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A BASIC ENGLISH TEXTBOOK IN ENGLISH FOR COMMUNICATION AND LEARNING STRATEGIES FOR NON-ENGLISH STUDY PROGRAMS

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Abstract: This study examines the learning strategies of non–English major students and evaluates the feasibility and effectiveness of *A Basic Textbook in English for Communication* as a communicative instructional resource in higher education. Persistent challenges in students' speaking performance, including limited fluency, frequent first language reliance, communication anxiety, and avoidance strategies underscore the need for structured and contextually relevant learning materials. The study employed a research and development (R&D) approach adapted from the Borg and Gall model, encompassing needs analysis, textbook design, expert validation, limited field testing, and effectiveness evaluation. Data were collected through expert validation instruments, speaking performance tests, classroom observations, and student response questionnaires. Expert validation results indicated a high level of feasibility, with mean scores ranging from 4.21 to 4.32 across content, pedagogy, and media design aspects. Effectiveness testing showed a significant improvement in students' speaking performance, with the mean score increasing from 65.4 (pre-test) to 82.7 (post-test). The instructional impact was further supported by a high effect size (Cohen's d = 1.12), indicating a strong practical effect of the textbook intervention. Improvements were observed across all speaking components, including fluency, accuracy, vocabulary, pronunciation, and interaction. Qualitative findings revealed a notable shift in students' communication strategies from avoidance behaviors toward more productive strategies such as paraphrasing, self-repair, circumlocution, and clarification requests, reflecting increased confidence and willingness to communicate. Overall, the findings demonstrate that a task-based, communicative English textbook can effectively enhance both linguistic competence and strategic language use among non–English major students in Indonesian higher education.
Keywords: *learning strategies; communication skills; English textbook; non-English majors; learning effectiveness.*

INTRODUCTION

English plays a strategic role in Indonesian higher education as a primary medium for accessing global academic resources, engaging with scientific developments, and participating in professional communication (Manurung & Rozimela, 2025). While English instruction is formally included across disciplines, students from non-English study programs often experience limited opportunities to develop functional oral communication skills (Uztosun, 2024; W. Yang & Shing, 2024). Unlike English majors, non-English majors typically receive fewer instructional hours and are exposed to English mainly through general-purpose courses, which are frequently misaligned with their communicative needs (Bayan et al., 2025; Sihombing & Nguyen, 2025).

Empirical studies consistently report that Indonesian EFL learners demonstrate low speaking proficiency despite prolonged exposure to English instruction (Zvarych et al., 2023). This condition is particularly evident among non-English majors, whose speaking performance is constrained by limited vocabulary, pronunciation difficulties, communication anxiety, and a strong tendency to revert to the first language during oral tasks

(Prabhakaran et al., 2023; Sarfaraj et al., 2025). Affective factors such as low self-confidence and fear of negative evaluation further reduce students' willingness to communicate, thereby inhibiting meaningful language use in classroom interactions (Alshammari, 2022; Metwally et al., 2022).

From a strategic perspective, these speaking difficulties are closely related to the communication strategies employed by learners. Communication strategy theory emphasizes that productive strategies such as paraphrasing, circumlocution, self-repair, and clarification requests enable learners to sustain interaction despite linguistic limitations (LaScotte, 2022; Volk & Zerfass, 2024). Previous studies indicate that explicit support for communication strategy use can enhance fluency, confidence, and interactional competence (Setiawan, 2024). However, recent findings in Southeast Asian EFL contexts reveal that non-English major students predominantly rely on avoidance strategies, including silence, premature task termination, and code-switching, rather than productive compensatory strategies (Amalia et al., 2025; Boonsuk, 2025). This pattern suggests that learners' strategic behavior is not merely an individual trait but is strongly shaped by instructional design and pedagogical scaffolding.

In this regard, teaching materials particularly textbooks play a critical mediating role. Textbooks structure classroom interaction, model communicative behavior, and implicitly shape the strategies students adopt during speaking tasks (Dang, 2024; Siregar et al., 2024). Nevertheless, empirical evidence indicates that many English textbooks used in Indonesian universities remain largely generic, grammar-oriented, and insufficiently responsive to the communicative and strategic needs of non-English majors (Emmiyati & Jinan, 2025; Lebedinets et al., 2024). The lack of contextualized dialogue, staged speaking tasks, and explicit strategic scaffolding limits students' opportunities to practice authentic communication and develop effective interactional strategies (Lu, 2022).

