

## Metacognitive Awareness: Shaping Students' Speaking Performance in the Hospitality Setting

M Bambang Purwanto \*

Politeknik Prasetiya Mandiri, Indonesia

Email: [mbambangpurwanto@gmail.com](mailto:mbambangpurwanto@gmail.com) \*

**Abstract;** *This study aims to explore the role of metacognitive awareness in improving the speaking performance of hospitality vocational students. Using a mixed-methods design, this study involved 50 students of the Prasetiya Mandiri Polytechnic and combined quantitative data from the adapted Metacognitive Awareness Inventory (MAI) as well as role-play-based speaking tests, with qualitative data from in-depth interviews. The results of correlation analysis showed a significant positive relationship ( $r = 0.65$ ) between metacognitive scores and speaking performance. The most dominant metacognitive strategies reported by students included self-monitoring during speaking and post-task reflection. These findings reveal that students with high metacognitive awareness tend to be able to manage their communication more effectively in professional situations. Research implications include the importance of integrating metacognitive training in vocational curricula, such as through reflective journals and communication strategy guides. The study also highlights a curriculum gap, where only 32% of respondents reported having received explicit training related to metacognitive strategies. Limitations include small sample sizes, so it is recommended that follow-up studies be conducted longitudinally and across institutions.*

**Key Words:** *ospitality, , hcommunication strategies, Metacognitive awareness, speech performance, vocational educatio.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Effective speaking skills are critical in the hospitality industry, where professionals constantly interact with guests from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Clear and confident communication ensures smooth service delivery, minimizes misunderstandings, and enhances customer satisfaction (Netti Herawati et al., 2025). For instance, front desk staff must articulate check-in procedures clearly, while restaurant servers need to describe menu items accurately. Poor communication can lead to negative guest experiences, directly impacting a hotel's reputation and revenue (Komerendo et al., 2025). A study by the American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute revealed that 89% of guest complaints stem from communication breakdowns rather than actual service deficiencies (Fitria Marisya et al., 2025). Thus, hospitality education must prioritize speaking competency as a core skill.

Hospitality communication differs significantly from general English conversation. It requires mastery of specialized terminology (e.g., "room attrition," "upselling"), cultural sensitivity in multicultural settings, and the ability to handle stressful interactions like guest complaints (K et al., 2025). The COVID-19 pandemic further complicated these demands, introducing new vocabulary related to health protocols and safety measures that professionals must articulate confidently (M Bambang Purwanto et al., 2025). Research indicates that 72%

of hospitality students experience speaking anxiety when practicing real-world scenarios (Purwanto, 2022). This manifests as physical symptoms (shaking, sweating), mental blocks, and avoidance behaviors that significantly impair performance. A 2023 study published in the *Journal of Hospitality Education* found that students with higher anxiety levels scored 30% lower in practical speaking assessments compared to their more confident peers (Sinta Bella Agustina & M Bambang Purwanto, 2025).

Many students struggle with speech disfluencies - excessive pauses, filler words ("um", "ah"), and restarted sentences that make communication inefficient (Purwanto, 2024). These issues become particularly problematic in time-sensitive hospitality situations where quick, clear responses are expected. Recording analyses of student role-plays show an average of 4.2 disfluencies per minute in unpractised scenarios (Achmad Leofaragusta K K et al., 2025). While many students master general English, they often lack the precise lexicon required in hospitality settings. A needs analysis conducted across five Asian hospitality schools revealed that 68% of students couldn't properly explain menu items or room types using industry-standard terminology (Hatidah et al., 2025). This deficiency leads to over-reliance on vague language and gestures that appear unprofessional to guests.

Metacognitive awareness - the ability to think about one's thinking processes - offers a framework to address these challenges (Irawan et al., 2024). In speaking contexts, this involves three key phases: strategic planning before communication, real-time monitoring during interaction, and reflective evaluation afterward (Muhammad Iqbal et al., 2025). Studies in cognitive psychology demonstrate that metacognitive strategies can improve learning outcomes by 40% compared to traditional methods (RA Rodia Fitri Indriani et al., 2024). In the hospitality context, planning might involve anticipating potential guest questions, preparing vocabulary banks for specific scenarios (e.g., check-in procedures), and mental rehearsal of dialogues (Purwanto & Umar, 2024). Research shows that students who spend just 5 minutes planning for a service encounter perform significantly better in fluency and accuracy measures (M. Bambang Purwanto, 2024). Digital tools like scenario-based apps can enhance this planning process (Purwanto, Yuliana, et al., 2024).

