



Language Self-Assessment: The Comparison of Learning Difficulty and Readiness of Non-Language Department Students

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Abstract: Self-assessment in language learning is important to understanding students' needs and challenges in mastering Arabic and English skills, especially for those outside the language department. Therefore, this study aims to explore the differences in the level of language learning difficulty and the readiness of students from non-language majors to learn Arabic and English. This study uses a quantitative descriptive approach with a survey method, involving 109 students from three Islamic universities in the Cirebon area as respondents. Data was collected through a questionnaire consisting of two main components: the language learning difficulty scale and the learning readiness scale. Data analysis was carried out to compare the difficulty level felt with the student's readiness to learn English. The results showed that both variables had the same response in terms of difficulty and readiness to learn. The classification of difficulty in Arabic and English is the same, namely at a moderate level with a percentage of 64% and 51%, and the dominant indicator that is considered difficult for students to master is the fluency indicator. In addition, the comparison of learning readiness in Arabic and English did not differ significantly. The motivation indicators of both languages have the same percentage of 35%. Thus, the motivation of non-language students to learn Arabic and English is higher than the other two indicators.

Abstrak: Penilaian diri dalam pembelajaran bahasa menjadi aspek penting untuk memahami kebutuhan dan tantangan yang dihadapi oleh mahasiswa dalam menguasai keterampilan Bahasa Arab dan Inggris, terutama bagi mereka yang tidak berada dalam jurusan bahasa. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi perbedaan dalam tingkat kesulitan belajar bahasa dan kesiapan belajar mahasiswa dari jurusan non-bahasa dalam mempelajari Bahasa Arab dan Inggris. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kuantitatif dengan metode survei, melibatkan 109 mahasiswa dari tiga perguruan tinggi Islam di wilayah Cirebon sebagai responden. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner yang terdiri dari dua komponen utama, yaitu skala kesulitan belajar bahasa dan skala kesiapan belajar. Analisis data dilakukan untuk membandingkan tingkat kesulitan yang dirasakan dengan kesiapan mahasiswa dalam belajar bahasa Inggris. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kedua variabel memiliki respon yang sama dalam hal kesulitan dan kesiapan untuk belajar. Klasifikasi kesulitan dalam bahasa Arab dan Inggris adalah sama, yaitu pada tingkat sedang dengan persentase 64% dan 51%, dan untuk indikator dominan yang dianggap sulit dikuasai oleh siswa adalah indikator kefasihan. Selain itu, perbandingan kesiapan belajar dalam bahasa Arab dan Inggris juga tidak memiliki perbedaan yang signifikan. Indikator motivasi kedua bahasa memiliki persentase yang sama yaitu 35%. Sehingga, dapat disimpulkan bahwa motivasi siswa non-bahasa dalam belajar bahasa Arab dan Inggris lebih tinggi dari dua indikator lainnya.

A. Introduction

Language learning in Indonesia is one form of the Indonesian nation's efforts to prepare itself for globalization (Siregar, 2021). Learning languages, especially foreign languages, is already complementary at various levels of education. Foreign language learning itself has a long history in Indonesia. The Dutch's entry into the colonial era was followed by the entry of the English and Japanese. Even today, in the era of global society, more foreign languages exist in Indonesia, and are even in demand by indigenous people to learn. In the realm of Islamic Higher Education in Indonesia, the importance of learning foreign languages such as English and Arabic is to prepare both a qualified and Islamic generation.

The need for the use of English and Arabic is considered equal for graduates of Islamic Universities seeing from the development of education, religion and technology synergizing. Both languages are considered important for graduates of Islamic Universities, where Arabic has a very strategic position in Islamic studies because the primary sources of Islamic teachings are (the Quran and as-Sunnah) and the majority of Islamic references are in Arabic. (Setyawan, 2018) occupies a strategic position, both to understand the teachings of Islam and as a means of communication between individuals, groups and even nations in the world to realize the unity of Muslims worldwide. Arabic is also one of the global dialects used by humankind to speak to each other (Khitom & Taufik, 2023). English, the universal language, is considered necessary to be learnt because of its great benefits for students in the future, especially in finding job opportunities in business, tourism, and education. This aligns with (Rao, 2019) that English is essential as a communication medium in various fields, such as business, technology, tourism, economy, and entertainment.

