection suggested that reducing communicative pressure was not an incidental classroom practice but a deliberate pedagogical decision intended to create a psychologically safe environment for speaking. The teacher recognized that providing additional processing time was an adaptive strategy rather than a sign of lowering academic expectations.

The interview findings reinforced this interpretation. The teacher explained:

"Sometimes he already knows the answer, but he cannot say it immediately. If I wait patiently, he usually responds after several seconds. If I repeat the question too quickly or complete the sentence for him, he becomes even more nervous."

The teacher further stated:

"I learned that silence does not always mean the student does not understand. Often, he is simply processing the information. My responsibility is to give him enough time instead of rushing him."

These interview responses demonstrated that the teacher interpreted pauses as part of the student's communication process rather than indicators of failure. Consequently, instructional interaction emphasized patience, encouragement, and emotional support instead of speed and accuracy.

The reflective journal provided additional evidence supporting these observations. One journal entry recorded:

"Today I waited almost ten seconds before the student answered. At first, I thought he would remain silent, but eventually he completed the sentence independently. This experience reminded me that giving additional time is often more effective than immediately helping him."

Another reflection documented the teacher's evolving understanding of communicative support:

"Previously, I believed that helping students meant providing answers quickly whenever they struggled. Through this experience, I realized that real support sometimes means allowing students enough space to think, even if the classroom becomes silent for a while."

The integration of visual evidence, Photovoice reflections, interviews, classroom observations, and reflective journals demonstrated that reducing communicative pressure constituted a fundamental adaptive teaching strategy for supporting speaking fluency among learners with ASD. The photographs illustrated how adaptive interaction was enacted through physical positioning, patient communication, and extended wait time, whereas the accompanying narratives explained why these interactional adjustments were pedagogically meaningful. Together, these findings indicated that speaking development depended not only on instructional resources but also on the quality of interpersonal relationships established during classroom communication.

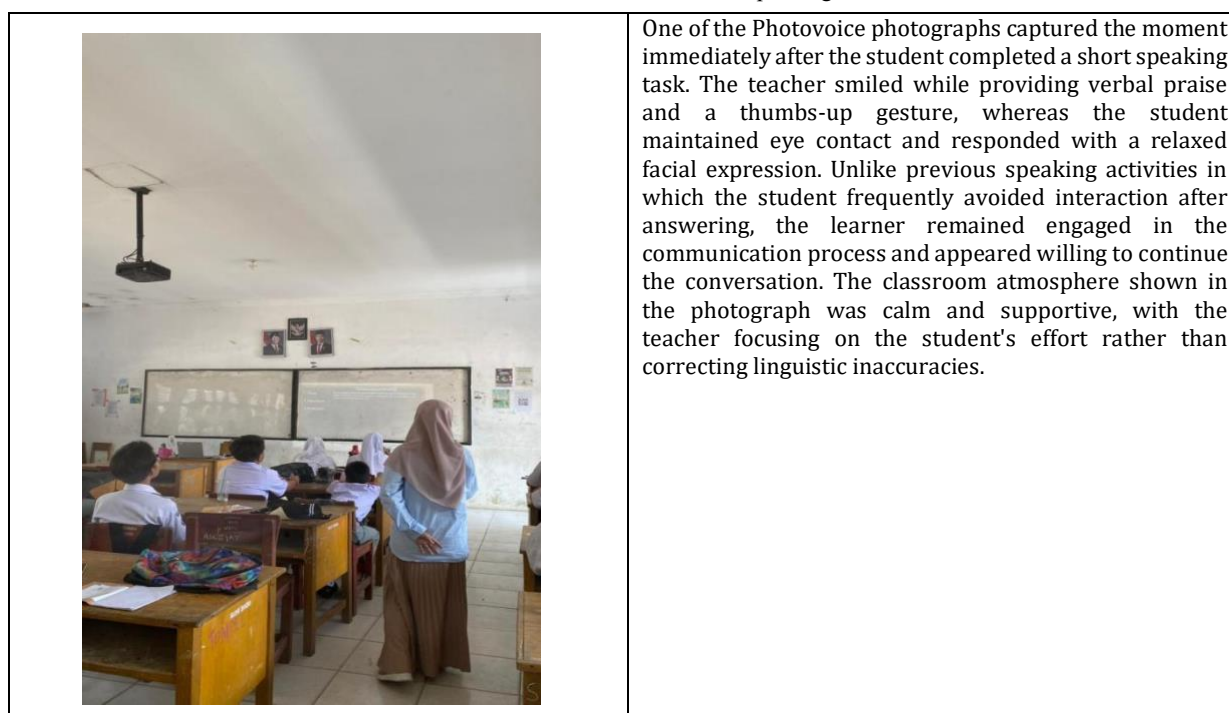
These findings are consistent with (Petersson-Bloom & Holmqvist, 2022) who emphasized that psychologically supportive learning environments enable students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) to participate more confidently in classroom communication by reducing emotional barriers and uncertainty. Similarly, argued that inclusive English language instruction requires teachers to adapt classroom interaction according to learners' diverse communication needs rather than expecting uniform participation from all students. Furthermore, (Jennifer G. Oyan et al., 2024) highlighted that adaptive teaching is characterized by teachers' continuous pedagogical adjustments in response to learners' cognitive, emotional,

