



## The Employment of Active Learning Strategies in Teaching English: Their Impact on Enhancing Vocabulary

Ghassan Ouf Abdulrahman Ahmed Al-Rifai

Urmia University, Iran

[ghsanwf51@gmail.com](mailto:ghsanwf51@gmail.com)

### Abstract

Vocabulary mastery is crucial for English proficiency, yet traditional rote learning through sheer repetition and memorization without meaningful comprehension often lacks engagement. This study explores the impact of active learning on EFL vocabulary acquisition among 60 Iraqi secondary students in Baghdad. A quasi-experimental design compared an experimental group (n=30) using gamification, discussions, and problem-based learning (PBL) with a control group (n=30) using conventional methods. Pre- and post-tests, surveys, and interviews provided data. Quantitative analysis (t-tests,  $p < 0.001$ ) showed significant gains in the experimental group ( $d=1.41$ ). Qualitative data indicated increased student engagement and motivation due to interactive learning strategies that effectively enhance vocabulary acquisition. The research supports active learning's effectiveness in EFL contexts, offering educators in Iraq comprehensive recommendations for integrating gamified and collaborative approaches to help students acquire proficient mastery of English vocabulary specifically and develop enhanced language competencies in other skills generally.

**Keywords:** active learning strategies, vocabulary acquisition, interactive learning, gamification, teaching integrated approaches.



## توظيف استراتيجيات التعلم النشط في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية: أثرها في تنمية المفردات

غسان عوف عبد الرحمن احمد الرفاعي

جامعة اروميه، ايران

[ghsanwf51@gmail.com](mailto:ghsanwf51@gmail.com)

### المستخلص

تُعد مهارات إتقان المفردات أمراً بالغ الأهمية في إتقان اللغة الإنجليزية، إلا أن التعلم التقليدي القائم على أساليب التلقين التقليدي في اعتماد التكرار والحفظ دون فهم عميق للمعاني غالباً ما يفتقر إلى الأنشطة التفاعلية المحفزة. تستكشف هذه الدراسة أثر التعلم النشط في اكتساب مفردات اللغة الإنجليزية لدى ٦٠ طالباً عراقياً في المرحلة الثانوية من بغداد. استُخدم تصميم شبه تجريبي لمقارنة مجموعة تجريبية (ن=٣٠) تعتمد على تقنيات التلعيب والمناقشات والتعلم القائم على حل المشكلات مع مجموعة ضابطة (ن=٣٠) تستخدم الأساليب التقليدية. تم جمع البيانات بإجراء اختبارات قبلية وبعديّة، واستطلاعات للرأي، ومقابلات. أظهر التحليل الكمي (اختبارات ت، للقيمة الاحتمالية  $0.001 < \text{مكاسب كبيرة في المجموعة التجريبية (حجم الأثر} = 1.41)$ ). كما أشارت البيانات النوعية إلى زيادة تفاعل الطلاب والتحفيز نتيجة لاستراتيجيات التعلم التفاعلي التي تعزز بفعالية اكتساب المفردات. تؤكد هذه الدراسة على فعالية التعلم النشط في سياقات تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، وتقدم توصيات شاملة للمربين في العراق لدمج الأساليب القائمة على تقنيات التلعيب والفعاليات التشاركية لمساعدة الطلبة على اكتساب إتقان متقن لمفردات اللغة الإنجليزية بشكل خاص وتطوير الكفاءات اللغوية المحسنة في المهارات الأخرى بشكل عام.

### الكلمات المفتاحية

استراتيجيات التعلم النشط، اكتساب المفردات، التعلم التفاعلي، التلعيب، الأساليب التعليمية المتكاملة.