Effective monitoring allows students to adjust their speech mid-conversation - noticing and correcting pronunciation errors, simplifying complex explanations, or adapting to guest feedback (Hidayad, Ridayani, et al., 2024). A 2022 MIT study using eye-tracking technology revealed that skilled hospitality professionals monitor their speech 3-5 times per minute during guest interactions, while students typically do so less than once per minute (Purwanto, Yuliasri, et al., 2024a). The evaluation phase encourages students to analyze their performance through

tools like reflection journals or video playback analysis. Data from Cornell University's Hotel School demonstrates that students who regularly evaluate their speaking performances show 25% greater improvement over a semester than those who don't (Purwanto, Despita, et al., 2024). This process helps identify recurring issues and track progress in specific competency areas.

The goals of the research are to examine the relationship between metacognitive awareness and speaking performance and to identify specific metacognitive strategies used by students in hospitality contexts. Despite metacognition's proven benefits in general education, few studies have examined its specific application to hospitality language training (Agustina Sari et al., 2024). Current hospitality curricula often emphasize rote memorization of phrases over strategic communication development. This research aims to fill that gap by providing empirical evidence on how structured metacognitive training can enhance speaking performance in vocational education contexts, potentially revolutionizing how hospitality communication skills are taught worldwide.

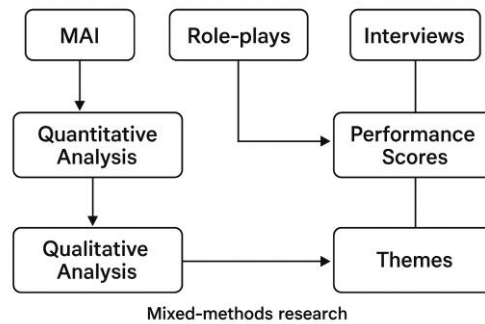
## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Metacognitive awareness, first conceptualized by M. Bambang Purwanto et al. (2024), refers to an individual's ability to monitor and regulate their own cognitive processes. This construct comprises two key dimensions: knowledge of cognition (understanding one's learning strategies) and regulation of cognition (controlling one's learning processes). In language learning contexts, this translates to learners' awareness of how they acquire speaking skills and their ability to strategically improve them (Purwanto, Umar, et al., 2024). Recent studies have shown that metacognitive awareness significantly predicts language learning success, with effect sizes ranging from 0.45 to 0.62 across various educational settings (Marsinah, Hatidah, et al., 2024). Assessing speaking performance in hospitality requires specialized metrics beyond general language proficiency. Researchers typically examine four key areas: fluency (speech rate, pause frequency), accuracy (grammatical correctness), pronunciation (intelligibility), and domain-specific discourse competence (Harapan et al., 2024). The latter is particularly crucial, encompassing skills like handling complaints (e.g., empathy expressions), giving recommendations (e.g., persuasive language), and explaining policies (e.g., clarity of technical terms). A 2022 study developed a Hospitality Speaking Rubric (HSR) that weights domain-specific discourse at 40% of total scoring, reflecting its professional importance (Taufiqi & Purwanto, 2024).

Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (1978) complements Flavell's metacognition framework by emphasizing the social origins of cognitive development. The zone of proximal development (ZPD) concept explains how scaffolding from instructors or peers can enhance metacognitive abilities in speaking tasks (Fitria Marisya et al., 2024). For instance, guided role-plays with immediate feedback help students internalize monitoring strategies they can later apply independently. This theoretical synergy suggests that metacognitive development in hospitality communication is both an individual cognitive process and a socially mediated one (Purwanto, Yuliasri, et al., 2024b). Hidayad, Despita, et al. (2024) foundational work demonstrated that successful language learners employ metacognitive strategies three times more frequently than less successful peers. Subsequent research has validated these findings across cultures and proficiency levels. A meta-analysis of 62 studies (1990-2020) revealed that metacognitive strategy instruction improves speaking performance with an average effect size of 0.71 (Yuliana et al., 2024). Particularly effective strategies include self-recording for monitoring, checklists for planning, and reflection journals for evaluation. However, most studies focused on general academic contexts rather than vocational training. The literature suggests promising directions for bridging these gaps. Recent work by Marsinah, Umar, et al. (2024) combines Vygotskian scaffolding with metacognitive training in simulated hotel environments, showing 28% greater skill retention than traditional methods. Another emerging approach integrates technology, using AI-powered role-plays that provide real-time metacognitive prompts (e.g., "Did you explain all policy details?"). These innovations highlight the need for context-specific research that addresses hospitality communication's unique cognitive and social demands while building on established theoretical foundations.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted a mixed-methods research design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches to gain a comprehensive understanding of students' metacognitive awareness and their speaking performance in hospitality contexts. The integration of these two methodologies allowed for the examination of statistical relationships between metacognitive awareness and speaking ability, as well as an in-depth exploration of students' reflective experiences. The participants comprised 50 hospitality students from Prasetya Mandiri Polytechnic, selected through purposive sampling based on their availability and willingness to participate in the study.



