Strategies for Non-English Students in Improving English Speaking Skills as an Effort to Optimize Islamic Da'wah in the Global Era

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the learning strategies used by non-English major students to improve their English-speaking skills, as well as to identify the factors influencing their choice of strategies and the challenges they encounter during the learning process. The research employed a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation involving several non-English major students who actively practiced speaking English. The findings revealed that students applied various learning strategies, including cognitive, metacognitive, social, and affective strategies. Factors influencing strategy selection included motivation, prior learning experiences, social support, and access to technology. Meanwhile, the main challenges faced by students were limited vocabulary, fear of making mistakes, and lack of opportunities to practice speaking. Overall, the study highlights that non-English major students are capable of improving their speaking skills through independent, creative, and context-based learning strategies, despite the constraints of formal learning environments.

1. INTRODUCTION

English is an international language that has an important role in global communication, both in the fields of education, technology, economy, and society. English language skills, especially speaking skills, are one of the main competencies needed in the era of globalization and the industrial revolution 4.0 (Alshammari, 2021). Speaking skills allow a person to convey ideas, interact effectively, as well as participate in academic and professional activities. Therefore, mastering the ability to speak in English is a necessity for all students, not only those who come from the English Education major.

English proficiency also has an important role in the context of international da'wah. In the modern era marked by cross-border connectivity, the delivery of Islamic messages is no longer limited to the local realm, but also includes a global audience. Mastery of English allows dai, scholars, and students to convey Islamic values more broadly and effectively to the world community. This is in line with Hasanah's view (2022) which emphasized that the ability to communicate in international languages is an important bridge in introducing Islam as a moderate, tolerant, and rahmatan lil 'alamin religion. Therefore, the ability to speak English is not only relevant for academic and professional purposes, but also has strategic value in supporting da'wah activities and cross-national cultural exchange.

Efforts to improve English speaking skills are not only related to academic aspects, but are also part of Islamic da'wah that is relevant to the demands of the times. A Muslim dai or student who

is able to preach in English has a greater chance of conveying the message of Islam universally, dispelling negative stereotypes about Islam, and strengthening the positive image of Muslims on the global stage. Therefore, this study is important to identify strategies used by non-English students in improving English speaking skills as a means of optimizing Islamic da'wah in the global era.

For non-English students, speaking English is often a challenge. Research conducted by Putri and Hidayat (2022) shows that non-language students often have difficulty speaking due to low confidence, limited vocabulary, and lack of opportunities to interact with other speakers. In addition, a learning environment that does not focus on language teaching also causes students to lack intensive speaking practice (Rahmawati, 2023). In the context of language learning, learning strategies play an important role in helping students achieve their communicative goals. Learning strategies include a variety of cognitive, social, and affective approaches that learners use to understand and use language effectively (Oxford, 2017; Griffiths, 2020). With the right strategies, students can learn independently, adjust to their difficulties, and improve their speaking skills on an ongoing basis.

Recent studies have also confirmed that non-English students tend to develop independent learning strategies through informal practices, such as watching English-language videos, interacting with peers, and using digital learning applications (Hartono & Sari, 2021; Nugraha, 2024). This phenomenon is interesting to study because it shows the existence of autonomous learning efforts outside the formal learning system. Based on this background, this research focuses on strategies used by non-English students in improving their speaking skills. This research also aims to identify the factors that influence the choice of the strategy as well as the difficulties faced by students during the learning process. Through a qualitative approach with a case study design, the results of this research are expected to contribute to the development of a more inclusive, adaptive, and relevant approach to English language learning for students from various majors, including nature to support their strategic role as communicators and agents of da'wah at the international level.

2. METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore in depth the strategies used by non-English students in improving their speaking skills. The research subjects consisted of ten non-English students who were selected using purposive sampling techniques based on certain criteria, such as having an interest in learning English and experience practicing speaking independently. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation, with researchers as the main instruments assisted by interview guidelines and observation sheets. The data collection process was carried out for three months, starting from February to April 2025 at STAI Al-Furqan Makassar (Winarni, 2021).