تاريخ النشر: آذار / ٢٠٢٦

تاريخ القبول: ٣٠ / ٨ / ٢٠٢٥

تاريخ الاستلام: ١٧ / ٨ / ٢٠٢٥



## 1. Introduction

English proficiency is a global currency, unlocking doors to education, career advancement, and cross-cultural dialogue. Central to this proficiency is vocabulary acquisition, the foundation for effective communication across listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Nation, 2013). However, EFL learners in Iraq frequently encounter barriers such as limited exposure to authentic language, low motivation, and cognitive overload when grappling with new words (Kassim & Said, 2020). Traditional pedagogies, often anchored in repetitive memorization and isolated word lists, have been critiqued for their inability to foster deep, lasting English vocabulary enhancement (Paredes et al., 2024).

Active learning methods, the interactive, learner-centered approach, revolutionize the teaching of English through involving students, cooperation, and real-world implementation. These approaches include educational games and discussions among peers; they stimulate curiosity and foster learning experiences that are significant (Rakha, 2025). Their use is becoming widespread all over the world, but their contributions towards vocabulary learning in Iraqi EFL contexts remain unexplored; forming a gap that this study aims to fill.

This void is addressed in this study by exploring the impact of active learning strategies on vocabulary learning for Iraqi high school EFL students in Baghdad. It addresses three research questions:

1. What is the proof that teaching new vocabulary using active learning works better than traditional approaches?
2. What is the effect of these strategies on students' motivation for learning English?
3. What do students' experiences about active learning tell us about vocabulary instruction?

The importance of the study rests on the fact that it is hoped to contribute in developing EFL pedagogy in Iraq by providing teachers with empirical and practical strategies that could have sustainable impact on EFL teaching outcomes, particularly in a context where teachers' cramming style and professional development have been challenged by the scarcity of resources and time. Through the lens of vocabulary development, it adds to the global literature on creative language pedagogy, which has implications for teachers, policy makers and researchers.



## Literature Review

### 1.1. Conceptualizing Active Learning

Active learning is a teaching philosophy that re-positions students into the role of knowledge co-constructors through critical thinking, group work and problem solving (Bonwell & Eison, 1991). Unlike passive instructional methods, such as the traditional lecture format, active learning promotes not only engagement with course content, but also interaction with colleagues and instructors to create a dynamic learning environment.

Key active learning strategies include:

1. **Collaborative Learning:** interactions among peers, such as group works that encourage mutual knowledge building (Wibowo et al., 2020).
2. **Problem-Based Learning (PBL):** The use of a language in solving real-life problems and tasks (Dzaiy et al., 2024).
3. **Gamification:** Engaging and interactive educational activities such as digital games, word puzzles, and vocabulary challenges designed to enhance English learning skills, particularly vocabulary acquisition (Hasram et al., 2020).
4. **Think-Pair-Share:** Guided conversations that promote thinking and verbalisation of thoughts (Rakha, 2025).
5. **Flipped Classroom:** Pre-class preparation introduction and in-class active work (Altalhab, 2023).

Recent research indicates the significant influence of active learning on English instruction. For instance, Wibowo et al. (2020) demonstrated that active learning contexts in (Indonesian) EFL classes helped to enhance student engagement, as they were able to experiment with the language in a safe environment. Similarly, Dzaiy et al. (2024) found that active learning methods improved critical thinking skills and participation in university environment.

### 1.2. The Pivotal Role of Vocabulary

Vocabulary knowledge is one of the pivotal elements influencing language learning, translating to learners' ability to decipher texts, express ideas and engage in communication (Alqahtsani, 2015). However, in Iraqi EFL settings, learners may encounter difficulties: lack of authentic exposure to the language, cultural differences, and motivational difficulty (Lutfiyah et al., 2022). Good word teaching has to move beyond flashcard memorization, placing words in rich contexts that have significance for those who are learning them.



Active learning techniques overcome these limitations by integrating vocabulary within interactive and multisensory activities. Paredes et al. (2024) reported that visual supports like video and interactive games led to significantly enriched vocabulary learning by stimulating the verbal and visual cognitive pathways simultaneously as suggested by Paivio's (1986) Dual Coding Theory. Kassim and Said (2020) also found out that mobile-assisted active learning tools have important role in vocabulary retention of ESL learner, showing the technology contribution in contemporary teaching.

