NON-ENGLISH STUDENTS' STRATEGIES IN IMPROVING THEIR SPEAKING SKILLS

Riska Azisah[1], Ardiana[2], Rezki Awalia[3], Ishmah Afifah[4]

Muhammadiyah University, Makassar, Indonesia
[1] riskaazizahjufri@gmail.com, [2] ardiana@unismuh.ac.id, [3] reskiawalia0504@gmail.com,
[4] ishmahafifah1006@gmail.com

Abstract

The importance of speaking skills in learning English has prompted this research to explore the strategies applied by non-English students. In this context, this research aims to explore the strategies used by non-English students to improve their speaking skills in English. Using a qualitative approach, this research involved in-depth interviews as a data collection method. The instrument used in this research was an interview guide. The interview guide was prepared based on the research objective, namely to find out what strategies non-English students use to improve their speaking skills. A total of 10 non-English-majoring students from various departments were selected at university Muhammadiyah of Makassar as research subjects. From the results of the interviews conducted, there were two strategies used by students to improve their speaking skills, namely: internal strategies and external strategies. Internal strategies include: self-speaking practice, committing to memorizing vocabulary every day, shadowing technique, read news articles in English, language switching strategies and determining speaking time. Meanwhile, the external strategy includes: getting used to communicating with family and friends using English (a natural communication strategy); taking an English course, forming a friendship circle. Knowing the students' strategies in enhancing their speaking skills, teachers can integrate them into their learning in the speaking classroom.

Keywords: Speaking Skills; Non-English Speakers; Speaking Strategies

INTRODUCTION

English is taught and introduced throughout the Indonesian education system, from playgroups to elementary and senior levels. English is the most important foreign language in Indonesia. Important exams including national exams, college entrance exams, and agency employee recruitment tests even require English as a subject. Therefore, the ability to communicate in a particular language is very important. In fact, English has emerged as the most widely used foreign language in various contexts due to globalization, including business, education, and technology.

Speaking theory and strategies in learning speaking are two important concepts in learning English. Speaking theory refers to an understanding of how someone learns to speak English. This theory includes things like vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. Conversely, strategies in learning to speak English discuss the methods and approaches used by students to improve their speaking skills. Some tactics that are often used include talking with original English speakers, watching English films or television series, and practicing with peers or tutors. Both of these theories are very important in helping English learners to develop their speaking skills better and more effectively.

The term "strategy" in this research refers to the efforts of non-English students to improve their English language skills through various exercises, both inside and outside the classroom. The strategies in this research are divided into two categories: internal strategies and external

strategies. Internal strategies are strategies carried out by students themselves to improve their speaking skills without involving the contributions of other people. External strategies are strategies that students carry out with the help of other people or sources outside themselves. For non-English students, speaking skill is one of the most difficult skills to master. Difficulties in mastering English-speaking skills among non-English students are caused by many factors. Megawati (2016) highlights the variety of challenges faced by students, which are influenced by different levels of English language proficiency. Palupi, Purwanto & Sutriyono (2022) further underline the impact of speaking anxiety on language acquisition, especially in the context of learning English. This anxiety can prevent students from speaking confidently, negatively impacting their oral skills. There is an interesting phenomenon found at several universities in Indonesia, namely that apart from students majoring in English, English courses are only taught for one to two semesters. Therefore, it is important for non-English students to have the right strategies to improve their speaking skills. This strategy can help students overcome the obstacles they face in learning to speak English.

Many researchers have analyzed the methods used by non-English students to improve their speaking abilities. Wibowo & Khairunas (2019), in their research, highlighted the use of interactive techniques to increase vocabulary and confidence, such as listening practice and oral presentations. Meanwhile, Listyani and Christie (2018) found in her research that storytelling, roles, small group discussions, and songs are effective ways to increase confidence in speaking English. Likewise, Lingga, Simanjuntak & Sembiring (2020) emphasized the importance of self-confidence and increasing vocabulary. Tantri, Romadlon & Nurcahyo (2023) also lists linguistic and non-linguistic problems, such as anxiety, pronunciation, and grammar, and offers solutions, including practice and vocabulary development. All of this research points to the need for diverse strategies involving vocabulary development, interactive exercises, and confidence development to effectively improve non-English-speaking students' English-speaking abilities. Hapsari (2019) shows that English language learners from the UII Language Education Program also use various metacognitive techniques. Hanifa (2016), a different study, also examines compensation techniques. This research is different from previous research, which used the Oxford Language Learning Strategy Inventory (SILL) to investigate language learning techniques used by English and non-English Department students (Agustina, 2020). Meanwhile, "Strategies that non-English students use to improve their speaking ability" is the special subject of this research.