Learning a language means learning four skills: listening, reading, writing and speaking. The expected achievement of learning a language is that students can write and also speak the language learned. Based on preliminary observation data, speaking skills are one of the most challenging but important skills for students. This is reinforced by (Fan & Yan, 2020) that speaking is an important language skill we use daily to communicate with others, express our views, and project our identity. In order to master this skill so that they can speak English and Arabic well, students must master all speaking skill aspects. According to (Nurgiyantoro, 2010), speaking skills include pronunciation, structure, vocabulary, and ideas of problems or ideas to be conveyed, as well as understanding the interlocutor's language. According to (Brown, 2004), aspects of speaking include pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension.

In general, students' difficulties in learning languages vary in factors. As revealed by (Slameto, 2005) students' learning difficulties are influenced by external and internal factors. External factors come from outside the student and can affect their achievement, for example, the subjects studied. Suppose one of these aspects cannot be mastered in language learning, especially in mastering speaking skills. In that case, the oral delivery of the message cannot be received by the listener or recipient. In addition, internal factors such as readiness to learn can influence students' difficulties in mastering speaking skills.

(Rahmatika & Suyatno, 2020) argue that readiness to learn is an individual's ability to respond to their learning experience. Student learning readiness can be measured by paying attention to several aspects, such as attention, motivation, and student readiness development.

Then, if English and Arabic in Higher Education have been carried out as learning activities, the measurement of learning activities should be done. Therefore, measuring the success of a learning process can be done through assessment. Learning assessment is carried out during learning and is used to improve and evaluate the teaching and learning process. One form of assessment in learning is self-assessment. In higher education, self-assessment can be used as a formative test to provide student feedback. (Adachi et al., 2018) argue that self-assessment in learning can be used by students to actively increase their confidence in their learning process because, with self-assessment, students participate in conducting assessments and receiving assessments. So that students can know their abilities and learn from their mistakes, which is reinforced by the results of a meta-analysis review conducted by (Karaman, 2021) that self-assessment has a potential influence on improving student learning and academic achievement in language learning, this self-assessment helps students improve self-learning and change their perspective on what they are learning, namely language skills and knowledge.

Looking at the importance of self-assessment in learning, this study was conducted based on previous research discussing self-assessment. However, it was different in terms of aspects measured through self-assessment. Previous research (Hidayat, 2018) on the importance of self and peer assessment in learning shows that meta-analyses of both types of assessments can positively impact a person's personality development, including self-confidence, self-awareness, and honesty. Then, another study (Darimi, 2016) diagnosed students' learning difficulties in active learning at schools using several techniques, such as prerequisite tests (prerequisite knowledge and skills), diagnostic tests, interviews and observations, which teachers carried out. Learning readiness is another factor determining learning success (Rahmatika & Suyatno, 2020). Analyze the learning readiness of high school students towards the five-day school program. The study results showed that one of the factors of readiness to learn, namely concentration, became an obstacle often faced by high school students during the five-day program. Moreover, this has an impact on the completion of their assignment.

In light of some previous research related to the aspects or variables studied, the researcher assumes that these three variables, namely self-assessment of learning speaking difficulty and readiness to learn English and Arabic, have never been studied simultaneously and comprehensively. Therefore, the author must compare self-assessment regarding difficulty and student learning readiness in mastering English and Arabic, especially speaking skills. This is because English and Arabic need to be studied to support the vision and mission of higher education.

Based on the description above, the problem that will be examined in this study is the comparison of learning speaking difficulty and readiness to learn of non-language

students in mastering English and Arabic. Comparing those aspects through self-assessment can be feedback for students and evaluation in the learning process of both languages at Islamic Universities in Indonesia so that the achievements of the language learning process are appropriate and support the graduation standards of Higher Education.

B. Method

This research approach is quantitative with a cross sectional descriptive survey method. The cross-sectional descriptive survey method is a quantitative research method used to describe data collected at one specific point in time from a sample taken from a specific population about beliefs, opinions, characteristics, behaviours, and relationships of other variables (Sugiyono, 2019). The population in this study is PTKIN and PTKIS students throughout Cirebon Regency in the second year. Meanwhile, the sampling technique used is an accidental sampling method. This sampling is a data collection technique based on chance, meaning anyone can be used as a sample. In this study, as many as 109 students from three research population campuses (IAI Cirebon, IAIN Syekh Nurjati, IAI BBC) filled out a questionnaire and were counted as research samples.