### **Research Evidence on Active Learning and Vocabulary Development**

An increasingly common focus in the research is the relationship between active learning and vocabulary development:

Lei & Reynolds (2022) reviewed research on digital word card activities with the findings showing interactive over static methods was found to be more effective for vocabulary retention and recall.

They are also beneficial for students language acquisition, as AR has also been studied as a learning tool in language settings (e.g., Li et al., 2016). Hung and Yeh (2023) investigated AR-based games, which not only improved students vocabulary but also raised the creative-thinking level among EFL learners, highlighting the incentive of immersive technologies.

Hasram et al. (2020) who discussed primary school online games and used them to sustain student attention and support long-term retention of words.

Altalhab (2023) focused on pair work in Saudi universities, finding enhanced vocabulary recall and use as a result of doing tasks together and highlighting the social aspect of active learning.

Alamri (2022) investigated the effectiveness of flipped classroom models in an EFL context and concluded that pre-lesson vocabulary learning, then post- or in-class active learning participation, greatly increased student retention.

Badr and Faraj (2024) examined the use of gamified vocabulary apps in Kuwaiti schools which helped to reduce learning anxiety and improved English vocabulary development.

Notwithstanding these developments, there are still research voids. Many research studies center on particular tools (e.g., AR or applications) or age groups, while the overall comprehensive active learning approach in various EFL settings is largely under-researched, particularly in Iraq. Furthermore, qualitative studies



are lacking on students' lived experiences of active learning which require greater exploration of their experiences and challenges.

### **Cultural Considerations in Iraqi EFL Contexts**

In Iraq, learning of English as a foreign language (EFL) is informed by cultural and educational influences. The approach that focuses on teachers' practice is teacher-centered or traditional methods where the teacher remains the central but silent subject (Afiouni & Maroun, 2013). Active learning approaches and their focus on teamwork and independence may challenge these norms, however, they also provide opportunities to adjust compliance with cultural values such community and collaboration (Altalhab, 2023). Knowledge of these processes is necessary in order to adapt vocabulary teaching to Iraqi classrooms.

### **1.3. Theoretical Framework**

This research is theoretically framed around three complementary theories:

**Social Constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978):** Learning is a social-mediated process and that interaction with peers and instructors promotes construction of knowledge. Group discussion and peer teaching, as active learning methods, correspond with this theory by encouraging collaborative meaning making.

**Dual Coding Theory (Paivio, 1986):** Words and pictures can be easy to remember and recall when used together. The principles of gamified quiz including, multimedia presentation can also be used to maximize the enhancement of English vocabulary.

**Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985):** Motivation is experienced when the needs of learners for autonomy, competence and relatedness are fulfilled. Active learning spaces, which emphasize student choice and collaboration, meet these needs while encouraging students to become positively engaged in class.

These bodies of theory together suggest that active learning techniques will lead to improved vocabulary retention as well as increased student engagement.



## Methodology

### 1.4. Research Design

The purpose of this research is to assess the effect of active learning techniques on word learning in a quasi-experimental design. There were two groups of EFL learners in comparison, i.e. an experimental group receiving active learning treatments and a control group receiving conventional method of instruction. This design provides a mix of applied and pure quality (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), and it is appropriate for school settings.

### Participants

The participants were 60 secondary public school students in Baghdad aged 15-17 years. Participants were randomly allocated into the experimental group (n=30) or the control group (n=30). All the participants demonstrated intermediate proficiency (A2–B1, CEFR) in English as confirmed by a placement test and had similar previous English-language instruction experience. The study received ethical approval from the school administration and informed parental consent was obtained for all participating students.