Research on "Strategies of Non-English Language Students in Improving Speaking Skills" has significant benefits in terms of deepening understanding of practical and effective methods for improving speaking skills in non-English language learners. The aim of this research is to identify the most effective learning strategies for improving the speaking skills of non-English-speaking students, as well as provide recommendations to educators regarding learning strategies that they can implement in the classroom context to support the development of non-English-speaking students' speaking skills.

METHOD

The research design used in this research is a qualitative method. According to Sugiyono (2014), qualitative research is a research method based on the philosophy of post positivism used to research the conditions of natural objects, where the researcher is the key instrument, data collection techniques are carried out using triangulation (combination), inductive/qualitative-based data analysis, and the research results emphasize meaning rather than generalization. The focus of this research is on what strategies non-English students use to improve their speaking skills. The subjects of this research were non-English major students. The instrument used in this research was an interview guide. The interview guide was prepared

based on the research objective, namely to find out what strategies non-English students use to improve their speaking skills. The number of research subjects was 10 students from various departments.

Qualitative data analysis was carried out in three steps. First, the initial step was sample selection. The second step was data collection, which includes in-depth interviews with structured and semi-structured guides to gain in-depth insight into the speaking strategies used by students to improve speaking. Lastly, it involved data analysis, where complete transcription of the recorded interviews is done to facilitate analysis, and then thematic analysis is applied to identify patterns, themes, and relationships in the data. The categorization of findings was carried out based on the speaking strategies used. These three steps form a comprehensive qualitative research methodology framework to understand in depth the English language learning strategies of this group of students. By using this methodology, researchers obtained in-depth and accurate data to answer their research objectives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Based on the results of interviews conducted to 10 students majoring in non-English at the Muhammadiyah University of Makassar, South Sulawesi, there were several strategies used by these students to improve their speaking skills. These strategies can be grouped into two categories, namely internal strategies and external strategies.

Internal Strategy

Internal strategies are strategies that students carry out independently, without involving other people. This strategy includes:

1. Self-Speaking Practice
    From the interview results, the strategy of practicing speaking with yourself is the one most often used by students to improve their speaking skills. They say that you can practice talking to yourself in front of a mirror, recording your own voice. They use this strategy because they do not have a supportive environment to improve their speaking skills.
    Student N said:
    "According to one respondent, talking to yourself is an effective strategy for improving his speaking skills."
    Student N added, *"I think the Self-Speaking Practice strategy is a very effective strategy for improving speaking skills. By talking to myself, I can practice freely without fear of being judged by others. I can also learn to speak more fluently and confidently."*
    This expression shows that the strategy of talking to yourself can be an effective method for improving speaking skills. This strategy can be done by imagining yourself talking to other people or giving a presentation. In this way, learners can practice freely without fear of being judged by others. With consistency and discipline in implementing this strategy, a person can improve various aspects of their speaking ability, thereby becoming more confident and competent in communicating in the target language.

2. Memorizing vocabulary
    Based on the results of interviews conducted with 10 non-English students, it was found that one of the students used a target strategy, namely memorizing 30 vocabulary words every day to improve his speaking skills. He said that memorizing vocabulary was the most effective strategy he used to improve his speaking skills. As Student A said:

"The strategy I use is a memorization method system where I have to be able to memorize 30 words per word and I think this is very effective for improving my speaking skills."

The technique used by student A reflects the learning approach commonly used to improve speaking skills. According to language learning theory, memorizing vocabulary regularly can help improve a person's vocabulary so that a person's speaking skills also improve. Apart from that, the use of vocabulary memorization methods can also be linked to psycholinguistic theory, where reproduction and reinforcement are important in acquiring and retaining new knowledge. Therefore, the method applied by Student A reflects the principles of language learning and can be considered a strategy supported by learning theory and psycholinguistics. In addition, Student A's approach to memorizing language also shows the application of the continuous repetition method. This method is based on the idea that learning a few new words every day helps expand a person's vocabulary and speeds up the process of creating connections between words. The logic behind this tactic has to do with short-term and long-term memory and how repetition helps move knowledge information in a student's long-term memory.

In the context of the target strategy used by Student A, this approach reflects the systematic and regular use of vocabulary memorization methods. However, it is important to remember that every individual has a different way of learning, so it may be necessary to try different methods and combinations to find the most effective approach for yourself.