In this study, the researcher took data by distributing a research questionnaire that referred to the variables and indicators measured, namely learning difficulties and learning readiness. After the data was obtained, the researcher processed the data using descriptive statistical analysis by categorizing the level of difficulty and readiness of students to learn using the Likert scale. This data analysis uses an absolute frequency distribution table describing the percentage, average, median, range, and standard deviation figures. The stages of quantitative research of this survey, according to (Sugiyono, 2019), namely:

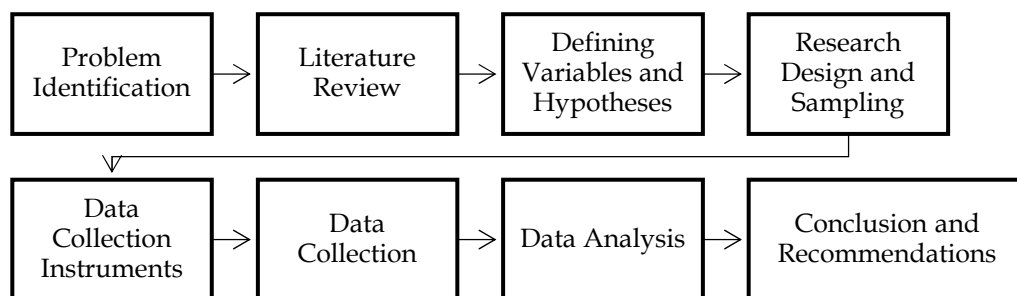


Figure 1. Research Flow

C. Result and Discussion

Result

Based on the results of a statistical descriptive test from a total of 109 students who filled out, the Arabic difficulty questionnaire had a minimum score of 24 and a maximum score of 120 with an average of 74.64 and a standard deviation of 15.645. The results of the English difficulty questionnaire obtained a minimum score of 28 and a maximum value of

120, with an average value of 74.48 and a standard deviation of 12.360. The results of the statistical descriptive test for the Arabic and English learning readiness questionnaires had identical minimum and maximum scores of 21 and 105. However, it has a different average score of 69.92 for the Arabic learning readiness questionnaire and 72.33 for English. For standard deviations of learning difficulties obtained, it was 13,311 for Arabic and 12,916 for English. Here is the data description that has been done:

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
English Learning Difficulty	109	28	120	74.48	12.360
English Learning Readiness	109	21	105	72.33	12.916
Arabic Learning Difficulty	109	24	120	74.64	15.645
Arabic Learning Readiness	109	21	105	69.92	13.311
Valid N (listwise)	109				

Comparing Speaking Arabic and English Difficulty

Although the use of Arabic and English has been widely known in Indonesian society, few people find it challenging to master the speaking skills of both languages. The following is an analysis of the difficulty of mastering Arabic and English in terms of speaking indicators:

Table 2. Self-Assessment of Learning Difficulties

Indicators of Learning Difficulties Languages	Vocabulary	Pronunciation	Grammar	Fluency	Performance
Arabic	25%	25%	17%	16%	17%
English	25%	25%	17%	16%	17%

Based on difficulty aspects, both Arabic and English obtained the same results, with 25% stating that vocabulary and pronunciation indicators are easy to learn. 17% of the sample chose grammar and performance indicators, and 16% chose fluency indicators. It can be concluded that students experienced the same difficulty in mastering fluency indicators. This can be seen from the percentage of lower fluency indicators than others. These results are the opinion of (Hanifa et al., 2022) that speaking skills are a communication skill that is quite difficult to master, and many students still have low speaking skills. To determine students' level of difficulty in speaking Arabic and English, researchers categorize them as follows:

Table 3. Categorization of Arabic Learning Difficulties

Categorization	Interval	f	%
Very difficult	$X < M - 1,5 SD$	< 51,1725	6 5,504587
Difficult	$M - 1,5 SD < X < M - 0,5 SD$	51,1725 - 66,8175	13 11,92661
Moderate	$M - 0,5 SD < X < M + 0,5 SD$	66,8175 - 82,4625	70 64,22018
Easy	$M + 0,5 SD < X < M + 1,5 SD$	82,4625 - 98,1075	15 13,76147
Very easy	$M + 1,5 SD < X$	> 98,1075	5 4,587156

