

## Bridging Faith and Fluency: An Identity-Responsive Instructional Model for Islamic-Based English Speaking Materials

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**Abstract:** This study aims to develop and evaluate an Islamic-based English speaking textbook as an identity-responsive instructional model, defined as a pedagogical approach that integrates learners' cultural and spiritual identities into CEFR-oriented communicative speaking tasks. This research employed an educational research and development design using the ADDIE model. The textbook was designed, validated, and implemented through pre- and post-tests of CEFR A2–B1 speaking tasks, student questionnaires, classroom observations, and after-class interviews involving 58 students and lecturers at SKM Islamic University. Spiritual identity engagement was examined through thematic analysis supported by indicators of importance, ease, and involvement demonstrated during speaking activities. Expert validation was conducted to evaluate linguistic accuracy, cultural relevance, and content quality. Statistical results show notable improvements in students' speaking performance, with fluency increasing from 2.8 to 4.1, vocabulary from 2.7 to 4.0, pronunciation from 3.1 to 4.2, and grammar from 2.9 to 3.8. Thematic analysis indicates that integrating Islamic values into communicative tasks fosters meaningful participation, confidence, and strengthened expression of spiritual identity. Experts confirmed the textbook's linguistic soundness and cultural alignment. The findings demonstrate that instructional materials incorporating cultural and spiritual identity elements can effectively support students' communicative ability and value engagement. The developed textbook shows strong pedagogical potential and competitive advantages over comparable materials used in Islamic educational settings.

**Keywords:** english, instructional materials, islamic values, language learning, speaking skills.

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### INTRODUCTION

How can English-speaking instruction at Islamic universities be both globally competitive and spiritually relevant? This guiding question underpins the current study, which develops and evaluates a CEFR-aligned textbook for the Speaking for Informal Interactions course at SKM Islamic University. As global demand for English proficiency increases, higher education institutions with Islamic foundations are under increasing pressure to equip their graduates with strong English communication skills while preserving their religious and cultural identity

(Aimen & Khadim, 2024; Poedjiastutie et al., 2018). The Speaking for Informal Interactions course, delivered under the auspices of the English Language Education Program, was designed to address both requirements with student-centric learning methods and technology to improve the students' communication skills (Su & Sazalli, 2024; Yahaya & Miskam, 2024).

Nevertheless, despite such innovative teaching, focus group interviews involving students and lecturers from the 2020/2021 intake revealed some teaching problems that remained. Chief among such problems was the unavailability

of well-structured, contextually valid speaking material, which aligns with the fact that the quality and contextual appropriateness of teaching material are significant factors influencing students' engagement, motivation, and speaking performance (Bakare, 2024). Teaching at SKM Islamic University mainly involved basic PowerPoint presentation design. While imported Western CEFR-specific textbooks were used, they were culture-mismapped, financially expensive, and lacked significant spiritual elements relevant to Muslim students learning English (Alfarisy, 2019; Amos et al., 2022). This problem typifies the global, and not merely the local, situation, where many Islamic and religious institutions around the world find the culture mismatching between their imported English learning textbooks and the religious identities of their Muslim students, as shown by various contexts elsewhere (Souad et al., 2018; Boonsuk & Ambele, 2022; Alkhalil, 2023).

This research gap has been well-articulated and addressed in various scholarly writings that promote the integration of Islamic values and cultural identities into English language learning and teaching for the enhancement of learner self-formation, moral development, and sense of belonging (Azmi et al., 2020; Hassan, 2020; Darmayenti et al., 2021; Lashari et al., 2023). Additionally, research indicates potential problems arising from ideologically Western-inspired English learning textbooks, which could inadvertently damage students' cultural identities (Souad et al., 2018; Boonsuk & Ambele, 2022). The available literature emphasizes the use of interactive, socially engaged, and technologized speaking behaviors (Zulhannan et al., 2025; Wahyuningsih & Afandi, 2020; Ferdiansyah et al., 2023). However, the available research literature offers no concrete process but only theoretical rationales, suggesting an imbalance between theoretical support for religiously inspired English teaching and the development of

applicable models for CEFR-supported speaking English learning materials infused with Islamic values. Based on this gap, the present study formulates two focused research questions: How can CEFR-aligned speaking materials be systematically designed to incorporate Islamic values without compromising communicative competence? To what extent does the use of such materials influence students' speaking performance and their engagement with spiritual identity in the classroom?

These operational questions provide measurable direction for the methodological design and evaluation process. To answer the research questions, an Educational Research and Development (R&D) approach following the ADDIE model was applied. The use of the ADDIE model appears particularly fitting, as it provides an iterative, scientifically based process that assists in the design, validation, and improvement of learning materials based on students' cultural and spiritual needs, while ensuring alignment with the international standard, the CEFR. The procedural nature of the ADDIE model helps address the methodological deficit noted above. The originality of the research lies not in challenging the general idea of integrating Islamic values, an idea many authors have long promoted, but rather in developing an organized procedural model that integrates Islamic values into communicative speaking tasks within the CEFR framework. Many authors have emphasized the urgent need to align learning content and Islamic values grounded in Islamic teachings across various subjects, although there appears to be less focus on concrete, systematic research supporting such integration (Khalid, 2017; Hasanah & Mufidatunnisa, 2019). While the present study departs from earlier works by proposing an organized model for the integration of Islamic values into English speaking, it develops an original model using a research and development design for integrating Islamic values

into English speaking tasks, and this direction aligns with recent emphases on incorporating prophetic learning values into English learning through structured design and applicability (Mansoor et al., 2025; Mardatillah et al., 2025).

In doing so, the study contributes to knowledge in two ways. Firstly, the study offers a procedural model for the step-by-step incorporation of Islamic values into English learning materials for higher education as an integration procedure that fills the research gap, as the current literature does not provide design frameworks for integration. Secondly, the study offers an alternative to Western-oriented design paradigms that often focus on English-language learning textbooks, demonstrating how Islamic learning materials can meet global standards and develop learner identities. This model is relevant not only to Islamic universities seeking to globalize their English curricula but also to other faith-based or culturally distinct educational institutions worldwide that aim to balance global language goals with cultural and spiritual integrity.

## ■ LITERATURE REVIEW

The integration of Islamic values into English language learning has become a key concern in Islamic higher education institutions, which seek to address global communicative competence in terms of religious identity as well (Astuti et al., 2024). At SKM Islamic University, learning English should not only enhance linguistic proficiency but also express the university's core principle of embracing Islamic values. This consideration has been raised in the context of the current need to learn English, especially for achieving higher education goals, according to Lauder (2008). Nevertheless, it has always been challenging to ensure that language education is conducted in ways that enhance students' spiritual growth while preparing them to participate in the global community (Anshari & Widyantoro, 2020; Mulyati & Kultsum, 2023).