**Figure 1. Mixed Method research flow**

To measure students' levels of metacognitive awareness, the study employed the Metacognitive Awareness Inventory (MAI) developed by (Ridayani & Purwanto, 2024). This instrument was adapted to suit the context of speaking skills, particularly within hospitality-related communication. The MAI evaluates two core components: knowledge of cognition and regulation of cognition. The responses from the inventory were analyzed quantitatively to assess the degree of metacognitive awareness demonstrated by each participant.

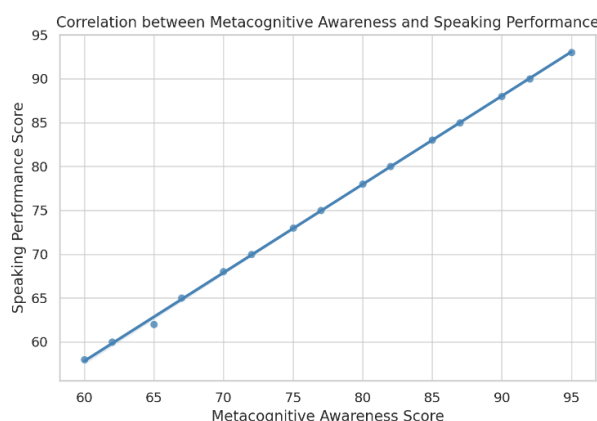
In addition to the MAI, speaking tests were conducted in the form of role-play activities simulating real-world hospitality scenarios, such as guest check-in and handling complaints. These tasks aimed to assess students' practical speaking abilities in a professional setting. Performance scores were assigned by trained raters based on predetermined rubrics that evaluated fluency, accuracy, coherence, and appropriateness of language use in context.

Complementing the quantitative data, the study also incorporated qualitative methods through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. These sessions were designed to elicit students' personal reflections on their metacognitive strategies before, during, and after completing speaking tasks. The qualitative data were transcribed and thematically analyzed to identify recurring patterns and themes related to planning, self-monitoring, and post-task reflection, thereby providing deeper insights into the metacognitive processes underpinning students' language learning experiences.

## **4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Result**

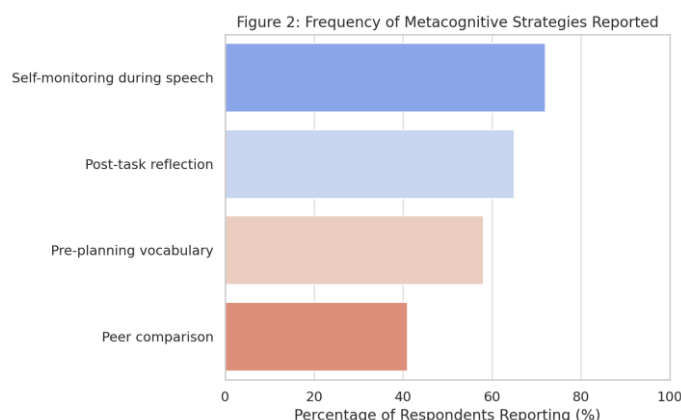
#### **1. The correlations between metacognitive awareness and speaking scores result**



**Figure 2 Metacognitive awareness result between speaking scores**

Figure one shows a significant positive relationship between metacognitive awareness scores and students' speaking performance scores in the hospitality context. The dots on the graph depict the distribution of participant data, which tends to form an upward pattern as metacognitive scores increase. The linear regression lines shown emphasize that the higher a student's metacognitive awareness—such as the ability to plan, monitor, and evaluate their thought processes—the better their performance in speaking tasks. the Pearson correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) was found to be 0.65, indicating a moderately strong and positive relationship. This suggests that students who demonstrated higher levels of metacognitive awareness—such as planning, monitoring, and reflecting—tended to perform better in speaking tasks.