The data obtained were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2018) which included data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. The validity of the data is maintained through triangulation of sources and techniques, as well as member checking with participants to ensure the credibility of the findings. In addition, the researcher also paid attention to the ethical aspects of the research such as maintaining the confidentiality of the participants' identities and obtaining consent before the interview. The results of the analysis are expected to be able to comprehensively describe the strategies, supporting factors, and difficulties faced by non-English students in an effort to improve their speaking skills.
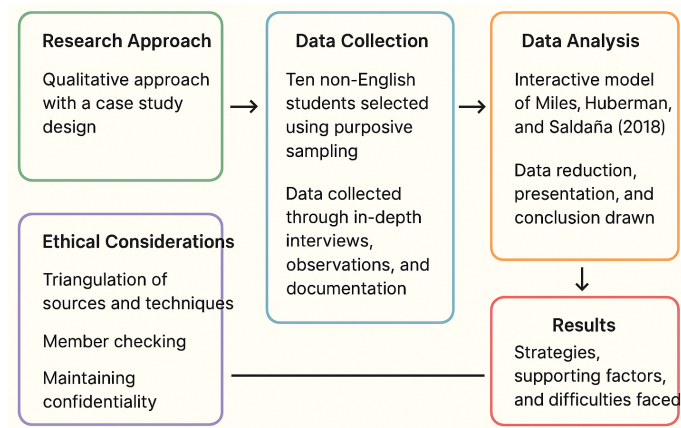
Figure 1. Methods

Furthermore, to support the depth and accuracy of the findings, researchers also conducted cross-analysis between interview data and observational notes to identify patterns and emerging themes related to speaking improvement strategies. This process was followed by reflective memo writing to strengthen the interpretation of data and avoid subjective bias. The researcher also maintained a systematic research logbook throughout the study to record significant events, contextual information, and analytical reflections that contributed to the overall research trustworthiness. Through this comprehensive approach, the study aims not only to reveal effective learning strategies but also to provide implications for curriculum developers, teachers, and students in designing more supportive speaking learning environments.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Learning Strategies for Non-English Language Students

The results showed that non-English students applied various learning strategies to improve their speaking skills. Based on the analysis of interviews, observations, and documentation, it was found that four main categories of strategies were used, namely cognitive, metacognitive, social, and affective strategies (Oxford, 2017). Cognitive strategies seem to be the most dominant, where students use digital media such as YouTube videos, movies, and podcasts to increase vocabulary, improve pronunciation, and understand the context of language use. Some participants stated that imitating dialogue from an English-language film helped them improve their fluency and confidence when speaking. These findings are in line with the results of research by Hartono and Sari (2021) which emphasized that the use of audiovisual media can improve oral communication skills through exposure to authentic language.

In addition, students also apply metacognitive strategies by setting daily learning goals, making a speech practice schedule, and self-reflection on their progress. Awareness in regulating the learning process reflects the ability to learn self-regulation, as explained by Griffiths (2020) that students who are able to control their learning process tend to achieve more optimal results. In practice, some students make vlogs in English or record mistakes they often make as material for self-evaluation. Furthermore, social strategies are used through collaborative activities such as practicing speaking English with peers and joining English learning groups. These activities allow students to interact in a supportive environment and provide direct feedback. Participation in a learning community also helps them reduce awkwardness when speaking. This is in line with

research by Rahmawati (2023) who stated that social support in language learning groups can strengthen motivation and reduce the level of anxiety of speaking in front of others.
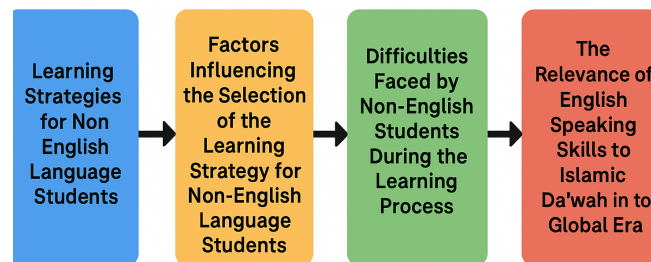
Figure 2. Result

On the other hand, affective strategies are used to manage emotions and confidence. Some students admitted that they often practice speaking in front of a mirror to grow self-confidence before talking to others. This strategy supports the Oxford (2017) theory that affective factors such as motivation, anxiety, and self-confidence have a major influence on the success of language learning. Students who are able to control negative feelings when speaking show increased fluency and courage in using English.

Furthermore, some students also associate the ability to speak English with the goal of international da'wah. They realize that English proficiency is not only important for careers and education, but also for conveying Islamic values globally. The ability to communicate in international languages opens up opportunities for students to participate in cross-border da'wah activities, such as seminars, conferences, and digital da'wah collaborations on social media. Thus, mastery of English is considered a strategic means in expanding the reach of peaceful and moderate da'wah messages at the international level. These findings reinforce the view that religious motivation is also a significant driving factor in language learning among non-English students.