and communicative characteristics. The present study extends these perspectives by providing visual evidence through the Photovoice approach, demonstrating that the teacher's physical positioning, the use of extended wait time, and supportive interpersonal communication were not incidental classroom practices but intentional adaptive strategies that reduced communication anxiety and encouraged greater participation in speaking activities. These findings further suggest that speaking fluency among students with ASD develops more effectively within learning environments that prioritize emotional security, individualized interaction, and responsive instructional support.

POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT TO FOSTER SPEAKING CONFIDENCE

The fourth theme identified from the thematic analysis was the use of positive reinforcement to strengthen the student's speaking confidence and encourage sustained participation in oral communication. The findings indicated that adaptive teaching was not limited to modifying instructional materials or classroom interaction but also involved creating an emotionally supportive learning environment through continuous encouragement and positive feedback. Evidence from the Photovoice documentation, classroom observations, interviews, and reflective journals consistently demonstrated that verbal praise, affirmative gestures, and positive teacher responses reduced the student's fear of making mistakes and gradually increased confidence during speaking activities.

FIGURE 4. Positive Feedback for Speaking



Several significant visual elements emerged from the photograph. The teacher's smile, eye contact, and affirmative body language conveyed acceptance and encouragement rather than evaluation. The thumbs-up gesture functioned as an immediate non-verbal acknowledgement of the student's participation, while the absence of corrective expressions suggested that the teacher intentionally prioritized communicative confidence over linguistic perfection. The student's open body posture and sustained attention toward the teacher further indicated that positive reinforcement contributed to a learning environment in which the learner felt emotionally secure to participate in subsequent speaking activities.

From a symbolic perspective, the photograph represented a shift in instructional emphasis from error correction to confidence building. The teacher's encouraging facial expression symbolized recognition of the student's effort rather than judgment of performance, reinforcing the principle that successful communication begins with willingness to speak. Likewise, the student's relaxed posture reflected growing trust in the teacher and increased confidence in participating despite linguistic limitations. These visual elements suggested that positive reinforcement functioned as an adaptive strategy that strengthened the learner's emotional readiness while promoting sustained engagement in oral communication.

The teacher's Photovoice reflection further explained the pedagogical significance of the photograph:

"I see myself smiling and giving positive feedback immediately after the student finished speaking. Even though his answer was not perfect, I wanted him to feel proud that he had tried. I realized that confidence develops when students feel appreciated for their effort, not only for correct answers."

This reflection demonstrated that the teacher intentionally used positive reinforcement to cultivate emotional security rather than merely acknowledging academic achievement. The photograph illustrated how encouragement became an integral component of adaptive teaching by creating opportunities for the student to experience success during speaking activities.

The interview findings further supported this interpretation. The teacher explained:

"I always try to respond positively whenever he attempts to speak. If I immediately correct every mistake, he becomes reluctant to continue. I prefer to appreciate his effort first, then provide feedback gradually after he feels more confident."

The teacher further stated:

"For this student, confidence comes before accuracy. Once he believes that making mistakes is acceptable, he becomes much more willing to express his ideas."

These interview responses suggested that the teacher deliberately postponed corrective feedback in order to preserve the student's willingness to communicate. Speaking confidence was therefore viewed as a prerequisite for language development rather than a consequence of linguistic accuracy.