Despite extensive research on EFL speaking difficulties and communication strategies, there is a clear research gap in the systematic development and empirical evaluation of communicative textbooks that explicitly integrate communication strategy support for non-English majors in Indonesian higher education. Existing studies tend to examine learning strategies as isolated learner variables or focus on speaking outcomes without addressing how instructional materials can operationalize strategy development within classroom practice. Consequently, the relationship between textbook design, speaking performance, and shifts in learners' communication strategies remains underexplored (Mualiyah et al., 2025).

To address this gap, the present study develops and evaluates *A Basic Textbook in English for Communication*, a task-based and communicative textbook specifically designed for non-English major students (Ahmadian & Long, 2021). Communication strategies in this study are conceptualized as learning outcomes shaped by textbook-mediated instruction, rather than as independent variables. Using a Research and Development (R&D) approach, the study examines the textbook's feasibility, its effectiveness in improving students' speaking performance, and its influence on students' communication strategy use in classroom interaction.

Accordingly, this study aims to: (1) assess the feasibility of the developed textbook based on material and media expert validation; (2) evaluate its effectiveness in improving the speaking skills of non-English major students; and (3) identify changes in students' communication strategies following textbook implementation. By integrating communicative tasks, contextualized content, and strategic scaffolding, this study is expected to contribute empirically and pedagogically to the development of needs-based English communication materials for non-English majors in Indonesian higher education.

METHOD

This study uses Research and Development (R&D) design to develop and test the feasibility of the A Basic Textbook in English for Communication textbook for non-English language students (Lai et al., 2022; Santi et al., 2024). The R&D model is used because it provides a systematic framework for producing valid, practical, and effective learning products through a series of stages: needs analysis, product design, expert validation, revision, and limited trials. This approach is in line with the guidance of Astrid et al., (2024) which affirms that the development of teaching materials must go through layered evaluations to ensure strong pedagogical quality and relevance to learners' needs. The trial stage in this study focuses on the initial effectiveness of textbooks in improving students' speaking skills, especially in the aspects of fluency, accuracy, vocabulary, pronunciation, and interaction.

The participants of this study consisted of 30 non-English students from the Elementary School

Teacher Education Study Program and Indonesian Language and Literature, semesters II and IV, at one of the public universities in North Sumatra. The gender distribution includes 19 women and 11 men. The key informants were selected based on two criteria: (1) students have taken basic English courses; and (2) students show barriers to oral communication as identified in the preliminary study.

The sampling technique used is purposive sampling, because the research requires participants who have specific characteristics related to the need to develop communication skills in the context of EFL. The number of 30 participants was considered adequate for a limited trial in the context of R&D, especially to identify the initial effectiveness of the product and its pedagogical feasibility before the large-scale trial phase.

Several instruments are used to comprehensively collect data:

Analytic Scoring Rubric. The rubric measures five main aspects (fluency, accuracy, vocabulary, pronunciation, interaction). Rubrics are used in the pre-test and post-test with two independent assessors. The level of inter-rater reliability is calculated using inter-rater reliability, which indicates stable score consistency.

Table 1. *Speaking ability assessment rubric*

Aspects	Score 4	Score 3	Score 2	Score 1
Fluency	Speak fluently with minimal pause; Ideas Delivered Naturally	Smooth but still uninterrupted pause	Pauses occur frequently and disrupt communication flows	Intermittent, many silent pauses, difficulty composing sentences
Accuracy (Grammar)	Complex and consistently correct sentence structure	Minor errors do not affect comprehension	Errors are frequent enough that they interfere with the accuracy of the message	Dominant errors, very inhibited understanding
Vocabulary	Use a varied and contextually appropriate vocabulary	The vocabulary is quite varied with a slight inaccuracy	Limited, often repeating the same word	Very limited, often stopped because they ran out of vocabulary
Pronunciation	Pronunciation is clear and easy to understand; Good intonation	The pronunciation is quite clear although there are some mispronunciations	Lots of mispronunciations but still understandable	Pronunciation hinders comprehension; often unclear
Interaction	Responsive, maintain conversations, use effective communication strategies	Good response but limited communication strategy	Difficulty responding and often losing their turn	Unable to maintain interaction; passive

(Source: Puspitasari, 2021)

Validation instruments for material experts and media experts. Material and media expert validation sheets are used to assess the feasibility of content, linguistic suitability, pedagogical suitability, visual design, layout neatness, and readability. The validity of the content is analyzed with Aiken's V.

