

Exploring EFL students' difficulties in mastering vocabulary

¹Khoirul Fathurizki*, ¹Kurniawan Yudhi Nugroho, ¹Elok Widiyati, ¹Choiril Anwar

¹English Education Study Program, Faculty of Language, Literature, and Culture,
Universitas Islam Sultan Agung, Indonesia

***Corresponding Author**

Email: khoirulfathurizki@gmail.com

Abstract

Although English has been taught in schools for over a decade, many EFL students still struggle with the language. A major reason is their limited vocabulary, which can be a barrier in the workplace, especially when interacting with foreigners. Ineffective teaching methods also contribute to this issue. This study aims to trace the root of the problems that hinder vocabulary development and to identify the factors affecting students' vocabulary mastery. A qualitative approach was used, involving five EFL students in Indonesia and data were analysed thematically. The findings of this study revealed that EFL students faced major vocabulary difficulties, particularly in memory retention, distinguishing word forms, and dealing with pronunciation and spelling differences. Internal barriers such as low confidence, lack of motivation, and anxiety further hindered their progress, while external barriers included limited exposure and unsupportive environments. Despite these difficulties, students applied various strategies such as note-taking, repetition, contextual practice, and the use of digital media, supported as well by teachers, peers, and family. This study suggests that teachers should integrate innovative and technology-based approaches with traditional methods, while also fostering supportive and low-anxiety classroom environments. Future research is recommended to involve larger samples and explore digital innovations that can enhance vocabulary retention and learners' confidence.

Keywords: EFL students; learning difficulties; learning strategies; technology-based learning; vocabulary mastery

INTRODUCTION

English is one of the international languages that is very important for students to master in today's globalized world. Among the various components of language skills, vocabulary mastery is a very crucial aspect because it serves as the foundation for speaking, writing, reading, and listening skills in various academic, non-academic, and professional contexts. Vocabulary mastery is an important foundation in language skills because, without adequate vocabulary, speaking, reading, writing, and listening skills will not develop optimally (Alqahtani, 2015; Manihuruk, 2020; McKeown, 2019; Sari et al., 2024).

However, even though students have been in formal education for many years, many of them still struggle to master English vocabulary. This research focuses on EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students in Indonesia, those who learn English not as first or second language, but as a foreign language. These difficulties arise because EFL students often do not have adequate learning strategies to learn and remember new vocabulary. Limited vocabulary not only hinders the ability to speak and write but also affects the understanding of academic texts as well as professional communication (Franscy & Ramli, 2022; Rabadi, 2016; Zuhairi & Mistar, 2023). This condition causes many students to lack confidence, especially when interacting with native speakers. The previous studies have shown that limited vocabulary and language difficulties can reduce learners' self-confidence (Machfudi & Afidah, 2022; Nety et al., 2020), moreover (Rahmawati & Rizqiya, 2023) emphasized that limited vocabulary lowers EFL students' self-confidence in speaking English significantly. Furthermore, (Alberth, 2023) emphasized that communicating with native speakers plays a crucial role in shaping EFL learners' confidence in their English skills. Psychological factors such as anxiety, shyness, and fear of making mistakes also contribute to students' reluctance to use English in real-life communication (Nety et al., 2020).

A variety of factors can cause low vocabulary mastery. Internal factors include low motivation to learn and a lack of effective learning strategies, as well as external factors such as less varied teaching methods. This has a direct impact on their ability to use English actively or passively. Previous studies have also shown that EFL students often feel unconfident or even reluctant to use English because limited vocabulary is a major barrier to speaking and writing skills (Fitriyanti & Malihah, 2024; Kulsum et al., 2025; Octaberlina et al., 2022; Wahyuningsih & Afandi, 2020).

Students' vocabulary mastery is not only determined by factors from within, such as enthusiasm for learning, the approach used in learning vocabulary, and educational background, but also influenced by external factors. These external factors include the teaching methods used, the availability of learning facilities, and the supportive learning environment (Alqahtani, 2015). Unfortunately, many educational institutions in Indonesia still apply traditional approaches such as repetition drills and translation and do not involve varied and communicative strategies in teaching vocabulary, which hinders optimal vocabulary learning outcomes (Kusumawati & Arifin, 2024).