3. Shadowing technique
   The shadowing technique in language learning is a technique where someone listens to a conversation in a foreign language and simultaneously tries to pronounce it in the same way as the native speaker, thereby helping to improve intonation, vocals, and rhythm in speaking. Shadowing techniques in language learning offer an interactive and actively involved approach to honing speaking skills. By listening and trying to repeat conversations in a foreign language in a similar manner to the native speaker, individuals can improve their intonation, vowels, and rhythm. Many respondents identified the effectiveness of shadowing techniques in developing English-speaking skills. Some respondents said that they learned to speak English by listening to and imitating other people's conversations. This can be done by watching English-language films or videos, listening to English-language music, or taking online courses reinforced by the student U expression:

   "I learn from films, so from films I usually find words that I can imitate, both in pronunciation and accent. This technique is very effective for me who likes learning models that are more fun and not monotonous."

   One of the advantages of the shadowing technique is the flexibility in its application. Individuals can select resources that suit their interests and preferences, creating a more enjoyable and engaging learning experience. This technique not only provides the context of everyday conversations, but also introduces a variety of vocabulary and expressions that may not be found in conventional textbooks or courses.

4. Reading News Articles in English
   "This strategy is very effective in improving my speaking skills. By reading news articles, I can learn new vocabulary and grammar. I can also learn about various trending topics.

Apart from that, reading news articles can also help me improve my understanding of English."

One respondent said that reading articles in English allowed him to improve his vocabulary so that he could find some vocabulary that he could use when speaking.

One positive aspect highlighted by one respondent was the ability of news articles to help improve vocabulary. By exploring various topics and contexts in the news, language learners can discover new vocabulary that is relevant and can be applied in everyday life and in conversation. This creates a contextual learning experience where learners can integrate new vocabulary into their speaking practice. Apart from helping to enrich vocabulary, reading news articles also opens the door to understanding trending and relevant contexts. Readers can gain insight into global issues, trends, and current events, which in turn can enrich their conversations and provide a dimension of cultural richness in the use of English. Therefore, the strategy of reading news articles is not only about developing speaking skills but also about expanding knowledge and understanding of the wider context in which English is used.

5. Language Switching Strategy
    Language change strategy or also known as language switching strategy is a strategy that involves changing the language settings on an electronic device, such as a cellphone, to switch from one language to another. This is often done to facilitate users' understanding and comfort in using the device in a language they choose or understand well. Language switching strategies can be applied in various technological contexts to support users in interacting with their electronic devices more effectively and efficiently.

    Student X said that "*I often change the language on my cellphone to English. This helps me to get used to English in everyday life."*

    Apart from these expressions, here are several other expressions from the interview results that support the strategy of changing the language on your cellphone to English to improve speaking skills:

    • *"I feel that changing the language on my cellphone to English helps me to improve my understanding of English. I can also learn new vocabulary and grammar contextually."*

    • *"This strategy was very effective for me to improve my speaking skills. By changing the language on my cellphone, I can practice speaking English naturally. I can also learn new vocabulary and grammar contextually."*

6. Determining Speaking Time
    From the interview results, student U said that:

    "I think the most effective time to learn English is the time that suits each person's condition. However, for me, sunset and before bed are effective times because I can study more focused and motivated. I usually study English at dusk because at that time, my mind is more relaxed and I can focus better on studying. Apart from that, I also like to study English before bed. This helps me to remember the material I have studied, and at that time I also use the time to increase my vocabulary memorization."

These expressions show that there are respondents who say that evening and before bed are effective times for learning English. This is because at these times, the mind and body are usually more relaxed, and the brain is in the memory consolidation phase. However, it is important to remember that the most effective learning time is one that suits the conditions and needs of each learner. If you feel more focused and motivated to study at another time, then you can choose that time to study English.

External Strategy
External strategies are strategies that students carry out by involving other people. This strategy includes:
Getting used to communicate with family and friends using English (natural communication strategy)
Speaking is one of the most important skills in English. This skill allows us to communicate effectively with others in English. One effective strategy for improving speaking skills is to get used to communicating with friends and family using English. This strategy is called a natural communication strategy. Some respondents said that this strategy was effective because it allowed someone to practice speaking English regularly and in real-life contexts. Apart from that, this strategy can also help to improve your understanding of the English language.

Natural Communication Strategy involves the habit of communicating using English with friends and family so as to create consistent and authentic speaking practices. Respondents expressed that implementing this strategy was fruitful because it provided regular opportunities to engage in spoken English. Interacting with people you know and trust in English helps build confidence and fluency. This strategy is in line with the principle that language learning is not limited to textbooks but develops through practical daily conversations.

Supporting statements from respondents further underline the positive impact of this strategy. One respondent stated, *"I try to always use English when communicating with family and friends. This helps me practice speaking English regularly."* Another respondent also expressed the same thing, saying, *"Getting used to communicating with family and friends in English is an effective way to improve speaking skills. This is because we can practice talking to people we know and trust."* These affirmations highlight the personal commitment and dedication required to make natural communication strategies successful.