Table 2. *Material expert validation instrument*

Aspects Assessed	Assessment Indicators	Rating Scale
Content Eligibility	Suitability of the material with communication competence; the relevance of the theme; depth and breadth of contents	1–4
Language Compatibility	Accuracy of vocabulary; clarity of sentence structure; Consistency in the use of academic registers	1–4
Linguistic Accuracy	Grammar accuracy; the correctness of the sentences; Language Function Suitability	1–4
Conformity with Learning Principles	Relevance of *task-based* approaches; contextual meaning; staging of controlled–free production	1–4

Material Integration	Coherence between units; material continuity; Clarity of instructions	1–4

Table 3. *Media expert validation instrument*

Aspects Assessed	Assessment Indicators	Rating Scale
Visual Design	Consistency of layout; the use of color; literacy of letters; Design aesthetics	1–4
Book Organization	The structure of the unit is clear; easy navigation; header/footer consistency	1–4
Illustrations & Graphics	Image relevance; visual quality; Learning Support Functions	1–4
Readability	Text size, spacing, paragraph clarity	1–4
Technical Completeness	Page numbering; clarity of tables and icons; Printing quality	1–4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study include three main aspects, namely (1) the feasibility *of the A Basic Textbook in English for Communication* textbook, (2) Improvement of non-English speaking skills after the use of textbooks, and (3) changes in students' communication strategies during the learning process. Based on the analysis of data obtained through validity tests, speaking performance tests, classroom observations, and student responses, we found that the textbooks developed not only met the content and media feasibility standards, but also had a real pedagogical impact on the development of students' communicative skills. The following findings are presented systematically to illustrate the quality of the product and the effectiveness of its implementation in the context of English language learning in college.

A Basic Textbook in English for Communication

The initial stage in presenting the results of the research is focused on testing the feasibility *of the A Basic Textbook in English for Communication* textbook that was developed. The feasibility of the product is assessed through a validation process by subject matter experts and media experts to ensure that the textbook meets content quality standards, pedagogical suitability, and technical and visual aspects before being implemented in learning. The results of the validation are presented in Table 4 as an empirical basis to assess the level of feasibility and validity of the curriculum developed.

Table 4. *Expert validation*

Components	Score	Categories
Material Expert	3,72	Highly feasible
Media Expert	3,81	Highly feasible
Isi (Aiken's V)	0,82–0,94	High validity

Table 4 presents the results of expert validation of the *A Basic Textbook in English for Communication textbook* developed in this study. From the results of the validation, it can be seen that material experts gave a score of 3.72 and media experts gave a score of 3.81, each of which was in the "very feasible" category. In addition, Aiken's V values are in the range of 0.82–0.94, indicating a high level of content validity and consistency of assessments between validators. These findings show that the components of the book's content, material structure, linguistic quality, visual design, and technical feasibility have met the standards for the development of teaching materials.

In line with the feasibility of the textbook that has been confirmed through expert validation, the next step is to test the effectiveness of the product on students' speaking abilities. This measurement is carried out through pre-tests and post-tests designed to see changes in communication performance after students participate in learning using *the A Basic Textbook in English for Communication* textbook. The test results are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5. *Speaking ability*

Components	Score	Categories
Pre-test	62.4	Moderate
Post-test	79.1	High

Based on the data in Table 5, there is a clear improvement in students' speaking skills. The average pre-test score of 62.4 in the medium category increased to 79.1 in the post-test, which was in the high category. This increase provides a strong indication that the use of textbooks contributes directly to strengthening aspects of student speech, such as fluency, accuracy, and engagement in verbal interactions. Thus, these findings support the early effectiveness of textbooks as English communication learning tools for non-English language learners.

To obtain a more comprehensive picture of the level of effectiveness of the intervention, the

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improvement of students' speaking skills was further analyzed through the calculation of gain score and effect size. This analysis is necessary to ensure that the change in the score does not only occur descriptively, but also has a statistically significant pedagogical significance. The results of the gain score and effect size calculation are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. *Gain score and effect size analysis results*

Components	Value	Categories
N-Gain	.72	Significant
Effect Size (Cohen's d)	1,12	high (Large)

Table 6 shows that the N-Gain value of 0.72 is in the significant category, indicating a significant increase after the use of textbooks. In addition, Cohen's effect size value of d of 1.12 was in the large category, which indicates that the intervention had a strong impact on students' speaking skills, not just a change that occurred by chance. Thus, this analysis reinforces previous findings that the textbooks developed have substantive effectiveness in improving the communication competence of non-English students.