Table 4. Categorization of English Learning Difficulties

Categorization	Interval	f	%
Very difficult	$X < M - 1,5 SD$	< 55,94	5 4,587156
Difficult	$M - 1,5 SD < X < M - 0,5 SD$	55,94 - 68,3	22 20,18349
Moderate	$M - 0,5 SD < X < M + 0,5 SD$	68,3 - 80,66	56 51,37615
Easy	$M + 0,5 SD < X < M + 1,5 SD$	80,66 - 93,02	19 17,43119
Very easy	$M + 1,5 SD < X$	> 93,02	7 6,422018

Table 5. Classification of Language Difficulties

Difficulty Level Languages	Very easy	Easy	Moderate	Difficult	Very difficult	Total
Arabic	5%	14%	64%	12%	5%	100%
English	6%	18%	51%	20%	5%	100%

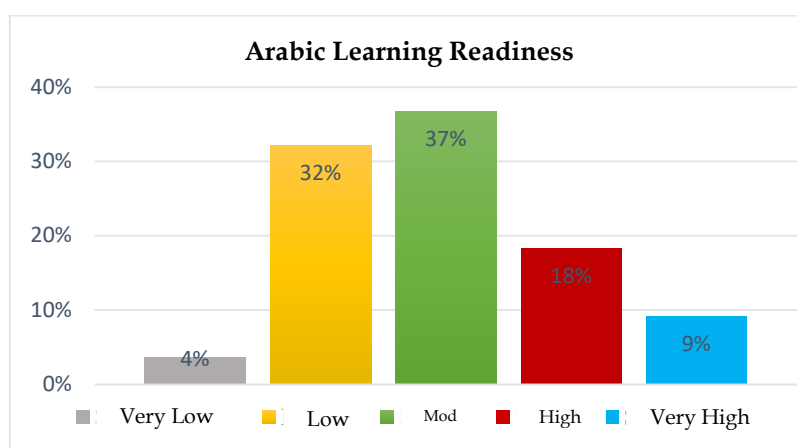
Based on the categorization results of non-language students on difficulty level in mastering speaking skills, it can be concluded that their mastery of Arabic and English is moderate. This is shown by students' responses to their difficulty level of the two languages that are more dominant at a moderate level, reaching 64% and 51%. However, many of them also consider that the level of difficulty of mastering Arabic and English is considered easy and even tricky. In second place, 14% of students think speaking Arabic is easy. At the same time, English is considered strenuous with a percentage gain of 20%.

Comparing Arabic and English Learning Readiness Levels

After knowing the self-assessment results of non-language students regarding the difficulty level in Arabic and English, it is necessary to know other factors that influence it. Therefore, the distribution of questionnaires regarding the readiness to learn of non-language students while participating or learning both languages needs to be carried out. This is because learning readiness aspects such as attention, motivation, and readiness development are some of the factors that influence the language learning process. A comparative analysis of student learning readiness in Arabic and English can be seen in the following table:

Table 6. Categorization of Arabic Learning Readiness

Categorization	Interval		f	%
Very low	$X < M - 1,5 SD$	$< 49,9535$	4	3,669725
Low	$M - 1,5 SD < X < M - 0,5 SD$	49,9535 - 63,2645	35	32,11009
Moderate	$M - 0,5 SD < X < M + 0,5 SD$	63,2645 - 76,5755	40	36,69725
High	$M + 0,5 SD < X < M + 1,5 SD$	76,5755 - 89,8865	20	18,34862
Very high	$M + 1,5 SD < X$	$> 89,8865$	10	9,174312

**Figure 2.** Arabic Learning Readiness

Overall, the learning readiness of non-language students in Arabic is classified as moderate, with a percentage gain of 37% or as many as 40 students. It is known that only 9% or ten students belong to the very high category. 18% or 20 students have high readiness to learn. Those in the low category are 35 people or 32%, and four people or 4%, are classified as very low. As for the categorization and explanation of readiness to learn English, it is explained in the following table:

Table 7. Categorization of English Learning Readiness

Categorization	Interval		f	%
Very low	$X < M - 1,5 SD$	$< 52,956$	4	3,669725
Low	$M - 1,5 SD < X < M - 0,5 SD$	52,956 - 65,872	32	29,3578
Moderate	$M - 0,5 SD < X < M + 0,5 SD$	65,872 - 78,788	39	35,77982
High	$M + 0,5 SD < X < M + 1,5 SD$	78,788 - 91,704	27	24,77064
Very high	$M + 1,5 SD < X$	$> 91,704$	7	6,422018