In conclusion, natural communication strategies emerge as a powerful tool for honing English-speaking skills. By incorporating regular English conversations with people, he knows, learners not only practice speaking but also develop a deeper understanding of the language. This strategy is in line with the idea that language is a living entity that is best learned through real-life interactions and practical engagement.

1. Taking an English course
   Taking an English course is one method that many people use to hone their speaking skills. Apart from offering a methodical approach to learning English, the courses also foster an environment of regular speaking practice. This strategy includes direct involvement with teachers who are experts in training students in making sentences, improving intonation, and enriching vocabulary.

   Many respondents stated that taking an English course provided significant benefits for improving their speaking skills. One response provided supporting evidence: *"I feel that taking an English course can help me speak more fluently because there is the opportunity to practice directly and get feedback from the instructor."* The teacher's presence provides

the necessary guidance to overcome speaking problems and correct errors. This strategy can also be applied to some respondents who do not have friends or family who can speak English. They take English courses so they have the opportunity to practice speaking with tutors or classmates at the course. They say that by taking English classes, they can learn more complex vocabulary and grammar.

English classes also provide an opportunity to communicate with other students besides the instructor. Participating in role plays, group conversations, or pair exercises can offer contextual and differentiated practice. The respondent said, *"Taking this English class not only improved my speaking skills but also provided the opportunity to talk with classmates, which broadened my horizons and experience in speaking English with other people."* Additionally, additional materials, such as study guides, online exercises, and speaking assignments are often included in English classes. Respondents said, *"I gained a deeper understanding of the context of the use of vocabulary and expressions thanks to the additional materials provided in the course."*

2. Forming a friendship circle

    One interesting and useful technique for non-English majors to improve their speaking skills is to form a circle of friends. This strategy allows participants to contribute their knowledge and experience while providing an inclusive learning environment. Respondents emphasized that this friendship circle provided a positive and open sense of support. Student A supporting statement*: "I formed a group with the aim of improving my speaking skills in English. There is no obligation to speak perfectly, and we give each other constructive feedback."* The relaxed and friendly environment encourages students to practice and gain confidence when speaking English. Additionally, this circle of friends gives them the opportunity to talk about interesting subjects or everyday events that offer context and can improve their understanding of vocabulary and grammar. Student K said that *"we often talk about things we like using English, so we learn while having fun."*

The strategy of forming friendship circles is an effective strategy that non-English major students can apply to improve their speaking skills in English. Respondents emphasized that togetherness, freedom from pressure, and a focus on shared interests provided a positive impetus for the development of their speaking skills. This group of friends also shows that, despite having different educational backgrounds or majors, learning English can be a collaborative process that inspires and encourages each other.

Discussion

From the results of interviews with non-English students, researchers found that the strategy most students used to improve their speaking skills was to practice speaking English regularly. According to respondents, through self-speaking exercises, they can practice their accent, intonation, and pronunciation without the pressure or embarrassment that arises when speaking in front of other people. This method is also supported by technology and internet resources, which allow students to record, play back, and assess their own speaking development. Overall, self-speaking practice techniques offer a safe and productive environment for non-English majors to hone their speaking skills without the constraints of face-to-face communication with classmates or native speakers. A number of researchers have also highlighted the importance of regular English-speaking practice in improving speaking skills. Widagdo (2018) stated that regularly practicing speaking English can significantly improve speaking competence.

Researchers also found other strategies used by non-English majoring students to improve their speaking skills, namely: the first is the strategy of memorizing vocabulary every day, which is a key strategy in language development. Pane (2020), Syahfutr & Niah (2017), and Manuputty & Wattimena (2020) stated in their research that memorizing vocabulary is a key strategy for improving speaking skills. The second strategy is the shadowing technique, which helps improve pronunciation and intonation when speaking English. This technique involves the entire auditory and motor systems, allowing students to absorb the intonation and vocal aspects of English. The third strategy is reading news articles in English, which enriches vocabulary and improves understanding of cultural context. The reason some respondents use this strategy is because reading news articles in English is considered effective because it can expand vocabulary, improve understanding of grammar, and introduce them to cultural contexts. This strategy is important for English literacy and character education. In their research, Agustina, Adiarti & Trisnawati (2021), stated the importance of language skills, including speaking, in the context of English literacy and character education.