The importance of integrating English language learning with an Islamic perspective has been underscored in previous studies to ensure learning is more meaningful and worthwhile. Farah & Su (2020) asserted that in Islamic higher learning institutions, students treat the subject of English not only as knowledge to be attained but also adopt it in terms of assisting in "da'wah" activities related to Islam. The significance of such thinking underscores the use of the subject to support religious work during language learning. The importance of integrating Islamic studies into language learning was advocated by Gusmaliana et al. (2023), who argued that learning materials should be developed to combine Islamic studies with language skills to enhance learning value and meaning. The integration was further underscored in the study conducted by Hidayatulloh et al. (2024), who demonstrated that the use of translation tasks in Islamic texts supports higher religious knowledge and enhances English language acquisition. This study supports Darmayenti et al. (2021), who showed the significance of religious and cultural identity in steering higher cultural values through textbooks integrated with religious values and local cultural identities in the university setting.

Though these contributions offer rich theoretical foundations, most lack structured methods for integrating religious content into the design of language-learning activities. Most consist mainly of general advice instead of design for actual, communicative learning materials for speaking instruction. It reflects the lack of practical methods in favoring the incorporation of Islamic values into CEFR-based speaking courses.

Methodologically and in learning design, Kawa & Nidham (2024) advance the Task-Based Language Teaching approach by facilitating meaningful interaction. Their argument is supported by the findings of Farid & Lamb (2020) and Wijayanto (2020), who emphasize

the importance of authentic communication in consolidating linguistic proficiency and cultural identity. Their lines of argument are further enhanced by Zulhannan et al. (2025), who advocate incorporating context-based dialogues and role-plays into the framework of cultural relevance to build communicative competence. Together, the above studies call for teaching practices beyond the mechanical use of language drills and for getting students involved in meaningful, socially and spiritually relevant interactions.

The importance of using culturally representative content is emphasized by Dahmardeh & Mahdikhani (2025), who postulate that textbooks designed in the local context would better represent learners' identities and reduce the challenges associated with cultural misfit. These notions are also reinforced in Tafazoli & Egan (2022), who argued that cultural misfit in content leads to students' alienation and disengagement. Collectively, these studies emphasize the importance of preventing learners from becoming reliant on textbooks imported from abroad, particularly from the West, which fail to recognize students' religious and cultural roots.

The role of technological tools is increasingly prominent in enriching the quality of speaking instruction. The study conducted by Tsang et al. in 2013 revealed the importance of technology in addressing key language learning problems, including fluency and vocabulary construction, through tools such as interactive assignments and multimedia content. Wahyuning Sih & Afandi, in 2020, clearly agree on the importance of technology in addressing students' fluency and confidence in learning. The study by Ferdiansyah et al. in 2023 further supports the point made above, underscoring the importance of technological tools in providing authentic settings for students to practice speaking while immersed in Islamic culture.

Character education remains essential to the broader inclusion of Islamic values. Astrid (2012) found that incorporating Islamic values into learning practices increased motivation and fostered well-rounded developmental growth among learners. Lashari et al. (2023) emphasized the importance of cultural resources, specifically for minority religious students. The results reinforced the need to implement study materials that align with the students' spiritual and cultural paradigms.

Other studies also connect the use of Islamic values with greater learning engagement and achievement. Handayani & Prasetyo (2022) found that religious integration into educational activities positively contributed to students' participation and performance. Irawan (2020) and Irwansyah et al. (2021) drew the same conclusions that learning materials aligned with learners' spiritual values strengthen both motivation and learning achievement. Alfian et al. (2021) linked these findings to the mission of Islamic universities, which aims to graduate students who are not only universally literate but also spiritually rooted.

Together, the literature reviewed points to a sound theoretical and practical rationale for incorporating Islamic values into English teaching. However, few reports have operationalized these arguments in textbook development, especially in CEFR-aligned speaking courses. The literature gap clearly points to the need for instructional models that afford both communicative practice and cultural resonance with students. The present work fills that gap by designing and developing a context-appropriate, spirituality-infused, and pedagogically sound textbook for the Speaking for Informal Interactions course at the Islamic University, SKM. By contributing in this manner, the work fills the gap between advocacy in theory and design in instruction, and it provides an actionable model for other Islamic universities looking to integrate global language goals

with efforts to preserve cultural and religious identity.

## ■ METHOD

To guide the development and evaluation of the Islamic-based English-language textbook, this study adopted a methodological approach that integrates several interconnected components. The method begins with an overview of the study participants, followed by a description of the research design that informed the creation and implementation of the textbook. It then outlines the instruments used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data, as well as the procedures for analyzing these findings. This integrated approach reflects the intention to examine the textbook not only as a product of instructional design but also as a classroom tool whose effectiveness can be understood through multiple forms of evidence.

### Participants

Participants were undergraduate students enrolled in the English Education Program at SKM Islamic University, representing the common pool of students enrolled in basic speaking courses. Fifty-eight students from one intact class enrolled in the Speaking for Informal Interactions course were selected for the study through purposive sampling. Criteria for participant selection included enrollment in the speaking focus course, familiarity with CEFR levels A2 to B1, and familiarity with basic speaking exercises. Participants were forty-two females and sixteen males aged nineteen to twenty-one, all of whom had completed an initial speaking course necessary for their engagement in informal interaction speaking tasks. The initial CEFR speaking scores for the study had an average of 2.8 and a standard deviation of 0.42. Variance for speaking proficiency was statistically controlled. Before engagement, the objectives and nature of the research were explained to the

student participants, and written consent was obtained. Two lecturers acted as observers, expert validators, and research interviewees. All necessary ethical procedures were followed, as applicable, for research involving human participants.

### Research Design and Procedures

This research employed an Educational Research and Development (R&D) model following the ADDIE framework, which consists of the stages of Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation, as proposed by Bennett et al. (1984). This model was selected because the study focused on designing and testing an Islamic-based English-speaking textbook tailored to the needs of an Islamic university, referred to in this study as SKM Islamic University, to maintain institutional confidentiality. The ADDIE model offers an effective procedure for developing contextual learning materials and for directly evaluating their effectiveness within classroom settings (Astuti et al., 2024; Gusmuliana et al., 2023). Its structured, step-by-step process is particularly appropriate for developing language-learning materials that aim to minimize cultural and religious bias, as highlighted by Bakare (2024) and Dahmardeh & Mahdikhani (2025). The research was conducted over eight months, from February to September 2024, allowing each ADDIE stage to be executed both sequentially and iteratively.

During the process, the ADDIE model was applied sequentially. The Analysis phase involved an extensive needs assessment that was conducted by means of two semi-structured interviews with two lecturers and fifty-eight students, as well as classroom observation, in order to identify specific needs related to learning and teaching materials. The needs analysis identified four major themes: (1) the lack of speaking material that was relevant and spiritual in relation to the students' culture; (2) low interest

in the use of foreign textbooks; (3) the need to align communicative tasks with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR); and (4) the desire for the integration of Islamic values.

During the Design phase, the learning objectives were explicitly stated to ensure alignment with CEFR levels; informal speaking topics were identified; and the integration of Islamic values was planned through institutionalized procedures. In this phase, a design blueprint was created that linked the CEFR descriptors to communicative tasks, such as role-plays, information-gap activities, and problem-solving activities, all intertwined with Islamic values.