Research on the difficulties of EFL students in Indonesia in mastering vocabulary is important, especially to gain a deeper understanding of the root causes of the problems they face. By understanding the factors that hinder vocabulary mastery, educators and educational institutions can design teaching strategies that are more targeted and relevant to the needs of today's students. Moreover, earlier studies found that students with larger vocabulary knowledge usually have better overall English skills, including reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Hartini & Ardini, 2024).

Some previous studies have emphasized quantitative outcomes, such as the development of students' vocabulary size over time (Siregar & Henni, 2023), the impact of vocabulary learning strategies on knowledge achievement and motivation (Ayana et al., 2024), and the statistical relationship between strategy use and vocabulary achievement (Asyiah, 2017). However, research that explores students' perspectives on their experiences of mastering academic understanding is relatively limited, so there is still a need for qualitative research on students' subjective learning processes as shown in qualitative study by (H. A. Nasution & Daulay, 2024), which revealed that students found the 'English With Tiffani' app to be not only engaging but also supportive in improving vocabulary learning through its gamified and user-friendly design.

In addition, although both internal factors (e.g., motivation and learning strategies) and external factors (e.g., teaching methods and learning environment) have been acknowledged as important in vocabulary development, few studies have examined these aspects deeply from the learners' own perspective. Mahmoudi (2015) pointed out that personal and contextual conditions influence EFL students' language learning strongly. Recently, Andari (2023) showed that individual characteristics, prior experiences, and access to authentic communication play a significant role in vocabulary acquisition. In the same way, (Nasution & Salmiah, 2024) found that students rely on practical strategies, including the use of digital tools such as the cake application, to deal with everyday vocabulary learning, while Laoli et al. (2025) found that students face various challenges in vocabulary learning such as memorization difficulty, contextual usage, low motivation, and retention problems and employ strategies including repetition, contextual practice, and the use of multimedia resources like songs and movies to overcome with these difficulties. Based on these findings, this study applies a qualitative design to capture not only the results of vocabulary learning but also the processes and subjective experiences of learners, thus providing more comprehensive understanding of vocabulary learning.

Therefore, the findings of this study are expected to contribute to the improvement of vocabulary learning strategies in higher education and support EFL students develop their English skills. Some previous studies have highlighted both internal factors, such as motivation, fear of speaking, and learning strategies, and external factors like teaching methods, media use, and learning environment can influence significantly EFL learning difficulties (Dewi, 2024; Hashemnezhad, 2022;

Wulandari et al., 2020). However, these aspects are often fully explored through quantitative approaches, so this qualitative research provides deeper insight from learners' perspective.

To address this, the use of a qualitative method is considered appropriate because it allows researchers to understand students' personal experiences, challenges, and strategies in learning vocabulary (Kesmez, 2021). This approach enables exploration not only what students learn, but also how and why they face specific difficulties. The insights gained from this study are expected to serve as a valuable reference for teachers in designing vocabulary instruction that aligns more closely with students' real learning experiences.

This study aims to explore the types of difficulties EFL students face in mastering English vocabulary and to identify the internal and external factors that contribute to these challenges. It also seeks to provide insights that can help teachers and educational institutions design more effective and contextual vocabulary teaching strategies. Accordingly, the research is guided by the following question: "What types of difficulties do EFL students face in mastering English vocabulary, and what factors contribute to these challenges?".

METHODS

This study used a qualitative approach with a phenomenological study design. This design was chosen to explore students' real experiences in learning and mastering English vocabulary. The phenomenological approach helps the researcher understand how students experience difficulties in vocabulary learning from their own perspective. Through this approach, the study focuses not only on what challenges students face, but also explore their thoughts, feelings, and strategies in overcoming these challenges.

Respondents

This study used a purposive sampling technique, allowing the researcher to select participants who are most relevant to the research objectives. The focus of this research was to explore the difficulties faced by EFL students in mastering vocabulary; participants were required to have direct experience with this issue. The criteria for selection included being university students currently enrolled in an intensive English program and willingness to participate in interviews. A total of 5 participants were involved in this study, with ages ranging from 18 to 35. They included both active university students and learners in intensive English programs. Their varied educational backgrounds and vocabulary learning experiences were expected to provide meaningful and diverse insights into the challenges of vocabulary acquisition in an EFL context.

