

**EXPLORING NON-ENGLISH MAJOR STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ON
SELF-LEARNING IN IMPROVING ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILLS**

THESIS

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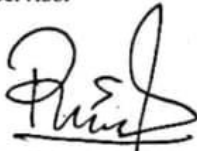
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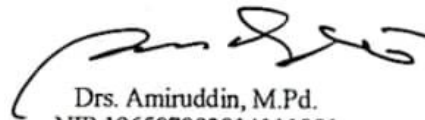
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Adalah benar-benar karya saya, kecuali semua kutipan dan referensi yang disebutkan sumbernya. apabila terdapat kesalahan dan kekeliruan di dalamnya, maka akan sepenuhnya menjadi tanggung jawab saya. Demikian surat pernyataan ini saya buat dengan sesungguhnya

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Saya yang membuat pernyataan,



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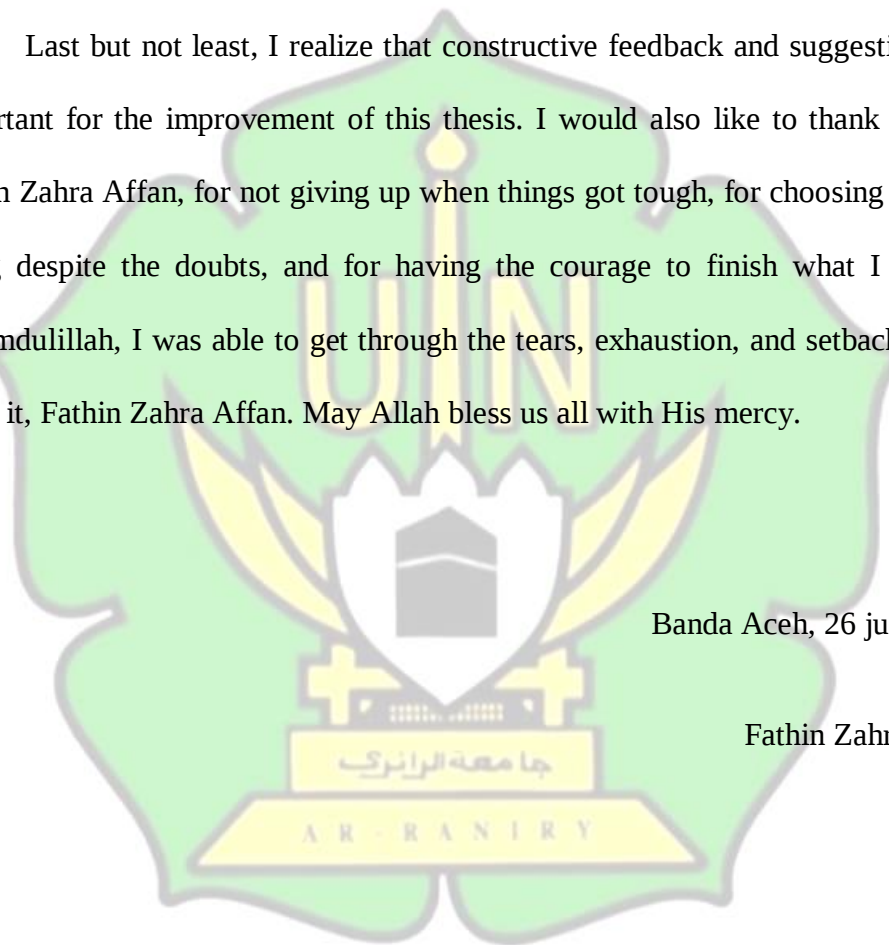
for me, and who are always there whenever I need them. May Allah SWT grant them a long and blessed life.

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ABSTRACT

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This study explores the perceptions of non-English major students toward self-learning in improving their English speaking skills. Recognizing the importance of speaking as an essential component of English proficiency, the research highlights the experiences of students from the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training at UIN Ar-Raniry who engage in self-learning practices. Using a qualitative method, data were collected through in-depth interviews with six participants and analyzed thematically. The findings reveal that students perceived self-learning as a flexible and personalized approach that helps them build confidence and prepare for real interactions. However, they also faced challenges such as motivational instability, difficulty maintaining consistent learning habits, limited vocabulary and grammar knowledge, lack of speaking partners, and absence of feedback. Despite these obstacles, students were motivated by both internal goals and external influences. The study concludes that while self-learning offers autonomy, students still need structured support and social interaction to develop speaking skills more effectively. These insights are expected to help educators and learners optimize independent learning strategies for language acquisition.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

In the worldwide society of today, proficiency in English speaking skills has become increasingly important for academic and professional success. As a lingua franca, English helps people from different cultures communicate with each other, and it is often required to access various information and opportunities in many fields. As stated by Jenkins (2009), English is widely used as a tool for global communication in education, business, science, technology, and diplomacy. In addition, Jenkins and Leung (2017) mentioned that the use of English in spoken cross-cultural communication among people around the world is known as English as a Lingua Franca. According to Khatoon et al. (2018), English is often seen as a common language that bridges international communication. In today's competitive era, being able to speak English well opens more chances for students to develop themselves. The ability to speak English effectively can help students connect with others, express their ideas clearly, and improve their academic and career opportunities.