In the Development stage, the prototype textbook was created, and Islamic values were explicitly woven into informal communication activities. Experts in instructional design, TESL, and Islamic studies were involved throughout the content validation process to ensure accuracy and appropriateness. Two rounds of expert review were conducted using structured verification tools that included rating scales and comment sections, and the materials were revised based on the feedback to improve language, organization, and appropriateness.

In the Implementation stage, the designed textbook was tested on fifty-eight purposively sampled participants, representing English proficiency levels from A2 to B1. Before the study, the nature and purpose of the research were explained to the participants, and written informed consent was obtained. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and students were assured that their information would be kept strictly anonymous. This study followed the applicable research ethics for human participants in learning research.

Finally, the Evaluation stage involved the use of pretests and posttests, closed- and open-ended structured questionnaires, semi-structured

interviews, and classroom observation to determine the efficacy of the textbook for speaking skill development and for integrating Islamic values. The absence of a control group in the study is acknowledged as a limitation. This limitation was addressed through systematic comparisons, expert triangulation, and efforts to ensure convergence of information from multiple sources.

## **Instruments**

Various research instruments were employed for data collection. Quantitative data were gathered through closed-ended questionnaires completed by 58 participants to gauge the feasibility, efficacy, and integration of Islamic values into the textbook, as well as through pretest and posttest speaking achievement tasks. For the collection of qualitative data, questionnaires, structured interviews, and extensive observation were conducted with ten student participants and two lecturers. These questionnaires were designed by adapting the English Language Teaching Textbook Evaluation Checklist developed by Nimehchisalem & Mukundan (2015), and their content validity was assessed for appropriateness by expert judgment. To gauge reliability, the questionnaires were tested using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded a value of 0.87, indicating high internal consistency.

Speaking performance assessments were administered as pretests and posttests and were validated against CEFR criteria. Two trained assessors, both with postgraduate qualifications, scored the speaking performance assessments, and inter-rater reliability was calculated using the intra-class correlation coefficient, yielding a value of 0.87.

Interviews were semi-structured and followed an interview schedule that listed items related to appropriateness of language, cultural relevance, learner engagement, and the embedding of Islamic values. Interviews lasted

between twenty and thirty minutes and were carried out individually. Observational data on classroom participation, interaction, use of the target language, and the use of Islamic communication behaviors were collected using structured observation schedules. These schedules were face validated by experts in instructional design and Islamic studies.

## Data Analysis

In this study, the qualitative data analysis followed the model proposed by Panzai & Channa (2017). In their study, the authors employed thematic analysis, which involves systematic coding, stratification, and the identification of core themes aligned with (a) the effects of textbooks, (b) students' perceptions, and (c) the incorporation of Islamic values. For coding in the present study, two independent coders were engaged, and both inductive and deductive approaches were applied. Intercoder reliability was examined using Cohen's kappa, which showed substantial agreement between coders. Consistent with the way the Results and Discussion are presented, the qualitative dataset (textbook content, classroom observations, expert feedback, and interview transcripts) was analyzed using Braun and Clarke's six-phase thematic analysis framework, including familiarization, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing up the report.

During the theme development and refinement stages, a thematic map was created to visualize the relationships among themes and sub-themes, supporting transparent and coherent reporting of the findings (Ahmed et al., 2025). Rather than reporting themes as isolated codes or stand-alone quotations, the thematic mapping process was used to synthesize patterns across data sources and to structure the Results and Discussion into coherent thematic clusters. This procedure is reflected in the thematic-map tables

reported in the Findings, namely the thematic map of the textbook development process (Table 1), the thematic map of expert and student validation (Table 3), the thematic map of student perceptions (Table 5), and the thematic map of speaking proficiency improvement based on interview data linked to test outcomes (Table 6).

Quantitative data, including pretest and posttest results and responses to closed questionnaires, were analyzed to determine efficacy and effectiveness, as well as perceptions of the integration of Islamic values into the textbook, using descriptive statistics. To determine whether pretest and posttest scores differed significantly, a paired sample t-test was used. Effect sizes were also calculated to determine the magnitude of improvement. To ensure integration between the quantitative and qualitative strands, questionnaire results were summarized as percentages and visualized in a 100% stacked bar chart. At the same time, interview data were thematically synthesized to explain and contextualize the observed response patterns. Similarly, speaking test outcomes were reported statistically and then interpreted alongside interview-based themes to account for pedagogical mechanisms underlying the score changes.

The research methodological framework consisted of two cycles of expert verification. This involved systematic feedback from three experts in design, educational media, and language, as well as three faculty members, using feedback forms to ensure clarity of instructions and the adequacy of content. These cycles were repeated as needed to ensure that the textbooks were acceptable and valid from both educational and cultural perspectives. Formative evaluation was conducted during the implementation phase of the textbooks. This process enabled the research to incorporate immediate improvements and corrections based on comments from students and teachers. Formative evaluation focused on

testing the capacity and capability of the textbooks to achieve the programmed objectives. The outcomes of expert verification and formative feedback were also incorporated as qualitative evidence during theme development, allowing validation-related themes (e.g., instructional clarity, authenticity needs, and technology enhancement) to be traced systematically across expert and student responses in the Results and Discussion.

## ■ RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Development of an Islamic-Based Textbook for the Speaking for Informal Interactions Course

The process of producing the Islamic-based book for the Speaking for Informal Interactions class required an arrangement that facilitated consistency and continuity across chapters. The arrangement involved formulating eight chapters aligned with key topics of speaking in informal contexts, in accordance with CEFR requirements, thereby fulfilling the students' linguistic, cultural, and spiritual needs. This approach is consistent with studies that evaluate textbook development in educational settings (Fitriani et al., 2023; Handayani & Amelia, 2023).

Apart from structural alignment, the textbook was designed to improve engagement through task-based, collaborative, and communicative learning activities. Such activities are essential for creating interactive learning environments that enhance oral fluency through

authentic speech production (Hidayati, 2022). Students were encouraged to participate in collaborative conversations and role-play activities to develop communicative and interactional skills (Rachman et al., 2022; Rismasari et al., 2022). Observational data indicated increased linguistic interaction during dialogue and problem-solving tasks.

To ensure academic credibility and Islamic sensitivity, multiple cycles of proofreading and expert verification were conducted for each chapter. Experts in TESL and Islamic studies assessed the content for linguistic accuracy, cultural appropriateness, and correctness of Islamic integration. Each chapter began with an Islamic value or quote that served as the ethical foundation for the learning materials. For instance, in the chapter on *Greetings and Introductions*, a Hadith emphasizing the greeting of peace was included to highlight the basis of civilized interpersonal interaction in Islam.

To synthesize the qualitative findings related to the textbook development process, a thematic map was constructed to illustrate the relationships among the key themes derived from textbook content analysis, classroom observations, expert validation, and student interviews. As presented in Table 1, the thematic map demonstrates how structural alignment and CEFR alignment, task-based communicative design, integration of Islamic values, and quality assurance processes collectively shaped the learner experience and informed future enhancement needs.