Instruments

At this stage, data was collected using a semi-structured interview method. The interview method was chosen because it allows participants to describe their personal perspectives, feelings, and strategies in facing vocabulary learning challenges. This method enables students to explain in detail the problems they face encounter and the ways they attempt to overcome them. It is particularly important as it provides access to students' internal experiences and thoughts, offering a more complete understanding of their difficulties in mastering vocabulary.

The interviews were guided by open-ended questions designed to explore students' experiences in vocabulary learning. Sample questions included: "What difficulties do you often face when learning English vocabulary?", "What helps you overcome these difficulties?", and "What internal and external factors contribute to these challenges?". These questions focused on identifying the types of challenges faced by students, the internal (e.g., motivation, anxiety) and external (e.g., teaching methods, learning environment) factors influencing vocabulary mastery, the strategies they used to overcome challenges, and their perception of the effective of those strategies.

Procedures

The interviews were conducted individually with each participant via zoom, with an average duration of 7-10 minutes. Before the interviews were conducted, each participant was asked to read and sign a consent form. The form explained the purpose of the study, assured participants that their involvement was voluntary, and allowed them to withdraw at any time. It also mentioned that the interviews would be recorded with their permission and that all personal information would be kept confidential. The data collection process involved three main steps: preparing the interview questions, conducting interviews with all selected participants (online), and recording the interviews in audio format for documentation and analysis.

Data analysis

This study collected data from interview transcripts involving five EFL students who shared their personal experience in learning English vocabulary. To analyze the data, the researcher used thematic analysis, a method that helps identify and report patterns or themes in qualitative responses. This approach was chosen because it allows for a detailed and flexible examination of participants' views, challenges, and strategies, making it suitable for exploring complex learning experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Thematic analysis was considered appropriate as it helps organize large amounts of qualitative data while highlighting key issues raised by participants, such as difficulties faced, internal and external influencing factors, and strategies used in mastering vocabulary. The analysis process involved several steps. First, the researcher carefully read the interview transcripts to gain familiarity with the content. Second, initial codes were developed by identifying significant or repeated points. Third, these codes were grouped then into broader themes based on their relevance to the research questions. Fourth, the themes were reviewed and refined, and then clearly named and defined. Finally, the researcher interpreted the themes to provide meaningful answers to the study's objectives.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The thematic analysis of the interview data revealed four major themes related to students' difficulties, strategies, and internal and external factors influencing EFL learners' vocabulary mastery.

Table 1. Summary of respondents' Responses on Exploring EFL Students' Difficulties in Mastering Vocabulary

Theme	Sub-theme	Supporting quotes
Type of difficulties	Memory retention difficulties	<i>"I often forget vocabularies I have learned after several days." (R2, R3, R4)</i>
	Confusion in word forms	<i>"I am still confused about distinguishing word classes, such as verbs, nouns, and adjective, for example: suggest and suggestion, advise and advice." (R1, R3, R4)</i>
	Pronunciation and spelling issues	<i>"I often get difficult to memorize because the writing and pronunciation are different." (R2)</i>
Strategies	Note-taking	<i>"I usually write new vocabularies in small notebook then memorize one by one., and make sentences" (R1, R2, R4, R5)</i> <i>"Memorizing new vocabulary over and over and then making sentences from that vocabulary is very effective." (R1)</i>
	Media use (film, music, TikTok, podcasts and novels)	<i>"I like watching English movies and listening to music for improving new vocabularies." (R1)</i> <i>"I watch English video on TikTok." (R3)</i>