Among the four English skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—speaking plays a particularly significant role as it reflects one's ability to express ideas clearly and interact effectively in real-life situations. Nhi (2025), highlighted that speaking has become a key focus in language learning, recognized as one of the most essential skills to master. This reality extends beyond English majors, making it crucial for non-English major students to also develop strong English

speaking skills, because everyone wants to mastering the speaking skills to communicate effectively in English.

In the academic context, being able to communicate in English is crucial for moving on to the next level. The TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication), and IELTS (International English Language Test System) are among the university-level English proficiency certificates that students need in order to participate in thesis defenses, student exchange programs, or master's degree programs in English-speaking nations (Afifah, 2024). These tests include speaking as one the main components, showing how important it is to develop this skill as part of academic preparation.

According to Yoestara and Putri (2019), English proficiency plays a crucial role in Indonesia, serving as a requirement for various significant milestones in life, it is essential for completing thesis defence required for university graduation, applying for scholarships to pursue further studies both domestically and abroad, participating in student exchange or internship programs, and securing employment especially with national and international companies.

Additionally, proficiency in English is often necessary for obtaining higher positions and certifications within professional organizations. Since speaking skill is a major part of communication, many students realize that they need to improve this skill to meet those goals.

In Indonesia, speaking is often seen as the most difficult English skills to develop, mainly because English is a foreign language that is not commonly used in daily conversation. The limited exposure to English in public spaces makes it challenging for learners to practice and gain confidence. As Mandasari and Aminatun (2020) emphasized, the lack of English usage in everyday life requires students to make extra efforts in improving their speaking abilities.

Speaking is the most important part in learning English. According to Yusnimar (2019), among the skills, speaking holds a significant position in the language learning process, when learners gain the confidence to speak the language they are studying, they tend to feel more motivated to develop the other skills, such as reading, listening, and writing in a more integrated way.

One of the main challenges faced by non-English major students is improving their English speaking ability, as it requires active use of the language, which is often lacking in their academic environment as well as sustaining their motivation to keep learning. Nhi (2025) noted that effective communication requires specific skills that can only be developed through consistent practice. Then, because their major is not English, and there is no an English-speaking environment that makes them feel familiar with the language, they often feel less confident to speak and struggle to find a way to practice.

Do to this situation, some non-English major students decided to learn and practice speaking on their own through self-learning. In self-learning, students have the flexibility to learn at their own pace and according to their own

schedules, they can explore unfamiliar topics and focus on the aspects that interest them the most. Oussou et al. (2024) explained that self-learning is recognized as a goal that learners should strive for in order to take control of their own education and engaged in lifelong learning. Apridayani & Teo (2021) claimed that a students' capacity to manage their own learning will effectively can enhance their academic performance, extending beyond both informal and formal education and fostering greater self-study habits.

Self-learning is needed in students' language learning, students will learn better through self-learning because they can develop and progress at their own pace. Students learnt best when they are self-directed, especially when learning a language like English (Ramadhanty et al., 2023). This skill is particularly crucial today, with the rise of technology in this modern era, resources for self-learning have become more accessible than ever, from anywhere and anytime.

Although self-learning gives students the freedom to choose their method and pace, improving English speaking skills through self-learning can be challenging. Self-learning in English language learning presents a number of difficulties for students who are not majoring in English. In particular, developing speaking skills through self-learning can be especially difficult due to the lack of real-time interaction, feedback, and speaking partners, Ni'mah et al. (2025) also emphasize that English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students often face several challenges in enhancing their speaking skills, such as limited opportunities to engage in

English-speaking environments, lack of confidence, and the pressure of speaking in real-time situations.

The lack of an environment that supports English is one of the challenges, which might make self-learning more intimidating. Due to the restricted roles that English plays in their daily lives, many EFL students struggle (Akbari, 2015). Self-learning can be tough, especially when they are unsure where to begin or how to progress. Maintaining motivation and discipline, choosing suitable materials, and managing challenging topics are common problem they faced (Akbari, 2016). Hibatullah (2019) stated that not all language learning process are successful and there are still some barriers to overcome. The challenges were affected by some factors such as learners' ability, motivation, environment, practices, and previous knowledge of foreign languages (Thompson, 2014, as cited in Hibatullah, 2019).