**Table 1.** Thematic map of islamic-based CEFR-Aligned speaking textbook development

Theme	Key Aspects	Evidence Sources
Structural and CEFR Alignment	Eight-unit structure; CEFR A2 to B1 scaffolding; step-by-step progression	Analysis of textbook structure; student reflections
Task-Based Communicative Design	Role-plays; discussions; problem-solving; collaborative tasks	Classroom observation; task implementation; student interviews
Islamic Values Integration	Quotes and Hadith as an ethical foundation; communicative ethics	Textbook content analysis; expert validation
Learner Experience	Engagement; identity affirmation; holistic learning; gradual skill growth	Student interview excerpts

Quality Assurance and Validation	Multilayer proofreading; TESL and Islamic studies expert review; revisions	Expert feedback
Enhancement Needs	Colloquial input; QR codes; video resources; technology support	Expert reviewer suggestions; student feedback

**Table 2.** Summary of textbook development

Chapter	Topic
1	Greetings and Introductions
2	Expressing Likes and Dislikes
3	Daily Routines and Time Management
4	Describing People and Places
5	Discussing Personal Preferences
6	Socializing in Informal Settings
7	Addressing Everyday Problems
8	Engaging in Small Talk

The inclusion of Islamic values was one of the most significant aspects of the textbook. Each chapter was preceded by Islamic quotes or values relevant to its theme, serving as guiding principles. The integration of Islamic values was woven into language learning so that students learned not only how to communicate but also how to uphold ethics and values in communication according to Islamic teachings. For example, in the section on “Greetings and Introductions,” the Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) encouraging believers to greet others with peace was used to reinforce the importance of respect and ethical conduct. This pedagogical practice aligns with scholarship indicating that everyday linguistic expressions within Muslim communities often carry embedded ethical meanings (Piamenta, 2024). Research on the role of Hadith also highlights how prophetic sayings shape communicative norms through discursive presence in everyday interactions (Fawzi et al., 2025).

The textbook-writing process involved a multilayered proofreading and verification procedure. After completing each chapter, the content was scrutinized for academic rigor and Islamic relevance. Proofreaders, including

experts in Islamic studies and TESL, evaluated content accuracy and the appropriateness of integrating Islamic values into communicative learning. This iterative feedback process helped refine the final textbook. From a discourse analysis perspective, such multilayered validation ensured that linguistic input, task instructions, and value-laden exemplars remained coherent, aligning with research demonstrating that practical discourse rests on clear structural relations across linguistic components (Joty et al., 2019). Exemplars serve as reference points that help students make principled judgments and uphold academic standards (Carless & Chan, 2017). This process minimized lexical or pragmatic inconsistencies that could undermine communicative clarity or religious appropriateness.

One student expressed their appreciation for this approach during the interview: *“I found the use of Islamic teachings in the lessons very engaging. It made me feel more connected to the material because I wasn’t just learning English for academic purposes; I was also learning how to communicate better as a Muslim.”* (Student 2, 14 September 2023). This excerpt corresponds to the Learner Experience thematic category, particularly identity affirmation

and engagement, as represented in the thematic map (Table 1).

The lexical choices “very engaging,” “more connected,” and “better as a Muslim” indicate both cognitive and identity-related benefits. The phrase “not just learning English for academic purposes” contrasts ordinary language learning with learning English in a way that aligns with the student’s religious identity. Prior studies show that culturally grounded language instruction enhances students’ engagement and motivation (Mardiani & Baharuddin, 2023). In this sense, the student’s reflection provides micro-evidence supporting the idea that identity-relevant scaffolding deepens learning experiences.

Task creation was a central component of the textbook. The tasks were communicative and collaborative, requiring students to practice speaking in pairs or groups in real-life contexts. Activities ranged from role-plays to extended discussions designed to mirror everyday conversations. Importantly, the tasks encouraged students to apply Islamic values in communication scenarios. For example, in Chapter 7, students practiced ways of conversing about everyday matters while reflecting on the roles of patience and honesty in Islam. Another student commented:

*“The activities really helped me improve my speaking skills. I especially liked the group discussions because we had to think about how to solve problems while keeping Islamic values in mind, like being honest and patient.”* (Student 3, 17 September 2023)

This quotation illustrates the thematic linkage between *Task-Based Communicative Design* and *Islamic Values Integration*, as visualized in the thematic map. Here, the learner connects linguistic development (“improve my speaking skills”) with ethical practice (“keeping Islamic values in mind”). The reference to “being honest and patient” suggests the internalization of specific virtues, demonstrating that Islamic

values were not merely thematic additions but functionally embedded. This aligns with research emphasizing the benefits of communicative and collaborative learning methods in second language acquisition (Effendi & Novita, 2024), which shows that meaning negotiation and problem-solving support fluency and critical thinking.

Another characteristic of the book is its sequential, scaffolded structure, where topics become progressively more complex. Students reported developing speaking skills incrementally, with foundational skills mastered before more challenging material was introduced. A student noted:

*“I like how the textbook doesn’t throw too much at you all at once. Each chapter builds on the previous one, so I felt like I was improving step by step. The fact that it also included Islamic values made the learning experience feel more holistic.”* (Student 4, 20 September 2023)

This reflection aligns with the theme of *Structural and CEFR Alignment*, which, in the thematic map, is shown to support learner confidence and holistic learning. Such scaffolding has been recognized as best practice for designing educational content, especially in language-learning settings, where it helps sustain students’ interest rather than overwhelm them (Widhiasih et al., 2022). The student’s statement, “*doesn’t throw too much at you all at once*,” implicitly engages with cognitive load management, while the phrase “*step by step*” reflects an understanding of sequential progression, which aligns with the concept of scaffolding. The final assessment of the learning process, expressed as “*holistic*,” indicates the learner’s recognition of the integration of linguistic, cognitive, and spiritual elements within a single learning trajectory, thereby supporting the idea that Islamic value formation and CEFR-inspired learning progress can be meaningfully integrated.

From an interpretive standpoint, the textbook's developmental structure reflects core principles of scaffolding and culturally responsive pedagogy. Organizing the eight units so that tasks move from simpler to more complex communicative demands operationalizes the notion that learners acquire linguistic knowledge more effectively when support is gradually reduced as competence increases (Leveridge & Yang, 2014). Aligning each unit with CEFR-based objectives while embedding Islamic quotes and values aligns with the cultural responsiveness model, which adapts global communicative standards to local cultural and spiritual contexts (Gusmaliana et al., 2023; Hidayatullah et al., 2023). Through this structure, the textbook provides not only a sequential arrangement of topics but also a theoretically grounded design that enables students to progress linguistically while seeing their religious identity consistently validated.

The importance of expert review in shaping the final version of the textbook was evident throughout the validation process. Reviewer 1 positively highlighted the inclusion of self-reflection components, noting that these elements enabled learners to monitor their progress and connect language learning with Islamic communicative ethics. This reflective practice aligns with Islamic educational principles, which regard self-reflection as central to moral awareness and character development (Iqbal & Hossain, 2021). Contemporary Islamic educational frameworks likewise emphasize value formation as a means of cultivating ethically grounded individuals, whose linguistic development progresses alongside their spiritual growth (Subandi et al., 2025).