The next strategy, namely the language switching strategy and determining speaking time, provides advantages in increasing adaptability to various communication contexts, allowing students to flexibly adjust the style and level of language formality. Apart from that, getting used to communicating with family and friends using English (natural communication strategy) has the benefit of showing effectiveness in building self-confidence and speaking fluency through authentic daily experiences. On the other hand, taking English classes offers the benefit of expert, systematic teaching. In addition, forming friendship circles in English is the preferred strategy because it creates an environment of constant support for practicing and communicating. According to Chiristie & Listyani (2018), there are four strategies that can be used to improve speaking skills: role play, small group discussions, storytelling, songs, and watching movies. In the four strategies proposed by Chiristie & Listyani, there are three similarities between the strategies that researchers found: small group discussions (forming friendship circles), songs, and watching films.

Overall, the main reasons for all respondents to choose various strategies were practicality according to each individual, contextual relevance, and choosing strategies that suit their needs and learning style in the hope of getting targeted guidance to improve their speaking skills.

CONCLUSION

After investigating the research through findings and discussion, the researchers came to the conclusion that non-English major students adopted various diverse and holistic strategies in an effort to improve their speaking skills. Self-speaking practice, memorizing vocabulary, shadowing technique, reading news articles in English, language switching strategy, determining speaking time, getting used to communicating with family and friends using English (natural communication strategy), taking an English course, and forming a friendship circle form a strategic framework that complements and supports each other. Of these various strategies, the self-speaking practice strategy is the one most often used by students to improve their speaking skills. The reason many non-English students use this strategy is because it offers a safe environment without the pressure or embarrassment that comes with speaking in front of other people.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

REFERENCES

Agustina, S. (2022). Language Learning Strategies: Contrasting English Department and Non-English Department Students. *Borneo Educational Journal*, 15.

Arif Widagdo. (2018). Implementasi Model Pembelajaran CLT Untuk Meningkatkan Kemampuan Berbicara Aktif Bahasa Inggris Berbasis Nilai-Nilai Karakter Berbahasa. *Magistra*, 83.

Hanifa, R. (2016). Speaking Efforts: Strategies From Students With Poor Speaking Performance. In Proceedings of the First Reciprocal Graduate Research Symposium between University Pendidikan Sultan Idris and Syiah Kuala University.

Hapsari, A. (2019). Language learning strategies in English language learning: A survey study. *Lingua Pedagogia, Journal of English Teaching Studies*, *1(1),* 58-68. https://doi.org/10.21831/lingped.v1i1.18399

Khairunas, A. I. (2019). Improving Communication English Speaking Skill through Listening. *Wanastra : Jurnal Bahasa dan Sastra*, 105.

Laura Maloni Lingga, R. M. (2019). Students' Strategies In Learning Speaking Skills At Smp Nasrani 3 Medan. *JOLLT Journal of Languages and Language Teaching*, 96.

Listyani, L. S. (2018). Teachers' Strategies to Improve Students' Self-Confidence in. *REGISTER JOURNAL*, 146.

Listyani, L. S. (2018). Teachers' Strategies to Improve Students' Self-Confidence in Speaking. *Register Journal*, 146-149.

Megawati, F. (2016). Kesulitan Mahasiswa Dalam Mencapai Pembelajaran. *JURNAL PEDAGOGIA*, 150.

Mia Fitria Agustina, D. A. (2021). Meningkatkan Kemampuan Bahasa Inggris Siswa Dan Siswi Smpn 7 Purwokerto Melalui Kegiatan Literasi Bahasa Inggris. *Gervasi: Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat*, 324.

Niah, W. S. (2017). Menguasai Speaking Skill Bahasa Inggris Dengan Konsep English Day Bagi Guru Dan Karyawan Di Sma Islam Terpadu Fadhilah Pekanbaru. *Jurnal Untuk Mu negeRI*, 50.

Pane, W. S. (2020). Meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata bahasa Inggris siswa sekolah menengah pertama dengan menggunakan idiom. *Mayadani* , 33.

Risqi Ekanti Ayuningtyas Palupi, B. P. (2022). Analisis Faktor Kecemasan pada Proses Keterampilan Berbicara Peserta Didik Tingkat. *Jurnal Dimensi Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran*, 144.

Sugiyono. 2014. Metodologi Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D. Bandung: Alfabeta.

Wattimena, P. M. (2020). Penggunaan Media Gambar Untuk Meningkatkan Kemampuan Anak Dan Remaja Dalam Kosakata Bahasa Inggris Di Jemaat Maranatha Kampung Sayosa Kabupaten Sorong. *Journal of Dedication to Papua Community* , 178.

Yulia Galuh Tantri, F. N. (2022). The Problems Encountered by Non-English Department Students in Speaking English. *International Journal of Research in Education*, 3-5.