### 1.5. Procedures

The intervention spanned eight weeks, with both groups receiving 90-minute English lessons twice weekly. The experimental group engaged in active learning strategies, including:

1. **Educational Games:** Vocabulary scavenger hunts, digital quizzes, and word association games to reinforce English vocabulary enhancement.
2. **Collaborative Discussions:** Think-pair-share and jigsaw activities to explore word meanings and usage.
3. **Problem-Based Learning (PBL):** Tasks such as creating travel itineraries or solving hypothetical scenarios using target vocabulary.
4. **Flipped Classroom Activities:** Pre-class video tutorials followed by in-class collaborative tasks.

The control group followed traditional methods, including:

1. Memorizing vocabulary lists.
2. Completing gap-fill and matching exercises.
3. Teacher-led explanations of word meanings and usage.

Both groups covered the same 50 target words, selected based on frequency (from the Academic Word List) and relevance to the Iraqi secondary curriculum. Lessons were delivered by trained EFL teachers to ensure consistency.



## 1.6. Data Collection Tools

**Vocabulary Tests:** pre- and post-tests assessed knowledge of the 50 target words. Tests included:

- Multiple-choice questions (e.g., selecting the correct synonym).
- Gap-fill tasks (e.g., completing sentences with appropriate words).
- Sentence-completion tasks (e.g., writing sentences using target words).

Test reliability was established using Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha=0.87$ ).

**Engagement Questionnaire:** A 5-point Likert-scale survey (15 items) measured student engagement, motivation, and perceived effectiveness of the learning methods. Items were adapted from Fredricks et al. (2004) and piloted for clarity ( $\alpha=0.82$ ).

**Semi-Structured Interviews:** Conducted with 12 students from the experimental group (6 male, 6 female) to explore their experiences with active learning. Interviews lasted 15–20 minutes and followed a guide with open-ended questions (e.g., "How did the games help you learn new words?").

## 1.7. Data Analysis

**Quantitative Analysis:** Paired-sample t-tests compared pre- and post-test scores within groups, while independent t-tests compared post-test scores between groups. ANOVA was used to explore interaction effects between group and time. Effect sizes (Cohen's d) were calculated to assess the magnitude of differences. Statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS v.25.

**Qualitative Analysis:** Interview transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Coding involved iterative cycles of open, axial, and selective coding to identify themes related to student engagement and learning experiences. Trustworthiness was ensured through member checking and peer debriefing.



## 1.8. Results

### 1.1.1. Quantitative Findings

The experimental group demonstrated significant improvement in vocabulary test scores ( $M=79.8$ ,  $SD=8.9$ ) compared to the control group ( $M=64.7$ ,  $SD=9.6$ ),  $t(58)=6.02$ ,  $p<0.001$ ,  $d=1.48$ . Pre-test scores were similar across groups (experimental:  $M=61.3$ ,  $SD=8.5$ ; control:  $M=60.9$ ,  $SD=8.8$ ), confirming baseline equivalence. ANOVA revealed a significant group-by-time interaction,  $F(1,58)=18.45$ ,  $p<0.001$ , indicating that active learning strategies drove the observed gains.

The engagement questionnaire showed higher motivation in the experimental group ( $M=4.3$ ,  $SD=0.5$ ) than the control group ( $M=3.0$ ,  $SD=0.7$ ),  $t(58)=6.89$ ,  $p<0.001$ . Students in the experimental group reported greater enjoyment, confidence, and perceived relevance of the activities.

**Table 1: Comparison of Vocabulary Test Scores**

Group	Pre-Test (M ± SD)	Post-Test (M ± SD)	p-value
Experimental	61.3 ± 8.5	79.8 ± 8.9	<0.001
Control	60.9 ± 8.8	64.7 ± 9.6	0.015

**Table 2: Engagement Questionnaire Results**

Dimension	Experimental (M ± SD)	Control (M ± SD)	p-value
Motivation	4.3 ± 0.5	3.0 ± 0.7	<0.001
Enjoyment	4.5 ± 0.4	2.8 ± 0.8	<0.001
Perceived Value	4.2 ± 0.6	3.1 ± 0.9	<0.001

### 1.9. Qualitative Findings

Thematic analysis of interview data identified four key themes:

**Heightened Engagement:** Students described active learning activities as "exciting" and "motivating," noting that games and group tasks made vocabulary acquisition enjoyable. One student remarked, "Learning words through games feels like playing, not studying."