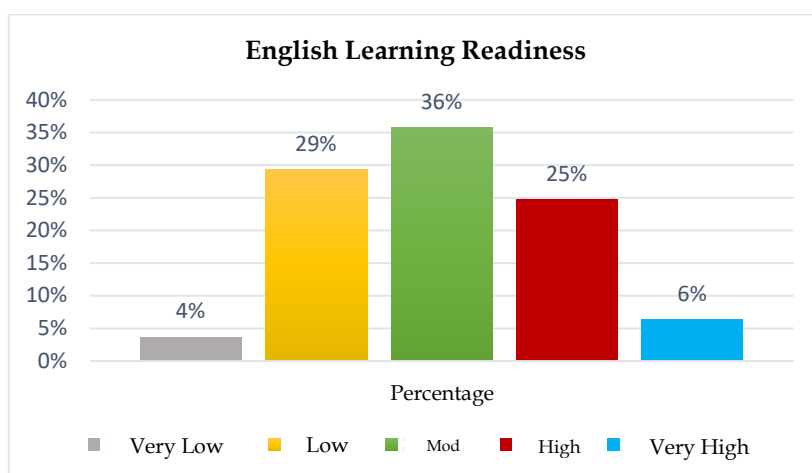


Figure 3. English Learning Readiness

Based on the data obtained, it can be concluded that the learning readiness of non-language students in learning English is classified as moderate, with a percentage gain of 36% or 39 students. In addition, only 6% or seven students are classified in the very high category. 25% or 27 students have high readiness to learn. Students classified in the low category are 32 people or 29%, and four people or 4%, are classified as very low level. The following are the results of measuring three indicators of learning readiness, including attention, motivation, and development in Arabic and English language learning:

Table 8. Comparison of Learning Readiness

<u>Learning Readiness Indicators</u> Languages	Attention	Motivation	Readiness Development
Arabic	34%	35%	31%
English	34%	35%	31%

Based on the data collected, the learning readiness comparison of Arabic and English did not make a significant difference. Precisely, the measured indicators have the same percentage. It can be seen that the attention indicator from both languages has a percentage of 34%, 35% motivation, and 31% of readiness development indicator. From these results, the motivation of non-language students to learn Arabic and English is higher than the other two indicators.

Discussion

In learning a new language, the first thing that will be learned is vocabulary and how to pronounce it. However, Indonesian itself has loanwords from Arabic and English. For example, words that are absorbed from Arabic are the words "doa", "batin", "dunia", etc. At the same time, the words that are absorbed from English are the words "acting", "application", "business", "camera", etc. Because of the many similarities in Arabic and English vocabulary and pronunciation with Indonesian, these two indicators are relatively

easy for students to learn Arabic and English, especially if they are familiar with the vocabulary and have basic knowledge of Arabic and English.

The result shows that grammar and performance indicators are more complicated than vocabulary and pronunciation. Grammar studies the sentence structures that are good and correct. This indicator is quite important in producing meaningful and communicative sentences when they are conveyed. (Wulandari, 2021) it is difficult for students to speak Arabic and English because of a lack of confidence, so they cannot perform well with halting speech and difficulty expressing ideas. The same thing was also expressed by (Girsang, 2018), that nervousness is a disease that often appears when someone is speaking or doing public speaking, or it is better known as glossophobia. Looking attractive and confident while speaking Arabic and English requires special skills acquired through much practice and habituation.

Overall, student mastery in Arabic and English for non-language students at the 3 sample universities is included in the moderate level. Several factors can influence these results, such as experience and interest in learning the language. Based on the results obtained, it is possible for non-language students to be able to master both languages well, and have the potential to be proficient in languages. Of course, this opportunity depends on each individual and how Arabic and English learning is implemented in the classroom, especially in minimizing learning difficulties experienced by students.

The level of difficulty that students feel in learning Arabic and English may have a direct impact on their readiness to learn. Students with high readiness can better overcome difficulties in the language learning process. On the other hand, if their readiness is low, the difficulties they experience in learning English will tend to be more significant. The results of this study show that students who find learning a language difficult may need more motivation or preparation to participate in learning effectively. However, the motivation of non-language students to learn Arabic and English is higher than the other two indicators, such as attention and readiness development.