Reviewer 2 recommended incorporating more colloquial language and technological resources to modernize the material, stating: *"The content is good, especially the Islamic integration, but I think it would be good if the*

*book included more technology resources, such as QR codes to watch examples of conversational speech on video."* This recommendation aligns with current educational research demonstrating that multimedia resources can significantly enhance learner engagement and knowledge retention (Abdulrahaman et al., 2020). From a linguistic perspective, the clause *"the content is good, especially the Islamic integration"* affirms the textbook's foundational design principle. At the same time, the subsequent concessive structure signals a forward-looking evaluation that proposes refinement through technology-enhanced input. These insights fall under the Enhancement Needs theme, highlighting areas for future development identified through expert feedback.

The development of the Islamic values-based textbook for the *Speaking for Informal Interactions* course successfully integrates language instruction with Islamic value formation, offering students a holistic learning resource. The enthusiastic responses from both students and expert reviewers further confirm the textbook's effectiveness. In addition to improving learners' speaking skills, the material also strengthened their ability to apply Islamic values in everyday communicative contexts. Future editions will incorporate more technology-supported content to increase student interaction and engagement with the material.

The linguistic evidence drawn from student and expert feedback, particularly regarding engagement, meaningful connection, a holistic learning experience, and the need for technological supplementation, reveals three key areas of convergence: spiritual relevance, communicative language development, and the need for greater multimodal and authentic input. The resulting thematic map highlights three interrelated dimensions consisting of spiritual relevance, communicative language development, and multimodal enhancement needs, which position

the textbook as an identity-conscious yet adaptable instructional resource. These convergences reinforce the argument that the textbook serves not only as an effective learning tool but also as a flexible resource that responds to evolving educational demands.

### Validation of the Islamic-Based Textbook

To validate the textbook, two TESL experts were invited to evaluate its content using a

structured 28-item questionnaire that assessed general characteristics, content quality, and alignment with established principles of language teaching and learning. The results of this expert evaluation, together with data from student interviews, were synthesized into a thematic map. As shown in Table 3, the thematic map was used to organize recurring evaluative patterns, enabling an integrated interpretation of the text book's strengths and areas identified for future refinement.

**Table 3.** Thematic map of expert and student validation of the islamic-based textbook

Theme	Key Aspects	Evidence Sources
Identity-Responsive Content Integration	Natural integration of Islamic values; alignment with students' religious identity; value-based communicative ethics	Reviewer 1 interview; textbook content analysis
Instructional Clarity and Task Design	Clear instructions; well-structured tasks; balance between linguistic focus and value integration	Reviewer 1 feedback; expert questionnaire
Communicative Effectiveness	Support for speaking development; collaborative and task-based activities; communicative relevance	Expert evaluation; student interviews
Authenticity of Informal Language Input	Need for more colloquial expressions; inclusion of slang and idiomatic language; real-life dialogue models	Reviewer 2 feedback; student interviews
Technology-Supported Learning Enhancement	Recommendation for QR codes, video-based conversational models; multimedia resources	Reviewer 2 feedback; student interviews
Learner Engagement and Relevance	Increased motivation; relevance to daily communication; preference for visual and multimedia input	Student interview excerpts
Future Development Needs	Expansion of informal discourse; integration of digital resources; refinement based on expert and learner input	Expert and student feedback synthesis

**Table 4.** Expert evaluation of textbook

Reviewer	Gender	Highest Degree	Field of Expertise	Years of Teaching
Reviewer 1	Male	Ph.D.	TESL	19
Reviewer 2	Female	Ph.D.	TESL	12

The reviewers were satisfied with the textbook's organization and content. Reviewer 1 was very impressed with the combination of Islamic values with the study of the English language in the textbook: "The book deserves

*an appreciation because it integrates the values of Islam with the study of the language in a unique manner, which can be very useful to students at an Islamic university*" (Reviewer 1, 15 September 2023). This comment

corresponds to the thematic category of *Identity-Responsive Content Integration*, indicating that the textbook successfully aligns linguistic instruction with learners' values and identities. Such alignment is consistent with findings that learning resources grounded in students' identities can enhance motivation to learn (Eden et al., 2024).

On the other hand, Reviewer 2 emphasized the importance of adding more examples of everyday, informal English and incorporating technology resources. She wrote: "*I think the book could benefit from more examples of informal, everyday conversations. Adding digital resources such as QR codes to videos would make it more interesting*" (Reviewer 2, 18 September 2023). This feedback is reflected in the thematic categories of *Authenticity of Informal Language Input* and *Technology-Supported Learning Enhancement* in the thematic map (Table 3). The recommendation aligns with current best practices in teaching, where media and authentic language exposure play key roles in language learning theory (Nuraini & Mas'odi, 2024).

Later clarification was gained through follow-up interviews with Reviewer 1. The reviewer was asked to clarify the strengths of the resources in terms of clarity of instruction and the integration of Islamic values: "*The clarity of the tasks and the way the Islamic content is naturally woven into the lessons really stands out. It doesn't feel forced, which is crucial in getting the students to learn the language while adopting the Islamic values*" (Reviewer 1, 15 September 2023). This aspect is paramount in ensuring that the spiritual does not overshadow the linguistic in language learning. This observation reinforces the theme of *Instructional Clarity and Task Design*, suggesting that spiritual content complemented rather than overshadowed linguistic objectives.

By contrast, Reviewer 2 went on to explain the importance of adding authenticity to the

conversation models presented in the textbooks. Reviewer 2 said, "*The lessons are well-structured, but I think there should be more examples of informal conversation. Real-life dialogues should involve slang or idiomatic expressions, and adding them to the book might help to make the lessons more relevant to the students*" (Reviewer 2, 18 September 2023). This critique further supports the thematic emphasis on *Authenticity of Informal Language Input*, underscoring the pedagogical value of realistic dialogue models in developing communicative competence (Domogen, 2023).

To validate the expert opinions, interviews were conducted with students to capture user feedback. On being asked to comment on the book, one student revealed, "*I liked the chapters, but I think it would help if there were more examples of casual conversations, like how people talk in real life. We practice formal English a lot, but in informal settings, people use different words and expressions*" (Student 5, 20 September 2023). Another student gave an opinion on integrating technology in the reader: "*I think it would be cool if we had QR codes or links to videos where we can see real conversations. Watching people actually talk would help us understand the informal expressions better*" (Student 6, 22 September 2023). These responses align closely with the themes of *Learner Engagement and Relevance* and *Technology-Supported Learning Enhancement* identified in the thematic map.

These remarks further substantiate the reviewers' feedback and reflect current student preferences in digitally mediated learning environments. As learners increasingly favor visual and multimodal resources, the integration of multimedia has become an essential component of contemporary instructional materials (Singh, 2023). In response to these findings, the research team planned revisions for future editions of the textbook, including expanding the use of colloquial and informal language and integrating

QR-linked video resources featuring real-world conversational contexts. These revisions are intended to enhance authenticity and learner engagement while maintaining the textbook's strengths in task clarity and in integrating Islamic values, in line recommendations for multimedia-supported learning (Kerimbayev, 2023).