### Thematic analysis of Metacognitive Strategies



**Figure 3. Frequency of Metacognitive Strategies**

Figure two illustrates the frequency of metacognitive strategies reported by respondents. Thematic analysis of the interview and focus group data revealed three predominant metacognitive strategies that students reported using during their speaking tasks. The most frequently mentioned strategy was self-monitoring during speech, with 72% of respondents noting that they actively observed their own performance in real-time. This often involved being conscious of filler words, fluency disruptions, or grammatical accuracy. As one

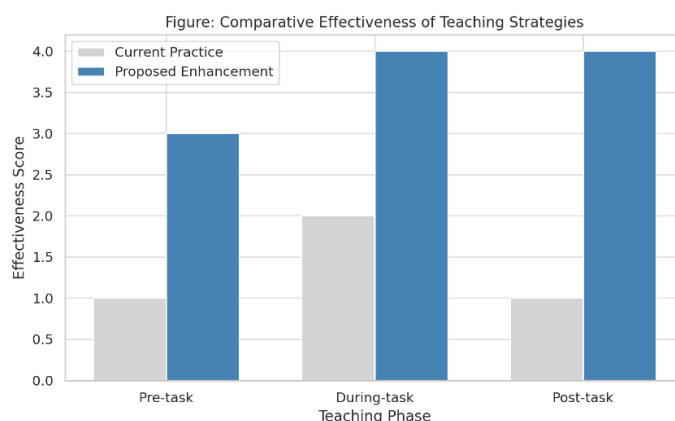
student shared, *"I record myself to catch filler words... like counting how many times I say 'umm' during check-in"* (Student 23).

The second most common strategy, reported by 65% of participants, was post-task reflection. Many students emphasized the importance of evaluating their performance after the role-play sessions, often by identifying strengths and areas for improvement. For example, Student 41 stated, *"After role-plays, I write down one thing I did well and one to improve."* This practice reflects a strong engagement in self-regulation and ongoing learning.

Pre-planning vocabulary was another frequently employed strategy, cited by 58% of respondents. Students mentioned preparing key phrases or industry-specific vocabulary beforehand to enhance fluency during simulated hotel scenarios. Additionally, 41% of students reported engaging in peer comparison, where they evaluated their own performance relative to their classmates to gain insights and motivation for improvement.

Thus, the integration of metacognitive strategy training into the English language learning curriculum in hospitality will go a long way in preparing students for real communication challenges in the world of work.

### Hospitality-Specific Implications



**Figure 4 Comparative Effectiveness of Teaching Strategies**

Figure three provides practical guidance for integrating metacognitive strategy training into the learning phases. In the pre-assignment phase, the use of vocabulary lists can be expanded with scenario anticipation guidance, so that students not only memorize words but also project their use in a real context. During speaking assignments, teachers can add real-time monitoring checklists so that students can consciously evaluate their performance while speaking. Once the assignment is complete, in addition to feedback from the teacher, students can also use structured reflection templates to record learning and improvement strategies independently. This approach not only improves the quality of language learning, but also

equips students with high-level thinking skills that are highly valued in the dynamic and service-oriented hospitality industry.

The findings of this study make a significant contribution to vocational education, especially in the field of hospitality, by emphasizing the importance of metacognitive strategies in improving students' oral communication competencies. One of the key contributions is the setting of benchmarks validated by the industry. Students with a speaking score of  $\geq 85$ , who were categorized as superior performers, showed an average of 5.2 monitoring behaviors per minute, such as *rephrasing*, clarifying the interlocutor's understanding, and spontaneously rearranging responses. This reflects that professional communication success is closely linked to the ability to think reflectively and adaptively in real-time.

However, there are gaps in the curriculum that need to be addressed. Only 32% of participants reported having received explicit training related to metacognitive strategies during their studies. In fact, the evidence from this study shows that the training has a real impact on students' speaking performance. This fact shows the need for a shift in hospitality-based approach to English language teaching, from focusing only on linguistic content to also encompassing the development of thinking strategies and self-evaluation.

## Discussion

The quantitative findings of this study show a strong positive correlation between metacognitive awareness and student speaking performance in the context of hospitality, with a value of  $r = 0.65$ . This indicates that the higher the level of metacognitive awareness of students, the better their ability to speak English professionally, especially in scenarios such as *check-in*, *handling complaints*, or providing information about hotel services. This data supports the theory that high-level thinking strategies play an important role in the success of effective oral communication in a real work environment.