Improved speaking ability of non-English speaking students

After the feasibility of the A Basic Textbook in English for Communication textbook was confirmed through expert validation, the next analysis was focused on improving the speaking ability of non-English students after use of the textbook. This improvement is analyzed in more detail on each aspect of speaking ability to obtain a comprehensive picture of the impact of learning on student communication performance. A summary of the results of improving speaking ability per aspect is presented in Table 7.

Table 7. *Improving students' speaking ability per aspect of speaking*

Speaking Aspect	Pre-test	Post-test	Improvement	Percentage Increase
Fluency	60.2	79.8	+19.6	+32.6%
Accuracy	63.5	78.2	+14.7	+23.1%
Vocabulary	61.8	80.5	+18.7	+30.2%
Pronunciation	62.1	76.4	+14.3	+23.0%
Interaction	64.4	84.3	+19.9	+30.9%
Average	62.4	79.1	+16.7	+26.7%

Based on the data in Table 7, all aspects of students' speaking ability showed an improvement after the implementation of the textbook. The highest increase occurred in the fluency aspect with an increase of 32.6%, followed by interaction by 30.9% and vocabulary by 30.2%. These findings show that communicative and task-based learning activities in textbooks effectively encourage fluent speaking, interaction engagement, and more active vocabulary use.

Meanwhile, the accuracy and pronunciation aspects also experienced a consistent increase, by 23.1% and 23.0%, respectively. Although the percentage increase is lower than in other aspects, this increase indicates a gradual improvement in the accuracy of the structure and clarity of student pronunciation. Overall, the average speaking ability of students increased by 26.7%, which confirms that the use of textbooks has a positive and equal impact on all components of non-English speaking skills.

Changes in communication strategies for non-English speaking students

The results of the learning observation showed a clear change in the communication strategies of non-English speaking students after the use of *the A Basic Textbook in English for Communication* textbook. The *task-based learning* approach integrated in the textbook encourages students to engage in more spontaneous, interactive, and sustainable communication activities. Contextual dialogue activities, step-by-step speaking exercises, and authentic communication assignments provide space for students to actively use English in situations that resemble real communication. These findings are in line with the view of Brown and Abeywickrama (2019) who affirm that structured and repetitive speaking practices can significantly improve learners' communication performance.

The results of the implementation of *the A Basic Textbook in English for Communication* textbook show that there is a shift from avoidant communication strategies to more productive strategies for students. Classroom observations showed an increase in the use of strategies such as *circumlocution*, *self-repair*, *paraphrasing*, and *clarification requests*, which play an important role in maintaining the continuity of verbal interactions.

Before the intervention, students tend to stop conversations, repeat phrases on a limited basis, or switch to Indonesian when facing linguistic difficulties. After the intervention, students seemed more confident, dared to try to convey a message even though it was not completely accurate, and were more active in maintaining the conversation. This change reflects an increase in *willingness to communicate* (MacIntyre et al., 1998), which shows that textbooks not only improve linguistic skills, but also develop students' readiness and courage to communicate using English.

The findings of this study indicate that *A Basic Textbook in English for Communication* meets high feasibility standards and demonstrates strong pedagogical potential when implemented with non English major students. The high validation scores obtained from material and media experts, supported by Aiken's V values in the high validity range, suggest that the textbook aligns well with established principles of content reliability, instructional clarity, pedagogical relevance, and technical design. Rather than merely confirming usability, these results indicate that the textbook provides a coherent instructional framework capable of supporting communicative learning processes. This reinforces previous R&D studies showing that rigorously validated materials are more likely to be implemented consistently and meaningfully in classroom practice (Furukawa et al., 2022; Muliana et al., 2020).

From a theoretical perspective, the validation outcomes reflect successful integration between communicative language teaching principles and task-based pedagogy embedded in the textbook design. Tomlinson's materials development framework emphasizes that effective teaching materials should facilitate meaningful engagement, learner autonomy, and authentic language use (LaScotte, 2022). In this study, expert validation confirms that these principles were not only conceptually adopted but operationalized through structured units, staged speaking tasks, and contextualized dialogue. Similar findings have been reported in R&D-based textbook studies in Asian EFL contexts, where alignment between theory and instructional design was found to enhance both instructional coherence and learner engagement (Haniah et al., 2023; Musarokah & Ardini, 2023).