Several studies have explored the role of self-learning in language acquisition among non-English major students. One such study was conducted by Nhi (2025), which aimed to find out how non-English major students improve their English-speaking skills using technology. The study used focus group interviews with ten students at the University of Finance and Marketing (UFM). The findings showed that students used various ways to practice speaking, identified certain motivational factors, and faced several challenges in the process.

In the Indonesian context, a similar study was conducted by Azisah et al. (2024) at Universitas Muhammadiyah of Makassar, through interviews with ten

students from different departments, the study found that students used two main types of strategies: internal and external. These findings offer useful insights for teachers in helping students during speaking classes. Another relevant study was carried out by Wahyuningsih et al. (2023) at Tidar University, Magelang. It focused on the differences in learning strategies among non-English department students, aiming to discover both the challenges they experienced and the strategies they applied. The study revealed that students found it difficult to regularly practice English since it is not commonly used in daily life. However, they still made efforts through self-learning using social media and attending English courses.

Furthermore, a study by Khamisna (2020) at UIN Ar-Raniry investigated the challenges faced by 45 first-semester students from the faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training. Using questionnaire and interviews, the study revealed problems such as a fear of making mistakes, low language proficiency, and to cope with these challenges, students applied strategies such as practicing, and preparing before speaking.

When it comes to thoroughly examining students' perceptions of self-learning when improving their English speaking skills through self-learning, especially among those who are not majoring in English, many research have been conducted. But specifically, at the Acehnese context, Indonesia, no studies have been conducted to investigate what are the students' perceptions toward self-learning in improving their English speaking skills. Closing this gap will help

non-majority English students especially students at UIN Ar-Raniry learn English more effectively by offering them useful insights and techniques to improve their self-learning experience in improving their English speaking skills.

Furthermore, understanding students' perceptions of self-learning is key to improving English learning strategies. By examining their motivations, strategies, and difficulties, educators can create targeted support to enhance EFL acquisition. This study explores how non-English major students perceive self-learning on their English speaking skills, aiming to provide insights for optimizing self-learning for better language acquisition.

B. Research Question

Based on the explanation above, this study will explore the following research question: What are non-English major students' perceptions towards self-learning in improving English speaking skills?

C. Aim of Study

This study aims to explore the perceptions of non-English major students regarding self-learning in improving their English speaking skills.

D. Significance of Study

The results of this research is expected to have practical significance for teachers and students:

1. By understanding the students' perceptions towards self-learning by non-English major students in improving English speaking skills by self-

learning, teachers may create more individualized, helpful, and successful teaching practices.

2. Students can gain insights into effective self-learning strategies that can improve their English language skills, and may motivate students to take more initiative in their studies.

E. Research Terminologies

The researcher has offered the following terminologies:

1. Perception

Perception is a psychological process where individuals interpret stimuli received through their five senses, resulting in positive or negative responses depending on their experiences (Putri, 2022). According to Purworini et al.(2017), perception involves interpreting messages about objects, events, or relationships based on past experiences. This means each person may perceive the same thing differently, influencing their attitudes and actions.

Kurniawan (2015) added that student perception is the process of interpreting information from observed objects to determine meaning. In summary, perception comes from experiences, and internal interpretation, which then influences how individuals respond to their environment. This study focuses on the perceptions of UIN Ar-Raniry students from non-English departments toward self-learning in learning English.

2. Self-Learning

Self-learning allows students to manage their study materials based on their abilities, goals, and learning speed. Hussein (2021) defined it as an independent process where students complete task on their own and use self-assessment to reach their learning goals. This approach helps students stay motivated and develop at their own level.

Venecia (2019) also described self-learning as gaining knowledge through personal research by selecting suitable resources. In learning English, this method helps students take charge of their progress by setting goals, organizing materials, and using tools like apps, videos, or online courses to improve on their own.

The term —self-learningl in this research describes the self-learned efforts of non-English major students at UIN Ar-Raniry to improve their English language skills. With self-learning, students can take charge of their education and concentrate on their own needs and goals.

3. English Speaking Skills

Speaking is one of the four essential skills that English learners need to master, as it plays an important role in social interaction and communication. It allows individuals to express their thoughts and feelings verbally, making it a key aspect of language learning. Qureshi (2007) explained that speaking holds great significance because it is often seen as a measure of language proficiency.

Although mastering all language skills is important, strong speaking ability provides specific advantages in building confidence and effective communication. Masluha and Swari (2023) also highlighted the importance of speaking fluently, especially for second or foreign language learners, as it helps them engage more actively in conversations. In this study, speaking skill refers to students' ability to express ideas clearly and effectively in spoken English during learning activities or daily interactions.