Similar evidence appeared in the reflective journals. One journal entry recorded:

"Today I praised the student after he completed two simple sentences independently. He smiled immediately and volunteered to answer another question without being asked. This was unusual because he normally avoided additional speaking opportunities."

Another reflective entry revealed the teacher's evolving understanding of positive reinforcement:

"I realized that a simple smile or encouraging word could influence the student's confidence more than repeated corrections. The student became increasingly willing to communicate because he felt that his effort was valued, even when his English was still developing."

The integration of Photovoice documentation, interviews, reflective journals, classroom observations, and visual analysis demonstrated that positive reinforcement played a significant role in promoting speaking confidence among learners with ASD. The photographs illustrated how encouragement was communicated not only through verbal praise but also through facial expressions, gestures, and supportive interpersonal interaction. These visual representations complemented the teacher's reflections by revealing that emotional affirmation was consistently embedded within everyday classroom practice rather than occurring only during formal assessment or evaluation.

These findings are consistent with (Jennifer G. Oyan et al., 2024), who emphasized that adaptive teaching involves responsive instructional practices that provide continuous encouragement and emotional support according to learners' individual needs. Similarly, (Petersson-Bloom & Holmqvist, 2022) argued that emotionally supportive classroom environments enable students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) to participate more confidently by reducing communication anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. Furthermore, (Fernández Sesma et al., 2025) explained that speaking fluency develops more effectively when learners are provided with supportive learning experiences that encourage meaningful communication rather than focusing solely on linguistic accuracy. The present study extends these perspectives by providing visual evidence through the Photovoice approach, demonstrating that positive reinforcement was enacted through the teacher's verbal encouragement, supportive facial expressions, affirmative gestures, and responsive interpersonal communication during authentic classroom interaction. The photographs further revealed that positive reinforcement functioned not merely as praise but as an adaptive pedagogical strategy that fostered emotional security, sustained participation, and gradually strengthened the student's confidence to engage in spoken English activities within an inclusive EFL classroom.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study explored how an English teacher implemented adaptive teaching strategies to enhance the speaking fluency of a student with ASD in an inclusive EFL classroom through a Photovoice approach. The findings demonstrated that speaking fluency was supported through four complementary adaptive teaching strategies: structured and predictable speaking routines, visual scaffolding, reduced communicative pressure through individualized interaction and extended wait time, and positive reinforcement. Rather than functioning independently, these strategies interacted to create a predictable, emotionally supportive, and communicatively accessible learning environment that encouraged the student to participate more confidently in speaking activities.

The findings further suggest that speaking fluency among learners with ASD should not be viewed solely as a linguistic outcome but also as the result of adaptive pedagogical practices that address learners' emotional, cognitive, and communicative needs. By integrating classroom observations, interviews, reflective journals, and systematic visual analysis, this study demonstrates that adaptive teaching is a dynamic instructional process requiring continuous pedagogical adjustment according to learners' responses and classroom situations.

Methodologically, this study contributes to the growing use of Photovoice in educational research by positioning photographs as primary qualitative data rather than supplementary classroom documentation. Through systematic visual description, symbolic interpretation, and contextual integration with teachers' reflective narratives, Photovoice enabled a richer understanding of adaptive teaching practices that might not have been fully revealed through interviews alone. This finding highlights the potential of visual methodologies for investigating inclusive teaching practices within authentic classroom contexts.

The practical implications of this study are primarily relevant to English teachers working in similar inclusive EFL classrooms. The findings suggest that structured classroom routines, visual learning supports, individualized interaction, extended processing time, and positive reinforcement may help reduce communication anxiety while encouraging greater participation among students with ASD. These strategies should be adapted according to individual learner characteristics rather than applied as universal instructional procedures.

This study is limited by its single-case design involving one teacher in one inclusive classroom. Consequently, the findings should be interpreted as context-specific insights rather than generalized recommendations applicable to all educational settings. In addition, the study primarily examined the teacher's perspective, whereas the experiences of students with ASD, parents, and special education teachers were not explored. Future research may involve multiple participants across different inclusive schools and incorporate diverse stakeholder perspectives to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of adaptive teaching practices. Further studies may also investigate how Photovoice can be integrated with other qualitative approaches to strengthen visual inquiry within inclusive EFL research.

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