The validation process confirms that the Islamic-based textbook meets linguistic and cultural requirements while effectively integrating Islamic values into communicative language learning. The thematic map illustrates how expert and student feedback converged around core strengths such as identity responsiveness, instructional clarity, and authenticity, while also identifying development needs related to technology support. From an interpretive perspective, these findings resonate with broader discussions on spiritually oriented English materials and technology-supported language learning. Reviewer 1's emphasis on organic value integration aligns with arguments that spiritually grounded materials can support linguistic and reflective growth when values are embedded naturally (Preece, 2017). At the same time, Reviewer 2's focus on colloquial input and multimedia enhancement aligns with research highlighting the pedagogical importance of authentic and multimedia-supported resources (Abernathy, 2024; Tsang et al., 2013; Wahyuningsih & Afandi, 2020; Ferdiansyah et al., 2023). The validation results, therefore,

suggest that while the textbook already functions effectively as an identity-responsive resource, future iterations should further strengthen exposure to informal discourse and digital integration to better address learners' real-world communicative needs (Romadhon, 2024; Kneževiæ et al., 2021).

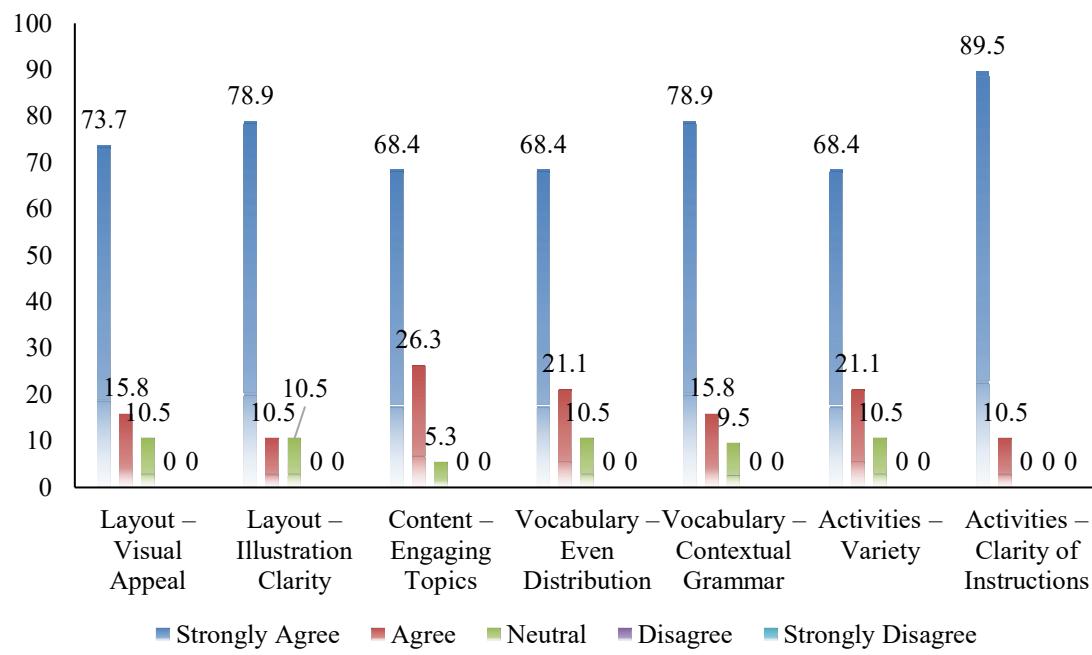
### **Student Perception of the Islamic-Based Textbook for Speaking for Informal Interactions**

The reception of the Islamic-based textbook among the 19 students enrolled in the Speaking for Informal Interactions course at SKM Islamic University was highly positive. Student responses were collected through a questionnaire assessing four core domains, namely layout, content, vocabulary, and exercises, using a five-point Likert scale consisting of Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. Rather than reporting raw frequencies, the results were converted to percentages and visualized in a 100% stacked bar chart (Chart 1), which illustrates the proportional distribution of responses across all Likert categories and provides a clearer representation of overall response patterns across the evaluated aspects. To further interpret these quantitative trends, a thematic map was developed to synthesize recurring dimensions of student perception drawn from both the questionnaire data and follow-up interviews, as presented in Table 5.

**Table 5.** Thematic map of student perceptions of the islamic-based speaking textbook

Theme	Key Aspects	Evidence Sources
Visual Design and Layout	Attractive layout; clear navigation; supportive illustrations	Questionnaire results; student interviews
Content Relevance and Engagement	Contextualized topics; relevance to daily communication; appropriate difficulty level	Questionnaire results; student interviews
Vocabulary and Structural Clarity	Context-based vocabulary; gradual distribution; meaningful grammar presentation	Questionnaire results; student interviews
Task Design and Instructional Clarity	Clear instructions; varied activities; communicative task types	Questionnaire results; student interviews

Islamic Value Integration	Faith-relevant content; ethical communication; identity affirmation	Student interview excerpts
Learner Motivation and Affective Engagement	Enjoyment; confidence; emotional engagement	Questionnaire patterns; student interviews
Multimodal and Technology Enhancement Needs	QR codes; audio-visual support; authentic language exposure	Student suggestions



**Figure 1.** Student perceptions of the islamic-based textbook

Regarding layout, students expressed strong appreciation for the textbook's visual organization. Most respondents evaluated the design positively, with 73.7 percent selecting "strongly agree" and 15.8 percent selecting "agree" regarding the material's visual appeal. Only a small number of students chose the neutral option, and no negative responses were recorded. A similar trend was evident in students' evaluations of the illustrations, with 78.9 percent strongly agreeing that the visuals were easy to follow. The overall design was also perceived as engaging, with 42 percent of students strongly agreeing and 47 percent agreeing with this statement. These patterns correspond to the Visual Design and Layout thematic category in the thematic map, underscoring the importance

of visual clarity and ease of navigation in supporting learner comprehension. These quantitative findings were reinforced by follow-up interviews, in which students emphasized the practical benefits of the layout. One student remarked, "*The layout is very useful. I can easily navigate the lessons, and the visuals help to make the information more comprehensible*" (Student 2). Together, these responses align with previous research highlighting the role of effective visual design in enhancing comprehension and learner motivation (Dolati & Richards, 2012; Ingulfsen et al., 2023).

Students' perceptions of the textbook content were likewise positive. When asked whether the topics were engaging, 68.4 percent of respondents selected "strongly agree," and

26.3 percent selected “agree.” Similarly, evaluations of content appropriateness showed that 68% strongly agreed and 21% agreed that the materials matched their learning needs. Neutral responses accounted for only a small proportion, and no negative responses were reported. These quantitative patterns were echoed in student interviews, in which learners highlighted the relevance of the topics to their everyday communication. One student noted, *“The subject matter is very interesting and relevant to what I need to be able to communicate daily. I think the level is also good for my needs”* (Student 3). This reflection aligns with the thematic category of Content Relevance and Engagement, suggesting that contextually grounded topics supported meaningful learning experiences. The findings are consistent with the arguments of Korkealehto et al. (2021) and Hiver et al. (2023), who emphasize that contextual relevance is crucial for fostering learner motivation and cognitive engagement.