Motivation is a desire that drives individuals to act or respond to something they want to achieve or do. According to (Nurfaliza & Hindrasti, 2021), motivation is an important factor as a benchmark for student success and failure in learning. Motivation is the engine that drives the vehicle if it is a vehicle. With learning motivation, learning outcomes will be easier for achievers to be active during the learning process.

Therefore, it is necessary to bring up students' learning motivation, especially while learning Arabic and English. (Kusumaningrini & Sudibjo, 2021) Several factors affect student learning motivation: parents' role, teacher creativity, and learning interest. As in the results of this study, the most dominant motivation of the questionnaire results was their strong desire to master Arabic and English skills. The result states that they are quite enthusiastic when following the lesson. Moreover, this will positively influence the learning continuity in the classroom and student learning achievement.

Then, two other factors, namely the parents' role and the teacher's creativity, are equally important in improving students' motivation to learn and speak Arabic and English.

The parent's role is significant in meeting their children's educational needs, such as the fulfilment of learning facilities. (Alfiansyah, 2019) argues that parental involvement's most significant contribution is learning facilities, including learning support books, decent learning spaces, study rooms, lamps, study tables, and other physical forms. Thus, students are expected to be more motivated in the learning process at home. In addition, another factor that also affects student motivation is the teacher's creativity in delivering subject matter.

Teachers' creativity needs to be supported by training in the development of teaching materials and effective teaching strategies. This is in line with the results of research conducted by (Mangangantung et al., 2022) that teacher creativity has a significant influence on student learning outcomes. (Amelia & Nur Istianah, 2021) Revealed that what teachers prepare before teaching, such as effective learning processes and expected outcomes, will determine the learning results. In other words, teacher creativity must motivate students' enthusiasm in the learning process.

In reaching outcomes that are by learning outcomes, not only is motivation a key indicator that influences, but also needs to pay attention to other indicators such as attention and readiness development. These three indicators are the student learning readiness aspect so that they are ready to receive and process learning well, and of course, learning results can be achieved.

Based on the results of this study, it is evident that the percentage of attention and readiness development is similar to their motivation indicator. All of them must be balanced as a set of interrelated factors to contribute to the learning process positively. Motivation is needed to foster students' interest in learning. Then with the growth of students' interest in learning, it will bring their attention so that they can study more diligently and readily accept the knowledge. (Nasution et al., 2022) argue that attention is one of the factors in determining student learning success and underlies the success of a learning activity. So, with the formation of motivation and attention, students will independently develop their knowledge and potential, which means they have entered the stage of readiness development.

The study also found variations in perceived difficulty levels and readiness to learn among non-language students. There is a negative relationship between the level of learning difficulty and student learning readiness. Students who find it difficult to learn Arabic and English tend to have lower readiness levels, affecting their motivation and participation in learning activities. The results of this study suggest that the development of language curricula in universities needs to consider students' academic backgrounds. With a more flexible and adaptive curriculum, non-language students can be better prepared to face the challenges of learning Arabic and English, so that learning effectiveness can also increase.

D. Conclusion

This study concluded that there was a significant difference in the level of learning difficulty and readiness to learn Arabic and English among students from various non-

language majors. Students who have higher readiness tend to have a lower level of difficulty. Based on the results obtained through the distribution of self-assessment questionnaires, it was stated that students experienced difficulties in mastering fluency indicators in mastering Arabic and English speaking skills. After assessing the difficulties of Arabic and English, students are also asked to assess how ready they are to learn. Based on the results obtained, the learning readiness of non-language students is moderate. The results were identified with motivation indicators with the highest percentage and readiness development indicators with a low percentage.

These findings imply the importance of a more adaptive approach in English language teaching programs in colleges, especially for non-language students. By taking into account the difference in readiness levels and learning difficulties, educational institutions can develop a more flexible curriculum according to each student group's needs. Additional support, such as intensive courses or customized learning methods, will be very beneficial to increase the motivation and participation in learning English for students facing more difficulties.

Further research is suggested to delve deeper into other factors affecting difficulties and readiness to learn English, such as personal motivation, social background, or previous learning experiences. In addition, more comprehensive studies with mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative) can provide deeper insights into how each factor interacts and influences language learning outcomes. Further research may also involve a broader and more diverse sample to reinforce the generalization of the findings.

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