**Social Collaboration:** Collaborative tasks fostered peer learning and support. Students valued sharing ideas, with one stating, "Working with friends helped me understand words better."

**Contextual Relevance:** PBL activities enabled students to use vocabulary in real-life scenarios, enhancing retention. A participant noted, "Writing a travel plan made the words stick in my mind."

**Reduced Anxiety:** Active learning environments alleviated fears of failure, as students felt encouraged to experiment without judgment.



## 1.10. Discussion

### Interpretation of Findings

The effects support the previous studies (Paredes et al., 2024; Hung & Yeh, 2023) about the effectiveness of the use of active learning for learning English vocabulary. The superior results for the experimental group (meaning effect size of 1.48) underscores the potential of interactive, context rich activities in further developing language proficiency. Such a claim is understandable when considering that active learning aligns with some of the key areas of Social Constructivism, Dual Coding Theory and Self-Determination Theory— collaboration, multimodal processing, and intrinsic motivation, respectively.

The engagement results support the motivational role of active learning. With the focus on autonomy and relatedness, methods such as networking and using gamified activities and peer discussions met the psychological needs of the EFL students which lowered their anxiety level and enhanced their belief in themselves (Al-Abbas & Al-Bayati, 2021). Qualitative findings also provide a better understanding of how student engagement leads to practical outcomes such as better word usage outside of the classroom.

### 1.11. Comparison with Existing Literature

These findings corroborate studies like Lei and Reynolds (2022), which found interactive tools superior for vocabulary retention, and Hasram et al. (2020), which emphasized the engagement benefits of gamified learning. However, this study extends the literature by integrating multiple active learning strategies (games, PBL, collaboration) and focusing on an Iraqi EFL context, addressing a critical research gap. The qualitative emphasis on students' lived experiences adds depth, aligning with calls for more learner-centered perspectives (Altalhab, 2023).

### 1.12. Cultural and Contextual Implications

In Iraq, where teacher-centered pedagogies dominate due to resource constraints and traditional educational norms, active learning challenges conventional practices but resonates with cultural values of community and cooperation. The success of collaborative tasks suggests that active learning can be adapted to Iraqi classrooms, provided teachers are trained to navigate cultural and logistical challenges (Al-Abbas & Al-Bayati, 2021). This study thus offers a blueprint for culturally responsive vocabulary teaching in Iraq.



### 1.13. Educational Implications

To leverage active learning strategies, Iraqi educators are to:

- **Incorporate Gamification:** Use digital quizzes, word puzzles, and role-plays to make vocabulary acquisition engaging.
- **Foster Collaboration:** Design group projects and peer discussions to promote shared learning.
- **Implement PBL:** Create tasks that connect vocabulary to real-world applications, such as writing letters or solving community issues.
- **Adopt Flipped Classrooms:** Encourage pre-class preparation to maximize in-class interaction.
- **Provide Teacher Training:** Equip educators with skills to implement active learning, addressing barriers like resource constraints (Önalán & Kurt, 2020). Policymakers in Iraq should support these efforts through curriculum reforms and professional development programs, ensuring scalability across EFL settings.

### 1.14. Limitations

The study's limitations include its modest sample size (N=60) and single-context setting in Baghdad, which may limit generalizability to other Iraqi regions. The eight-week duration, while robust, may not capture long-term retention. Additionally, teacher variability and resource availability could influence outcomes, though efforts were made to standardize instruction.