Responses relating to vocabulary and structure were also highly favorable. A total of 58 percent strongly agreed, and 32 percent agreed that vocabulary was evenly distributed, while 79 percent strongly agreed and 16 percent agreed that vocabulary and grammar were introduced in meaningful contexts. Only a limited number of students selected neutral responses, and none selected disagree or strongly disagree. One student commented, *“I enjoy the natural way in which the vocabulary in the textbook is presented. It is not just words being presented to us, but it is done in real-life scenarios”* (Student 4). These findings are consistent with Nation’s (2001) principles of incremental vocabulary development and with models of context-based learning.

The exercises and activities received some of the strongest approval in the evaluation. Students responded very positively to the variety of activities, with 68.4 percent selecting “strongly agree” and 21.1 percent selecting “agree.” The

clarity of instructional directions was rated even higher, with 89.5 percent of respondents strongly agreeing that the instructions were easy to understand, and no respondents selected the disagree or strongly disagree options. These results indicate that students found the tasks both accessible and engaging. This perception was reinforced during interviews, where one student explained, *“The instructions are obvious, and the activities are varied, which keeps me engaged throughout the lessons”* (Student 5). This response aligns with the thematic category of Vocabulary and Structural Clarity, highlighting the role of clear guidance and varied task design in supporting contextualized language use. The findings are consistent with Zhang and Hyland (2021), who emphasize the importance of clarity and variety in effective communicative task design.

Students also expressed strong appreciation for the integration of Islamic values throughout the lessons. One student noted, *“The thing that I appreciated the most was the inclusion of Islamic values in the activities. I feel like I was learning English in a way that is relevant to my faith”* (Student 6). This reflection corresponds to the thematic category of Islamic Value Integration, highlighting identity affirmation as a central aspect of learners’ perceptions. At the same time, some students pointed to the need for greater multimodal accessibility to support learning, as illustrated by the suggestion, *“It would be very helpful if the book included QR codes with audio or videos so we can see and learn exactly how others apply the language”* (Student 7). These comments align with the Multimodal and Technology Enhancement Needs thematic category. They are consistent with existing research on multimedia-supported language learning, which emphasizes the role of audiovisual resources in enhancing authenticity and learner engagement (Haleem et al., 2022; Abernathy, 2024; Romadhon, 2024).

The students’ responses indicate that the textbook contributed not only to linguistic

development but also to emotional engagement and learning motivation. The predominance of “strongly agree” and “agree” responses across all evaluated domains, together with the absence of negative evaluations, suggests that the textbook was perceived very positively by learners. As shown in the thematic map, student perceptions converged around six interrelated dimensions: visual design, content relevance, vocabulary clarity, task effectiveness, Islamic value integration, and the need for enhanced multimodal support. These patterns align with theoretical perspectives emphasizing that culturally congruent and contextually grounded instructional materials can strengthen learner confidence, reduce affective barriers, and promote deeper participation in learning activities (Korkealehto et al., 2021; Hiver et al., 2023). The consistently positive evaluations further indicate that integrating CEFR-based communicative instruction with Islamic values fostered a psychologically safe, identity-affirming learning environment, as described by Moloney and Mansour (2022). In addition, students’ calls for greater technological integration reflect current scholarship on digital literacy, which highlights the role of multimedia-supported learning in enhancing authenticity, engagement, and multimodal comprehension (Abernathy, 2024; Romadhon, 2024; Kneževiæ et al., 2021).

## Improvement of Students’ Speaking Proficiency

To examine the efficacy of the Islamic-based textbook in improving students’ speaking skills, a pre-test and post-test design was implemented involving 58 students enrolled in the Speaking for Informal Interactions course at SKM Islamic University. Both tests aligned with CEFR level A2 to B1 descriptors and assessed four key components of oral proficiency: fluency and coherence, vocabulary range, grammatical accuracy, and pronunciation. Student performance was rated on a five-point scale, ranging from 1 (beginner level) to 5 (proficient intermediate level). To complement the quantitative results, a thematic map was developed to integrate patterns emerging from test score analysis and student interview data. As shown in Table 6, this thematic map illustrates how gains in speaking proficiency were influenced by communicative task design, scaffolded instructional input, and identity-responsive learning contexts. Detailed statistical results of the speaking performance tests, including standard deviations, *t* values, *p* values, and effect sizes, are reported in Table 7.

The results presented in Table 7 demonstrate substantial improvement in students’ speaking performance across all assessed

**Table 6.** Thematic map of improvement in students’ speaking proficiency

Theme	Key Indicators	Supporting Evidence
Fluency and Expressive Confidence	Smoothen speech; reduced hesitation; improved coherence	Pretest–posttest gains; Student 1 and Student 2 interviews
Vocabulary Expansion through Contextualized Input	Increased vocabulary range; easier lexical retrieval	Table 7 results; Student 1 reflection
Gradual Development of Grammatical Accuracy	Moderate gains in accuracy; prioritization of meaning over form	Test scores; Student reflections
Pronunciation Improvement through Repetition	Increased pronunciation accuracy; confidence in articulation	Pronunciation gains: Student 5 interview
Scaffolding and Progressive Task Design	Step-by-step progression from simple to complex speaking tasks	Student 4 reflection; CEFR A2–B1 alignment
Identity-Responsive and Spiritually Anchored Learning	Reduced anxiety; enhanced motivation; spiritual relevance	Student 3 and Student 6 interviews

Affective Safety and Speaking Confidence	Willingness to speak spontaneously; lower anxiety	Student 2 and Student 6 reflections
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Table 7. Pretest and posttest speaking performance

Indicator	Pretest Mean (SD)	Posttest Mean (SD)	Improvement	t (57)	p-value	Cohen's d
Fluency and Coherence	2.8 (0.43)	4.1 (0.47)	+1.3	12.42	< .001	1.63 (large)
Vocabulary Range	2.7 (0.41)	4.0 (0.46)	+1.3	11.89	< .001	1.55 (large)
Grammatical Accuracy	2.9 (0.45)	3.8 (0.51)	+0.9	8.03	< .001	1.05 (large)
Pronunciation	3.1 (0.40)	4.2 (0.49)	+1.1	10.77	< .001	1.42 (large)
Overall Score	2.9 (0.42)	4.0 (0.48)	+1.1	12.05	< .001	1.59 (large)

dimensions. The most pronounced gains were observed in fluency and vocabulary, with mean increases of 1.3 points in each category. These improvements suggest that the communicative tasks embedded in the textbook effectively supported learners in expressing ideas more confidently and accessing a broader range of vocabulary during oral production. This interpretation is further reinforced by the large effect sizes recorded for fluency ( $d = 1.63$ ) and vocabulary ( $d = 1.55$ ), indicating that meaning-focused, task-based activities played a significant role in enhancing students' spoken language performance. These quantitative outcomes closely align with the thematic category of Fluency and Expressive Confidence identified in the thematic map (Table 6), linking measurable proficiency gains to learners' perceived communicative development.