3.2. Factors influencing the selection of the Learning Strategy for Non-English Language Students

The choice of learning strategies by non-English students in improving speaking skills is influenced by various interrelated factors. Some of the main factors found include learning motivation, previous learning experience, social environment, access to technology, and confidence level. These factors form the basis for students' considerations in choosing the most appropriate way to develop their speaking skills.

Learning motivation has proven to be a major driver in the use of certain strategies. Students who are highly motivated, whether due to academic needs, careers, or international da'wah goals, tend to use more diverse and active strategies. They view English language skills as a means to contribute globally, including in the context of digital da'wah and the spread of Islamic values rahmatan lil 'alamin. Strong motivation makes them more consistent and diligent in training. This result is in line with the opinion of Dörnyei and Ushioda (2021) who affirm that motivation has an important role in determining the direction and intensity of a person's efforts in learning a language. In addition to motivation, previous learning experiences also influence the chosen strategy. Students who have taken English courses or have experience interacting with foreign speakers are usually more confident in communicating. They more often use social and affective strategies, such as talking directly to friends or joining discussion groups. Meanwhile, students who don't have much

experience tend to choose cognitive strategies such as imitating pronunciation or memorizing simple sentences. This is in line with the results of Hartono and Sari's (2021) research which shows that the background of learning experiences affects the tendency of strategies used by a person.

The social environment is also an important factor that affects the learning process. Students who are in an environment with friends who have similar interests are more easily motivated to practice speaking regularly. They often practice together through activities such as practicing speaking English with peers or discussions in the English speaking community. This kind of social support makes students feel more confident and not afraid to make mistakes. Research by Rahmawati (2023) also shows that social interaction in the language learning process can foster confidence while strengthening the spirit to continue practicing.Another factor that is quite influential is access to technology. Students with good internet access are more likely to use digital platforms such as YouTube, Duolingo, or social media as a means of practicing speaking. Technology is considered to help them learn more flexibly and funly. On the other hand, the limitations of devices or internet networks make some students choose traditional methods, such as speaking in front of a mirror or recording their own voice. This view is in line with Nugraha's (2024) research which emphasizes that digital technology plays an important role in creating independent and contextual language learning.

In addition, confidence also has a great influence on the learning strategies used. Students who have high confidence are usually more daring to speak directly using English in real situations. On the other hand, students who lack confidence prefer to practice on their own before communicating with others. These findings support the theory of Oxford (2017) which states that affective factors such as motivation, anxiety, and self-confidence greatly determine success in learning a foreign language.

3.3. Difficulties Faced by Non-English Students During the Learning Process

Non-English students face various difficulties during the process of learning to speak English. These difficulties include linguistic, psychological, environmental, and limited time and facilities. These difficulties are interrelated and affect the effectiveness of implementing the learning strategies they have chosen. From the linguistic side, most students admitted that they had difficulty mastering vocabulary and pronunciation. They often hesitate to choose the right words or have difficulty composing sentences spontaneously when speaking. The limited mastery of sentence structure and intonation also makes them less fluent in communicating. This is in line with the findings of Rahayu (2022) who stated that vocabulary limitations are one of the main obstacles faced by non-major-level English learners in speaking skills. This difficulty also has an impact on students who have international da'wah motivations, because they feel that they are not able to convey religious messages clearly and accurately in English.

In addition to language difficulties, psychological factors also greatly affect students' courage in speaking. Many students feel less confident, afraid of making mistakes, and worried about the judgment of others. Some of them also experience anxiety especially when asked to speak in front of a class or with more fluent speakers. This condition causes them to tend to be passive and prefer to listen rather than talk. These findings are in line with the theory of Oxford (2017) and the research of Rahmawati (2023) which explains that affective factors such as fear and low self-confidence can be the main obstacles to the development of speech skills. In the context of international da'wah, this psychological factor is an additional challenge, because weak speaking skills can limit students' space to contribute to conveying Islamic values globally.

Environmental factors are also a challenge. Students admit that they rarely have the opportunity to practice speaking in real situations because their environment does not support the use of English. The limitations of training friends and the lack of an English-speaking community make it difficult for them to maintain consistency in training. Some students even mention that when trying to speak in English, they often get less positive feedback from their peers, which lowers their motivation to keep practicing. This condition is in line with Nugraha's (2024) research which highlights the importance of a supportive social environment in the foreign language learning process. In the context of da'wah, an environment that does not support the use of English can also hinder students' readiness to participate in cross-cultural da'wah activities, both orally and digitally.