		<i>"Listening to podcast that contain stories, and imitation makes it easier to remember vocabulary through repetition"</i> (R5)
		<i>"I memorize vocabulary by reading novels and translating them using dictionary or google translate"</i> (R1)
	Repetition & practice	<i>"Memorizing new vocabulary over and over and then making sentences from that vocabulary is very effective."</i> (R1)
	Speaking partners	<i>"Finding friends to practice speaking using new vocabulary (R1) and practice new vocabulary by reading, writing and speaking with friends (R2)."</i>
Internal inhibitors	Low confidence & fear	<i>"I am embarrassed to say new vocabularies, afraid of making mistakes."</i> (R1) <i>"I lack confidence because I am afraid of making mistakes."</i> (R2, R3, R4)
	Low motivation	<i>"I sometimes feel lazy and lack motivation, or my motivation is unstable."</i> (R1) <i>"I get bored easily or don't enjoy learning foreign languages."</i> (R2) <i>I get bored easily and lazy to memorize vocabulary."</i> (R3)
	Limited time	<i>"Time to study vocabulary is limited because it clashes with others study hours, so it's not optimal."</i> (R1, R2)
	Unsupportive environment	<i>"The environment is not supportive because people around rarely speak English."</i> (R2, R3, R5) <i>"My friends always say that I am showing off when I speak English (R4)."</i>
Internal supports	Motivation and curiosity	<i>"I have strong desire to go abroad where English is spoken."</i> (R2) <i>"I have strong desire to master English."</i> (R3, R4) <i>"I feel curious every time I find a new word, so I want to know the meaning."</i> (R5)
	Awareness of importance	<i>"I realize English is very important and necessary for work."</i> (R1, R4)
	Supportive family	<i>"My family is very supportive."</i> (R1, R4)
External supports	Helpful teachers and media	<i>"Learning media such as podcast, films, or online materials help to enrich new knowledge through real-world contexts."</i> (R5) <i>"If the teachers explain with pictures, it's easier for me to understand."</i> (R1)

Types of difficulties in learning vocabulary

The findings of this study showed that EFL students experienced several main difficulties in mastering vocabulary, such as memory retention difficulties, confusion in distinguishing word forms, and pronunciation or spelling difficulties. Several respondents of this study reported difficulties in distinguishing between different word forms. For instance, three of respondents mentioned: *"I am*

still confused about distinguishing word classes, such as verbs, nouns, and adjective, for example: suggest and suggestion, advise and advice" (R1, R3, R4). Another frequent issue was memory retention. Students explained that they often forget words they memorized after a short period of time: *"I often forget vocabularies I have learned after several days"* (R2, R3, R4). In addition, Pronunciation and spelling also were considered as problematic. As one respondent stated: *"I often get difficult to memorize because the writing and pronunciation are different"* (R2).

These findings showed that vocabulary learning is not only about memorization, but also involves the ability to recognize, store, and retrieve words accurately in different contexts. This aligns with (Ayana et al., 2024), who emphasized that vocabulary retention requires repeated exposure and contextual use, which helps learners to store words in long-term memory. In this study, many students admitted that they forgot words only a few days after learning, which reflects insufficient reinforcement.

Another difficulty that frequently happens is confusion in differentiating among word classes. Students often feel confused to recognize whether a word is a noun, verb, or adjective, which hindered accuracy in speaking and writing. This finding is lined with (Machfudi & Afidah, 2022), who noted that learners need explicit instruction and meaningful practice to overcome word-form confusion. Insomuch, inconsistencies in spelling and pronunciation also became obstacles, because students reported difficulties when written and spoken forms were different. This confirmed earlier study by (Manihuruk, 2020; McKeown, 2019), who emphasized the importance of phonological awareness in vocabulary learning.

Strategies to overcome difficulties

Although students faced these difficulties, the students also showed various strategies to improve their vocabulary learning. Several participants relied on writing and note-taking as their main approach, for example: *"I usually write new vocabularies in small notebook then memorize one by one, and make sentences"* (R1, R2, R4).

Other respondents preferred using media such as films, music, or social media platforms: *"I like watching English movies and listening to music for improving new vocabularies"* (R1), and *"I watch English video on TikTok."* (R3). *Repetition and contextual practice were also considered effective strategies. As one respondent mentioned: "Memorizing new vocabulary over and over and then making sentences from that vocabulary is very effective"* (R1).

This study showed that EFL students adopt both traditional and technology-based strategies to overcome vocabulary difficulties. Note-taking, repetition, and sentence-making reflect conventional approaches that emphasize structured practice. At the same time, the use of digital media such as TikTok, YouTube, and podcasts indicates a shift towards technology-supported learning. This aligns with (Kabooha & Elyas, 2018), who found that YouTube-based activities can significantly improve EFL learners' vocabulary acquisition and are positively perceived by both teachers and students. The preference for media-based strategies in this study showed that today's EFL students are motivated by authentic and engaging input, which not only provides exposure but also lowers boredom in vocabulary learning.

Internal inhibiting factors

Students' internal barriers mainly involved psychological aspects such as low motivation, lack of confidence, and anxiety. Several respondents admitted feeling embarrassed to speak new words for fear of mistakes" (R1, R3, R4), while others reported low interest in learning. For example: *"I get bored easily or don't enjoy learning foreign languages"* (R2).