### 1.15. Future Directions

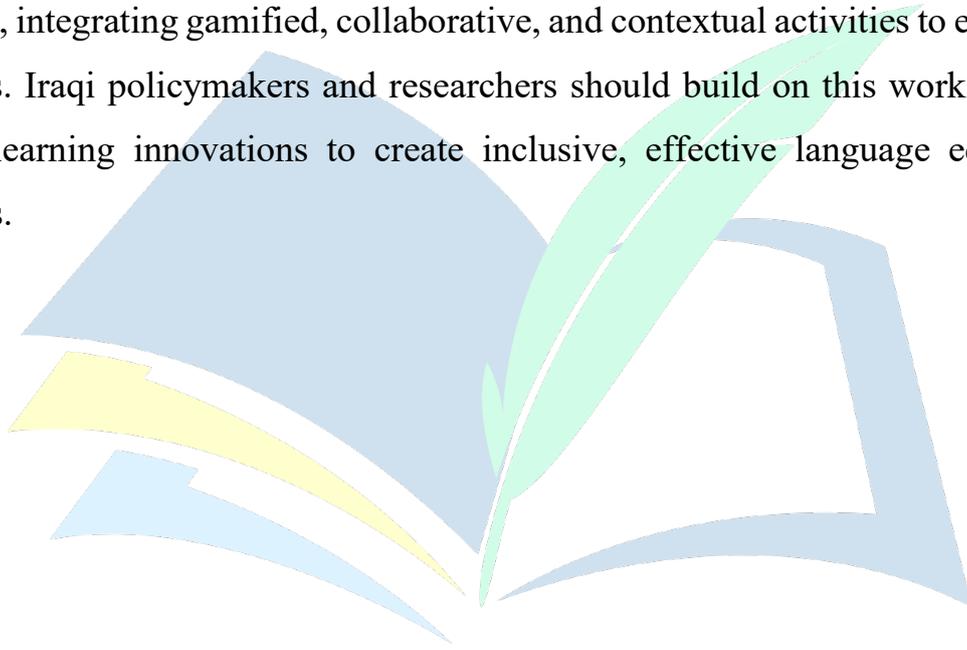
Future research is recommended to explore:

- The efficacy of specific active learning strategies (e.g., AR vs. PBL) across diverse age groups and proficiency levels in Iraq.
- The role of cultural and gender dynamics in shaping responses to active learning in Iraqi contexts.
- Longitudinal studies to assess the durability of vocabulary gains and their impact on overall language proficiency.
- The integration of emerging technologies, such as AI-driven vocabulary apps, within active learning frameworks.



## 1.16. Conclusion

This study underscores the transformative potential of active learning strategies in enhancing English vocabulary acquisition among Iraqi EFL learners. By outperforming traditional methods in both performance and student engagement, these strategies offer a powerful antidote to the challenges of vocabulary teaching. The findings, grounded in robust quantitative and qualitative data, illuminate how interactive, student-centered approaches can foster linguistic competence and confidence, particularly in Iraqi EFL contexts. Educators are urged to embrace active learning as a cornerstone of teaching English, integrating gamified, collaborative, and contextual activities to empower learners. Iraqi policymakers and researchers should build on this work, scaling active learning innovations to create inclusive, effective language education systems.