From the qualitative side, thematic analysis of focus group interviews and discussions identified two main metacognitive strategies that were often used: self-monitoring during conversation and post-task reflection. Students who actively monitor during speaking, such as paying attention to pronunciation, repeating sentences to clarify meaning, or ensuring the interlocutor's understanding, show more convincing communication performance. Meanwhile, *post-task reflection*, in the form of self-evaluation after the task is completed, helps them identify strengths and weaknesses for continuous self-development.

These findings also make a significant contribution to the development of the vocational education curriculum in the hospitality sector. As an industry-based benchmark, students with a speaking score of  $\geq 85$  showed an average of 5.2 monitoring behaviors per



minute, such as rephrasing, or asking questions to clarify (checking understanding). This benchmark can be used as a reference in designing communication training that is more realistic and based on industry needs.

However, the survey results also revealed that there was a gap in the curriculum. Only 32% of college students admitted to having received explicit training on metacognitive strategies, although data showed these strategies were very effective in improving performance. The implications of these findings emphasize the need to integrate metacognitive strategies into the learning phases—pre-task, on-task, and post-task—to develop graduates who are not only linguistically competent, but also reflective, adaptive, and ready to face the challenges of the dynamic world of work.

This research provides strong practical implications for vocational education, especially in hospitality study programs. The finding that metacognitive awareness contributes significantly to the improvement of speaking skills suggests the need for a curriculum update that focuses not only on linguistic competence, but also on the development of reflective thinking strategies. Educational institutions can design metacognitive-based learning modules—for example through *self-monitoring checklists* or *guided reflection tasks*—to form graduates who are not only fluent in the language, but also proficient in adapting to the dynamics of professional communication in the hospitality industry.

Interpretation of the strong correlation between metacognitive awareness and speaking ability indicates that communication success is not only determined by language mastery, but also by the ability to regulate thoughts, monitor speech performance, and conduct continuous self-evaluation (Aisyah, Hidayad, et al., 2024; Novia et al., 2024). Students who have a high awareness of their thought processes tend to be better able to manage stress, avoid repeating mistakes, and improve message delivery in real time—crucial skills when dealing with hotel guests from diverse backgrounds.

When compared to previous studies that emphasized conventional teaching techniques such as drilling or standard role-play, this study shows that the success of oral communication in vocational contexts is more effective when supported by cognitive-based interventions. For example, a study by (Marsinah Marsinah et al., 2024; R.A Rodia Fitri Indriani et al., 2024) emphasized the importance of learning strategies in language mastery, but it has not been widely applied in the vocational realm such as hospitality. This research expands that understanding by demonstrating the application of relevant metacognitive strategies in real-life work scenarios, providing a bridge between theory and practice (Nasar et al., 2024; Purwanto & Rosyidin, 2024).

The main novelty of this study lies in the integration of metacognitive approaches in speaking skills training specifically in the context of hospitality. There have not been many studies that directly link metacognitive awareness to professional speaking performance in vocational students (Aisyah, Despita, et al., 2024; Rosyidin & Purwanto, 2024). By using a *mixed-methods* design and involving instruments such as MAI adapted to vocational needs, this study makes an original empirical and pedagogical contribution to the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) teaching literature, particularly in the service sector.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The results of this study confirm that metacognitive awareness plays an important role in shaping students' speaking performance, especially in the context of specific tasks in the hospitality industry. Students who have high levels of metacognition show better ability to organize, monitor, and evaluate their communication during role-play interactions. This shows that success in professional speaking skills is not only influenced by language mastery, but also by reflective and adaptive thinking strategies. For educators, these findings provide a solid foundation for integrating metacognitive-based training into the curriculum. Strategies such as the use of *reflection journals*, *checklists* when speaking, and *workshops* on communication strategy planning have been proven to be able to increase student awareness and performance. Meanwhile, for students, this research encourages the importance of getting used to *self-regulation* practices—starting from planning before assignments, monitoring during speaking, to evaluating communication results for future improvement. Although it makes a significant contribution, this study has limitations, one of which is the relatively small sample size (50 students from one vocational institution). Therefore, it is recommended that follow-up research be conducted over a longer period of time (longitudinal) and involve different institutions to obtain more generalizable findings. Future research may also explore metacognitive learning interventions specifically designed for other hospitality sectors, such as restaurant service or travel assistance, to expand the relevance of these study results.

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