Although the improvement in grammatical accuracy was smaller, at an increase of 0.9 points, it remains pedagogically meaningful. This pattern is consistent with the widely accepted view that grammatical accuracy tends to develop gradually and often requires sustained form-focused instruction and corrective feedback (Nation, 2001; Ellis, 2003). Given that the course placed

greater emphasis on natural, meaning-focused communication, students appeared to prioritize conveying meaning over close monitoring of grammatical form during speaking tasks. As a result, larger gains in fluency and vocabulary were pedagogically expected and align with findings from previous studies on communication-based instructional approaches (Yenkimaleki et al., 2023). This trend is captured in the thematic category, Gradual Development of Grammatical Accuracy, presented in the thematic map (Table 6), which links slower grammatical development to the communicative orientation of the course design.

Qualitative data obtained from student interviews further reinforce these conclusions. One student reflected, "*My speech has become even smoother, and I have more words to articulate my ideas because the textbook provides examples related to our everyday lives, which are valued*" (Student 1, 18 September 2023). This comment illustrates the role of contextual familiarity in supporting more fluent and spontaneous speech, a relationship widely discussed in previous research on cognitive load reduction and oral language production (Jin, 2017; Qiu, 2020). The student's reflection aligns

with the thematic category of Vocabulary Expansion through Contextualized Input on the thematic map, linking learners' perceived progress to the textbook's pedagogical design.

Another student reflected on changes in speaking confidence, stating, *"Before, I always struggled with speech tasks requiring spontaneous speaking, but after practicing speeches from the textbook, I feel less anxious"* (Student 2, 19 September 2023). This response suggests that repeated, well-structured practice tasks played an essential role in reducing anxiety and fostering greater automaticity in speech production. Previous research has similarly shown that repetition within meaningful communicative contexts supports the development of speaking fluency and learner confidence (Yenkimaleki et al., 2023). This experience aligns with the thematic category of Affective Safety and Speaking Confidence. In addition, the integration of Islamic teachings was perceived as supportive of engagement and comprehension. One student explained, *"It was not that difficult for me to grasp these phrases because they were tied to our Islamic teachings..."* (Student 3, 20 September 2023). In this sense, spiritual concepts functioned as cognitive anchors that facilitated vocabulary recall and comprehension, a pattern consistent with research suggesting that spiritually meaningful and identity-relevant content can enhance memorability and depth of processing in language learning (Azizi & Zamaniyan, 2013; Wiseman, 2024). This evidence aligns with the thematic category of Identity-Responsive and Spiritually Anchored Learning.

A similar pattern emerged in another student's reflection on the gradual progression of learning tasks, as one noted, *"Each unit progressively encouraged us to learn more sophisticated ways of expressing ourselves..."* (Student 4, 21 September 2023). This perception reflects the principle of scaffolded input, in which

learners are gradually guided toward more complex language use through structured support, as described by Ellis (2003) and Nation (2001). The same developmental pattern was also evident in students' perceptions of pronunciation improvement. One student explained, *"I was not confident about the way certain words are pronounced..."* (Student 5, 21 September 2023), suggesting that repeated exposure to modeled dialogues and guided practice contributed to greater phonological accuracy. Such repetition and modeling have been shown to play a crucial role in improving pronunciation in second language learning (Daskalovska, 2018). Beyond linguistic development, students also reported a deeper sense of emotional safety and motivation. As one student expressed, *"Since the content was related to our faith, it made the classroom feel very safe for me..."* (Student 6, 22 September 2023). This reflection aligns with arguments that spiritual and cultural relevance can foster identity affirmation, learner confidence, and active classroom participation (Moloney & Mansour, 2022). Collectively, these reflections correspond to the thematic categories of Scaffolding and Progressive Task Design, Pronunciation Improvement through Repetition, and Affective Safety and Identity Affirmation presented in Table 6, illustrating how pedagogical structure and identity-responsive content jointly supported students' speaking development.

The improvements reported in Table 7 reflect not only numerical gains but also deeper pedagogical processes underlying students' speaking development. The consistent progress observed across fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammatical accuracy aligns with theoretical perspectives that emphasize the importance of meaningful, identity-linked input in fostering oral proficiency (Nation, 2001; Ellis, 2003). Student testimonials further suggest that linguistic improvement was facilitated by reduced affective barriers, strong contextual relevance,

and a sense of spiritual resonance embedded in the learning materials. As summarized in the thematic map (Table 6), these factors worked together to create a psychologically safe learning environment that encouraged spontaneous, confident speech. The findings are also consistent with previous studies demonstrating that culturally responsive instructional materials enhance learner confidence and classroom participation (Hiver et al., 2023; Moloney & Mansour, 2022). Taken as a whole, the proficiency gains identified in this study reflect not only the effectiveness of CEFR-aligned communicative tasks but also the added pedagogical value of integrating language learning with students' spiritual and cultural identities.

## ■ CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that developing and implementing an Islamic-integrated speaking textbook contributed to meaningful improvements in students' speaking performance, particularly in fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammatical accuracy. These gains were accompanied by stronger motivational and emotional engagement among learners. Taken together, the results suggest that situating communicative learning tasks within culturally and spiritually meaningful contexts can heighten students' sense of relevance and personal connection to the learning process. In this respect, the study provides empirically grounded support for the importance of incorporating cultural and Islamic identity into English-language learning within Islamic institutions of higher education, both from the perspective of material design and classroom implementation.

The implications of these findings extend across theoretical and practical domains. Theoretically, the results reinforce the premise within culturally responsive pedagogy that language learning is shaped not only by cognitive input but also by alignment with learners' identities, values, and lived experiences.

Practically, the study offers a model for material development that may guide Islamic universities seeking to embed religious and ethical principles into English-language instruction without compromising communicative goals. The textbook design framework described in this study has the potential to serve as a reference point for similar learner populations, particularly in contexts where institutions aim to preserve spiritual identity while meeting global linguistic demands.

These contributions are substantial, yet several limitations must be acknowledged. The absence of a control group restricts the extent to which improvements can be attributed solely to the new textbook rather than to general instructional progression. The assessment of speaking performance relied exclusively on instructor ratings, without documented inter-rater reliability, raising the possibility of bias. Although the perception survey drew from established instruments, it did not undergo a rigorous validation process, limiting the precision of interpretations drawn from the data. Furthermore, the study was conducted at a single institution with a relatively homogeneous student population, which reduces the generalizability of the findings to more diverse educational settings.

Future research would benefit from employing more rigorous experimental or quasi-experimental designs, such as the inclusion of comparison groups or blind scoring procedures, to strengthen causal claims regarding the textbook's effectiveness. Expanding the research to multiple institutions with culturally and linguistically diverse learners would help determine whether similar textbook models perform consistently across varied contexts. Additional investigation into complementary learning supports, including digital tools such as QR-linked videos, dialogue demonstrations, and mobile-assisted pronunciation aids, may also offer deeper insight into how technologically enhanced resources reinforce speaking skill development.

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