### 1.17. References

1. Al-Abbas, L. S., & Al-Bayati, W. A. (2021). Challenges of teaching English in Iraqi secondary schools: Teachers' perspectives. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 12(18), 45–53.
2. Alamri, M. M. (2022). The effectiveness of flipped classroom strategy in enhancing vocabulary acquisition among Saudi EFL learners. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 13(4), 789–797.
3. Alqahtani, M. (2015). The importance of vocabulary in language learning and how to be taught. *International Journal of Teaching and Education*, 3(3), 21–34.
4. Alrabai, F. (2021). The influence of teacher enthusiasm on EFL learners' motivation in the Saudi context. *Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 28(2), 167–185.
5. Altalhab, S. (2023). Vocabulary learning strategies used by Saudi university students in pair work. *International Journal of Education & Literacy Studies*, 11(1), 44–49.
6. Alzahrani, M. (2021). Mobile-assisted language learning: Its impact on vocabulary acquisition in Saudi EFL classrooms. *International Journal of Mobile Learning and Organisation*, 15(3), 298–315.
7. Badr, A., & Faraj, M. (2024). Gamified vocabulary learning apps: Impact on Kuwaiti EFL students' engagement and anxiety. *Education and Information Technologies*, 29(3), 245–260.
8. Bonwell, C. C., & Eison, J. A. (1991). *Active learning: Creating excitement in the classroom*. ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No. 1. George Washington University.
9. Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101.
10. Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.
11. Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1985). *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior*. Springer.
12. Dzaiy, A., et al. (2024). The use of active learning strategies to foster effective teaching in higher education institutions. *Zanco Journal of Human Sciences*, 28(1), 140–157.
13. Farooq, M. S., & Rahimi, M. (2023). Vocabulary learning through digital storytelling in EFL contexts. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 36(4), 567–589.
14. Fredricks, J. A., Blumenfeld, P. C., & Paris, A. H. (2004). School engagement: Potential of the concept, state of the evidence. *Review of Educational Research*, 74(1), 59–109.
15. Hadi, M. S., & Siddiqui, M. A. (2022). Collaborative learning in EFL vocabulary instruction: A case study in Pakistan. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 23(2), 245–258.
16. Hasram, S., Arif, F., Nasir, M., Mohamad, M., Daud, M., Rahman, M., & Mohammad, W. (2020). Online games for primary school vocabulary teaching and learning: A literature review. *Creative Education*, 11, 2327–2336.
17. Hung, H. T., & Yeh, H. C. (2023). Augmented-reality-enhanced game-based learning in flipped English classrooms: Effects on students' creative thinking and vocabulary acquisition. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 39, 1786–1800.
18. Kassim, H. M., & Said, N. E. M. (2020). The integration of mobile learning among ESL teachers to enhance vocabulary learning. *Education Sciences*, 10(12), 1–15.



19. Khan, R., & Ali, M. (2024). Problem-based learning in EFL vocabulary instruction: Effects on retention and motivation. *Language Teaching Research*, 28(1), 89–107.
20. Lei, Y., & Reynolds, B. (2022). Learning English vocabulary from word cards: A research synthesis. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13.
21. Lutfiyah, N., Nuraeningsih, N., & Rusiana, R. (2022). The obstacles in learning vocabulary of EFL students. *Prominent*, 5(2), 11–125.
22. Nation, I. S. P. (2013). *Learning vocabulary in another language* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
23. Önalın, O., & Kurt, G. (2020). Teacher training for effective EAP instruction: A case study. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 47.
24. Paivio, A. (1986). *Mental representations: A dual coding approach*. Oxford University Press.
25. Paredes, C. D. T., Alvarado, C. I. L., & Jarrın, E. A. C. (2024). The impact of effective vocabulary learning strategies in English learners to improve their vocabulary acquisition. *South Florida Journal of Development*, 5(9), e4430.
26. Prince, M. (2004). Does active learning work? A review of the research. *Journal of Engineering Education*, 93(3), 223–231.
27. Rakha, A. H. (2025). Promoting online teaching through active learning strategies: Applications and innovations. *Frontiers in Education*, 10, 1546208.
28. Salem, A. A., & Alshammari, M. (2023). Gamification in Saudi EFL classrooms: Opportunities and challenges. *Education and Information Technologies*, 28(6), 1453–1470.
29. Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.
30. Wibowo, A. Y., et al. (2020). The strategies in building an active learning environment in English classroom: Pre-service teachers' perceptions. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 8(12A), 7583–7595.
31. Yusuf, N., & Al-Bogami, S. (2022). Flipped classroom and vocabulary acquisition: A study in Qatari EFL contexts. *Journal of Second Language Acquisition and Teaching*, 29, 102–118.