Previous studies also have highlighted similar internal difficulties. According to (Horwitz, 2016), language anxiety is a common psychological barrier that often prevents learners from using new vocabulary actively. Similarly, (Mahmoudi, 2015) emphasized that low motivation and poor self-confidence negatively affect students' persistence in vocabulary learning. Moreover, (Yan Ju &

YanMei, 2021) examined the interplay among anxiety, self-efficacy tend to perform worse in vocabulary tasks. These findings corroborate the current study's findings that psychological factors including embarrassment, low interest, anxiety, and lack of confidence play crucial role in shaping students' vocabulary learning experiences.

External inhibiting factors

Students identified several external barriers in vocabulary learning. Including limited time, lack of exposure, and unsupportive environments. For example, some respondents mentioned that study hours often clashed with other academic tasks, making vocabulary practice less optimal (R1, R2). Other participants mentioned the lack of an English-speaking-environment: *"The environment is not supportive because people around rarely speak English"* (R2, R3, R5).

Previous studies also support these findings, showing that contextual limitations such as time constraints, insufficient exposure to authentic language use, and unsupportive environments negatively affect students' vocabulary learning. For example, (Alrasheedi, 2020) found that EFL students often struggle to practice vocabulary because of busy schedules and limited opportunities to use English outside of classroom. In the same way, (Mahmoudi, 2015) emphasized that the absence of a supportive linguistic environment can significantly reduce learners' motivation and confidence in learning new vocabulary.

Internal supporting factors

Nevertheless, students also showed positive internal driving factors that motivated them to learn vocabulary, including curiosity, and awareness of the importance of English as valuable skill for future work. As one respondent explained: *"I realize English is very important and necessary for work"* (R1, R4). Other added, *"I feel curious every time I find a new word, so I want to know the meaning."* (R5)

Social strategies also played an important role, especially peer practice and speaking with friends. Recent perspective in language learning, such as the growing participator approach (GPA), emphasize that learners develop language competence through meaningful interaction and participation in real communities. This highlights that practicing vocabulary with peers is not only about language use but also about fostering collaborative learning environment.

Moreover, contemporary research has reaffirmed the importance of emotional and motivational factors, for example, (Li & Zhou, 2023) argued that learner's anxiety, self-confidence, and motivation strongly shape the effectiveness of vocabulary learning. When the students feel anxious or fear being ridiculed, their emotional barriers increase and reduce their willingness to use English. Otherwise, when they are motivated and confident, these barriers are lowered, and language acquisition becomes more effective.

External supporting factors

In contrast, students acknowledged the role of external support such as family, friends, teachers, and technology were reported as helpful. For example, one student stated, *"If the teachers explain with pictures, it's easier for me to understand"* (R1), while others highlighted family encouragement (R1, R4). Digital resources such as podcasts, films, and online materials were also seen as helpful in providing authentic input (R5).

These findings align with the previous studies that highlighted the effectiveness of incorporating authentic materials, such as movies, podcasts, and social media, into language learning to improve communicative competence by exposing learners to both formal and vernacular language (Pavithra & Gandhimathi, 2024). In addition, integrating podcasts in EFL curricula has been found to increase motivation and create a realistic, engaging learning environment, because podcasts foster rapport and authenticity in language exposure (Chaves-Yuste & de-la Peña, 2023).

Overall, external factors also influenced vocabulary mastery. Supportive families, teachers, and digital tools were considered as positive factors, while time constraints and unsupportive environment

acted as barriers. These findings echo (Wahyuningsih & Afandi, 2020), who emphasized that learning context and emotional factors can strongly affect language outcomes. Therefore, this study indicates that vocabulary difficulties are not only caused by a single factor, but also by a combination of linguistic, psychological, and contextual aspects. Therefore, teachers and institutions should create supportive, and low-anxiety environments and integrate engaging strategies that align with students' needs.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the difficulties faced by EFL students in mastering vocabulary and identified the internal and external factors that shaped their learning. The finding revealed that the main difficulties included memory retention, word-form confusion, and pronunciation or spelling difficulties. In addition, internal inhibitors such as low-confidence, lack of motivation, and anxiety also hindered vocabulary learning. On the other hand, students showed resilience by applying various strategies, including note-taking, repetition, contextual practice, digital media, and peer collaboration. Both external supports (teachers, families, and media) and internal factors (motivation, curiosity, and awareness of the importance of English) contributed to their progress positively.