In addition, time and facility limitations are also difficulties that often arise. Non-English students generally have a hectic academic schedule in their respective fields of study, so the time to practice English is limited. In addition, not all campuses provide facilities such as language labs or English-language extracurricular activities that can help them hone their speaking skills. As a result, students must look for alternative ways of learning independently using digital media or personal practice at home. The limitations of these facilities not only hinder the development of speaking skills in general, but also reduce students' opportunities to hone their intercultural communication skills which are needed in the context of international da'wah.

3.4. The Relevance of English Speaking Skills to Islamic Da'wah in the Global Era

The ability to speak English has strategic value in expanding the reach of Islamic da'wah (Hartina et al., 2025). Students who have international communication skills can convey Islamic values to a global audience through various media, such as *podcasts*, *YouTube*, international conferences, and Islamic forums (Arqam et al., 2026). Some students who are informants have even been active in preaching through English-language video content on social media as a form of digital da'wah contribution.

The results of the study show that some non-English students view the ability to speak English as a bridge to a broader and professional da'wah. They understand that Islam is a religion of rahmatan lil 'alamin that brings grace to the whole world so that the delivery of da'wah should not be limited by language and cultural barriers. Therefore, they work hard to hone their English speaking skills in order to be able to explain Islamic concepts such as *tolerance*, *justice*, *peace*, and *humanity* in a language that is easy to understand by an international audience. This step is important to correct the misconceptions that often arise against Islamic teachings in the Western world and the global media.In practice, Muslim students use various digital platforms as a means of English-language da'wah. Some of them create *podcast* content, short da'wah videos, or educational uploads on social media such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok that contain moral messages and Islamic values (Mutakin, A., & Khasanah, S. U., 2023). There are also those who are active in international online discussions, webinars, or interfaith forums that use English as the language of instruction. This kind of activity shows that the ability to speak English is not just a means of communication, but a modern da'wah instrument that is able to bridge dialogue across cultures and religions in a peaceful manner.

This phenomenon also reflects the shift in the da'wah paradigm from traditional to *digital da'wah* or technology-based da'wah (Annafsa, Z., Farhan, M. A., Zakiah, R. I., & Siswanto, A. H., 2025). In this case, the ability to speak English is the main key for young dai to adapt to a fast-paced, open, and cross-border global communication pattern (Salsabila, F. L., Widiyanarti, T., Ashari, S. D., Zahra, T., & Fadhilah, S. A., 2024). Through good speaking skills, students can present a friendly, inclusive, and Islamic face in accordance with universal values. Da'wah delivered in English with a communicative approach is also able to attract the attention of the young generation of non-Muslims

who are interested in understanding Islam from an academic and rational perspective. As stated by Firdaus, K., Ritonga, M., Hanafi, A. H., & Mursal, M. (2025) da'wah in the global era requires Muslim da'wah, scholars, and scholars to have foreign language skills in order to be able to explain Islamic values to the outside world directly without having to rely on third-party translations. Mastery of English with good speaking skills allows the message of da'wah to be conveyed with a meaning that remains intact and not distorted by the interpretations of other cultures. More than that, this ability also shows the intellectual readiness of Muslims to participate in global discourses on ethics, morality, humanity, and world peace (Ridho, A., 2024).

Thus, the ability to speak English is not only an academic skill that is useful for career and education, but is also an integral part of global da'wah competence. Muslim students who are able to communicate effectively in English have the potential to become moderate and insightful ambassadors of Islam, who can present Islam as a religion that is in line with the times. From the perspective of contemporary da'wah, mastery of the English language is a tangible manifestation of *the scientific jihad* of an intellectual effort to uphold Islamic values through education, dialogue, and cross-cultural communication at the international level. The findings of this study reinforce the view that non-English language students employ a diverse range of learning strategies to improve their English-speaking skills. Cognitive strategies emerged as the most dominant, especially through the use of digital media such as YouTube, films, and podcasts. This aligns with Oxford's (2017) classification of learning strategies and supports Hartono and Sari's (2021) assertion that audiovisual exposure enhances oral communication by providing authentic language models. The reliance on self-directed digital materials reflects students' tendency to adopt flexible, independent learning methods that suit their individual needs and daily routines. At the same time, students' use of metacognitive strategies goal setting, scheduling practice, and self-evaluation indicates that they are capable of planning and monitoring their learning processes, which echoes Griffiths' (2020) argument that self-regulated learners achieve higher levels of proficiency.