The significant improvement in students' speaking performance, supported by a high normalized gain (g) = 0.72) and a large effect size (Cohen's d = 1.12), indicates that the textbook intervention had a strong and practically meaningful impact. Importantly, the effect size suggests that the observed gains were not trivial or limited to statistical significance, but represent substantial learning improvement in real instructional contexts (Cherubini & MacDonald, 2021). Comparable R&D studies on communicative and task-based textbooks have reported similarly large effect sizes, particularly when instructional materials emphasize interactional practice and learner engagement rather than isolated language forms (Dawilai et al., 2024). This positions the present findings within a broader body of evidence supporting the instructional value of task-based materials for EFL speaking development (Alvarez et al., 2024; Jia & Lu, 2025).

A closer examination of speaking components reveals that fluency and interaction showed the greatest gains. This pattern can be interpreted through the lens of task-based learning theory, which prioritizes meaning-focused communication and negotiation of meaning over immediate grammatical accuracy (Torres & Serafini, 2025; C.-J. Yang, 2023). The communicative tasks embedded in the textbook required students to sustain interaction, exchange information, and complete problem-solving activities, thereby directing cognitive resources toward maintaining conversational flow. Similar patterns have been reported by Chen et al., (2025) and Kositchaivat, (2025) who found that task-based interventions consistently yield stronger gains in fluency and interaction than in accuracy-focused components. Thus, the improvement observed in this study reflects a theoretically predictable outcome of task-based instructional design rather than an incidental effect.

Regarding communication strategies, the findings indicate a noticeable shift from avoidance-oriented behaviors toward more productive strategies such as paraphrasing, circumlocution, self-repair, and clarification requests. However, it is important to interpret this shift cautiously. While classroom observations suggest increased use of productive strategies, the study does not employ a formal observational coding scheme or frequency-based strategy analysis. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted as indicative tendencies rather than definitive causal claims. This aligns with reviewer concerns and reflects a more conservative interpretation of strategy change as an emergent outcome of instructional exposure rather than a direct causal effect of the textbook.

Nevertheless, the observed strategic tendencies are consistent with established communication

strategy theory, which posits that learners are more likely to employ productive strategies when instructional environments provide supportive interactional contexts and reduced anxiety (Demetriadis & Tegos, 2023; Uztosun, 2024; Vats et al., 2025). The textbook's design featuring contextualized dialogue, collaborative tasks, and gradual progression from guided to freer production may have created conditions that encouraged students to maintain communication rather than withdraw from it. Similar outcomes have been reported in R&D studies where communicative materials indirectly facilitated strategic language use by increasing learners' confidence and willingness to communicate (Luque-Jimenez, 2023; Merzlikina, 2022).

When compared with existing R&D textbook studies in Indonesian and Southeast Asian EFL contexts, this study contributes additional empirical evidence highlighting the importance of integrating communication strategy support within textbook design. Previous research has often examined speaking improvement without explicitly addressing how instructional materials shape learners' strategic behavior Musarokah & Ardini, (2023) By positioning communication strategies as learning outcomes influenced by textbook-mediated instruction, this study extends prior work and offers a more holistic view of communicative competence development among non English majors.

Overall, the findings suggest that communicative, task-based textbooks when systematically developed and validated can play a significant role in enhancing both speaking performance and strategic engagement in EFL classrooms. Rather than claiming direct causality, this study demonstrates that well-designed instructional materials can create pedagogical conditions that support meaningful oral interaction and encourage more adaptive communication behaviors. In the context of Indonesian higher education, where non-English majors often face limited opportunities for authentic English use, such materials represent a viable and pedagogically sound intervention.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the *A Basic Textbook in English for Communication* textbook developed through the Research and Development (R&D) approach has a very high level of feasibility and is effective in improving the communication competence of non-English speaking students. The results of the validation of material and media experts show that the textbook has met the standards of content quality, pedagogical suitability, and technical feasibility. The effectiveness test through pre-test and post-test indicated a significant improvement in speaking ability, both descriptively and based on the gain score and effect size analysis which was in the high category. The improvement covers all aspects of speaking, with the most prominent impact on fluency and interaction, reflecting the success of task-based learning approaches in encouraging communicative and authentic use of English.

In addition to improving speaking performance, this study also shows a change in students' communication strategies from the tendency to avoid communication to the use of more productive strategies. Students become more courageous to maintain conversations through strategies such as paraphrasing, clarification, and self-improvement, which indicates an increased willingness to communicate. These findings confirm that communicative textbooks not only serve as a source of linguistic input, but also as pedagogical instruments that shape students' readiness, confidence, and communication strategies. Thus, this study makes an important contribution to the development of English teaching materials in Indonesian universities, especially for non-English students, by showing that contextual, validated, and task-based textbooks have the potential to improve students' communication competencies in a sustainable and meaningful manner.

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