REFERENCES

- Alberth, A. (2023). How important is communicating with native English speakers to EFL learners' self-confidence in their English language proficiency? *Journey: Journal of English Language and Pedagogy*, 6(2), 380–393. <https://doi.org/10.33503/journey.v6i2.3169>
- Alqahtani, M. (2015). The importance of vocabulary in language learning and how to be taught. *International Journal of Teaching and Education*, III(3), 21–34. <https://doi.org/10.20472/TE.2015.3.3.002>
- Alrasheedi, S. (2020). Investigation of factors influencing speaking performance of Saudi EFL learners. *Arab World English Journal*, 11(4), 66–77. <https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol11no4.5>
- Andari, I. A. M. Y. (2023). Factors influence the acquisition of vocabulary by young learners. *Kumarottama: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 2(2), 153–166. <https://doi.org/10.53977/kumarottama.v2i2.833>
- Ayana, H., Mereba, T., & Alemu, A. (2024). Effect of vocabulary learning strategies on students' vocabulary knowledge achievement and motivation: the case of grade 11 high school students. *Frontiers in Education*, 9, Article 1399350. <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2024.1399350>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Chaves-Yuste, B., & de-la Peña, C. (2023). Podcasts' effects on the EFL classroom: a socially relevant intervention. *Smart Learning Environments*, 10(1), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40561-023-00241-1>
- Dewi, E. G. A. (2024). Exploring the factors behind low English proficiency- focused students. *Vox Edukasi: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan*, 15(2), 300–315. <https://doi.org/10.31932/ve.v15i2.4010>
- Fitriyanti, I. D., & Malihah, N. (2024). The Problems Encountered by English Foreign Language Learners in English Speaking Skill: Systematic Literature Review. *EDULINK: EDUCATION AND LINGUISTICS KNOWLEDGE JOURNAL*, 6(2), 170–181. <https://doi.org/10.32503/edulink.v6i2.3992>
- Franscy, F., & Ramli, R. (2022). Problems Encountered by Indonesian EFL Learners in Mastering Speaking Skills. *Pioneer: Journal of Language and Literature*, 14(1), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.36841/pioneer.v14i1.1176>
- Hartini, L. W., & Ardini, A. S. (2024). Relationship Between Indonesian EFL Learners' Vocabulary Knowledge and English Competencies. *Journal of English and Education (JEE)*, 10(1), 55–66. <https://doi.org/10.20885/jee.v10i1.33651>