In addition to cognitive and metacognitive approaches, social and affective strategies play a crucial role in shaping learning behaviors. Peer collaboration and participation in English-speaking groups provide opportunities for authentic interaction and constructive feedback. These findings are consistent with Rahmawati (2023), who emphasizes the importance of social support in reducing anxiety and increasing motivation in language learning. Meanwhile, affective strategies such as practicing in front of a mirror or managing anxiety illustrate students' efforts to overcome psychological barriers. The influence of emotional factors motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety reaffirms Oxford's (2017) proposition that affective regulation is essential for effective speaking performance.The selection of these strategies, however, is strongly shaped by external and internal factors, including motivation, prior experience, social environment, technological access, and confidence level. Students with strong academic, personal, or religious motivations tend to adopt more active and varied strategies, showing that motivation is a major driving force behind strategic learning behavior, as highlighted by Dörnyei and Ushioda (2021). Access to technology further amplifies the use of digital tools, supporting Nugraha's (2024) claim that technology-driven learning environments foster autonomy and contextual understanding. On the other hand, students with limited facilities or weaker confidence tend to rely on more private, individualized strategies, which may restrict opportunities for interactive language use.

Despite these efforts, the study reveals several persistent challenges, particularly linguistic and psychological difficulties. Limited vocabulary, pronunciation issues, and challenges in producing spontaneous sentences continue to hinder fluency, consistent with Rahayu's (2022) findings on the common linguistic barriers among non-major English learners. Psychological

obstacles fear of making mistakes, anxiety, and low confidence remain significant, often preventing students from practicing in real communicative situations. Environmental constraints, such as the lack of English-speaking communities and insufficient institutional support, further exacerbate these difficulties. These findings emphasize the need for more structured language support systems within academic environments, including language labs, peer-learning programs, and extracurricular English activities.

A distinctive contribution of this study lies in revealing the perceived relevance of English-speaking skills to Islamic da'wah in the global era. Many students view English not only as an academic or professional tool but also as a strategic medium for spreading Islamic values internationally. Their involvement in digital da'wah such as producing English-language content, participating in online forums, or joining international discussions demonstrates the role of language proficiency in modern religious communication. This supports the perspectives of Hartina et al. (2025), Arqam et al. (2026), and Mutakin & Khasanah (2023), who highlight the increasing importance of English in global Islamic discourse. As digital da'wah continues to develop, mastery of English becomes essential for presenting Islam as a peaceful, intellectual, and inclusive religion on the world stage. Overall, the results indicate that English-speaking skills hold both academic and spiritual significance for non-English students. Their strategic learning efforts, combined with religious motivations, reflect an emerging paradigm of da'wah that integrates language proficiency, digital literacy, and intercultural communication. This aligns with the arguments of Firdaus et al. (2025) and Ridho (2024), who emphasize that modern da'wah requires readiness to engage with global audiences through clear, accurate, and culturally sensitive communication. Thus, English-speaking ability functions not only as a personal competency but as a form of *ilmiyah jihad*—an intellectual endeavor that allows Muslim students to contribute constructively to international dialogue, education, and peacebuilding.

4. CONCLUSION

This study aims to describe the strategies used by non-English students in improving their speaking skills, as well as the factors that influence the choice of these strategies and the difficulties faced during the learning process. Based on the results of data analysis, it was found that non-major students were able to develop various learning strategies independently even though they did not receive intensive English learning in class. The dominant strategies include cognitive, metacognitive, social, and affective strategies, with the use of digital media such as videos, podcasts, and interactive platforms that help expand vocabulary and improve fluency in speech. The choice of learning strategies is influenced by various internal and external factors, such as motivation, learning experience, confidence, social environment support, and access to technology. Students with high motivation and a supportive environment are more active in using social and communicative strategies, while those who lack confidence tend to rely on cognitive strategies and independent practice. However, difficulties such as limited vocabulary, fear of making mistakes, lack of opportunities to practice, and limited time and facilities are still major obstacles in the process of developing speaking skills. However, most students show adaptability through independent learning and the use of digital technology. Overall, the results of this study confirm that improving the speaking skills of non-English students is not only important for academic and professional interests, but also has strategic value in the context of international da'wah. Mastery of English allows students to become agents of delivering peaceful, inclusive, and moderate Islamic messages to the global community. Therefore, educational institutions are expected to create a supportive learning environment, provide adequate language learning facilities, and integrate Islamic values in English learning, so that students from various majors are not only able to communicate effectively, but also play an active role in expanding cross-cultural da'wah at the world level.

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