- Hashemnezhad, H. (2022). Inflamed EFL Learning: A qualitative study to explore factors affecting EFL learning. *HOW*, 29(1), 129–153. <https://doi.org/10.19183/how.29.1.601>
- Horwitz, E. K. (2016). Factor Structure of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale. *Psychological Reports*, 119(1), 71–76. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033294116653368>
- Kabooha, R., & Elyas, T. (2018). The Effects of YouTube in Multimedia Instruction for Vocabulary Learning: Perceptions of EFL Students and Teachers. *English Language Teaching*, 11(2), 72–81. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v11n2p72>
- Kesmez, A. (2021). EFL students' vocabulary learning strategies and the difficulties faced by them in vocabulary learning. *International Journal of Language Academy*, 36(36), 78–98. <https://doi.org/10.29228/ijla.48703>
- Kulsum, E. M., Falah, F., & Mulyadi. (2025). A Study on the difficulties in English Speaking for EFL Students. *Journal on Education*, 7(2), 10648–10659. <https://doi.org/10.31004/joe.v7i2.8109>
- Kusumawati, B. I., & Arifin, S. (2024). Effective vocabulary teaching techniques for EFL teachers in primary classrooms. *JETAL: Journal of English Teaching & Applied Linguistic*, 6(1), 37–46. <https://doi.org/10.36655/jetal.v6i1.1650>
- Laoli, A., Giawa, N. H., Putri, D., Zebua, J., Fransiskus, E., & Namo, J. (2025). Strategies and challenges of English education students in vocabulary mastery. *Eltin Journal: Journal of English Language Teaching in Indonesia*, 13(1), 157–170. <https://e-journal.stkipsiliwangi.ac.id/index.php/eltin/article/view/5750>
- Li, Q., & Zhou, Y. (2023). Enhancing EFL Class Design: Affective Filter Hypothesis in Action. *International Journal of Education and Humanities*, 9(3), 38–40. <https://doi.org/10.54097/ijeh.v9i3.10161>
- Machfudi, M. I., & Afidah, A. (2022). Students' difficulties in vocabulary mastery. *CREW Journal*, 1(1), 01–12. <https://doi.org/10.35719/crewjournal.v1i1.1359>
- Mahmoudi, S. (2015). Internal and external factors affecting learning English as a foreign language. *International Journal of Language and Linguistics*, 3(5), 313–322. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ijll.20150305.16>
- Manihuruk, D. H. (2020). The Correlation between EFL Students' Vocabulary Knowledge and Reading Comprehension. *JET (Journal of English Teaching)*, 6(1), 86–95. <https://doi.org/10.33541/jet.v6i1.1264>
- McKeown, M. G. (2019). Effective Vocabulary Instruction Fosters Knowing Words, Using Words, and Understanding How Words Work. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools*, 50(4), 466–476. https://doi.org/10.1044/2019_LSHSS-VOIA-18-0126
- Nasution, & Salmiah, M. (2024). Students' Perception on Using Cake Application as Learning Vocabulary. *IDEAS: Journal on English Language Teaching and Learning, Linguistics and Literature*, 12(2), 1049–1060. <https://doi.org/10.24256/ideas.v12i2.5389>
- Nasution, H. A., & Daulay, E. (2024). Evaluating Vocabulary Learning with the English With Tiffani App: A Qualitative Study of Student Perceptions and Pedagogical Outcomes. *The Journal of Educational Development*, 12(1), 32–41. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.15294/jed.v12i1.3597>
- Nety, N., Wahyuni B, A., & Nurhaeni, N. (2020). Students' self confidence in speaking English. *English Education Journal*, 6(1), 8–16. <https://doi.org/10.55340/e2j.v6i1.284>
- Octoberlina, L. R., Muslimin, A. I., & Rofiki, I. (2022). An Investigation on the Speaking Constraints and Strategies Used by College Students Studying English as EFL Learners. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 21(9), 232–249. <https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.21.9.14>
- Pavithra, K., & Gandhimathi, S. N. S. (2024). A systematic review of empirical studies incorporating English movies as pedagogic aids in English language classroom. *Frontiers in Education*, 9, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2024.1383977>
- Rabadi, R. I. (2016). Vocabulary Learning Strategies Employed by Undergraduate EFL Jordanian Students. *English Language and Literature Studies*, 6(1), 47–58. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ells.v6n1p47>
- Rahmawati, D., & Rizqiya, R. S. (2023). Anxiety effects of self-confidence in EFL speaking skill. *PROJECT: Professional Journal of English Education*, 6(4), 820–828. <https://doi.org/10.22460/project.v6i4.p820-828>

- Sari, N. N. K., Maulida, Z. P., & Salmawati, A. (2024). Pentingnya Bahasa Inggris Pada Era Globalisasi. *Karimah Tauhid*, 3(3), 3685–3692. <https://doi.org/10.30997/karimahtauhid.v3i3.12571>
- Wahyuningsih, S., & Afandi, M. (2020). Investigating English Speaking Problems: Implications for Speaking Curriculum Development in Indonesia. *European Journal of Educational Research*, 9(3), 967–977. <https://doi.org/10.12973/eu-jer.9.3.967>
- Wulandari, C., Surtikanti, M. W., & Agung, A. S. S. N. (2020). A case study of internal and external factors on the difficulties in learning English. *JOEEL: Journal of English Education and Literature*, 1(2), 43–48. <https://doi.org/10.38114/joeel.v1i2.81>
- Yan Ju, S., & YanMei, S. (2021). Examining the role of anxiety, self-efficacy, and motivation in the vocabulary performance among MFL learners. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, 10(1), 507–521. <https://doi.org/10.6007/ijarped/v10-i1/8954>
- Zuhairi, A., & Mistar, J. (2023). Vocabulary Learning Strategies and Vocabulary Mastery by Indonesian EFL Learners. *World Journal of English Language*, 13(8), 453–461. <https://doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v13n8p453>