

Evaluating the Impact of Senior Five Learners' English Vocabulary Knowledge on their English-Speaking Skills in Three Selected Schools in Gakenke District, Rwanda

Jonas Ndayisaba¹
Patrick Ujwiga Anguru²
Jean Paul Ngoboka³

¹jonasndayisaba1@gmail.com (+250784427639)

²pujwiguru2022@gmail.com

³jeannngoboka@gmail.com

^{1,2,3}University of Rwanda-College of Education, Rwanda

ABSTRACT

Empirical studies have evidenced the correlation between vocabulary knowledge and English-speaking skills in various English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts but research is scarce in rural Rwandan schools. The present study evaluated the impact of senior five (S5) learners' vocabulary knowledge on developing their English-speaking skills in three selected schools in the Gakenke District in Rwanda. The current study was guided by Harmer's and Bygate's vocabulary knowledge hypothesis and communicative competence theories for developing speaking proficiency. A quantitative descriptive research design was employed and cluster sampling was used to select 90 S5 learners from 116 who made the target population. A structured questionnaire was administered to assess the current status of vocabulary knowledge and English-speaking skills and the impact of vocabulary knowledge on English-speaking skills. Descriptive statistics was used for data analysis using MS Excel. Key findings revealed that 73.3% of learners regularly look up new vocabulary, and 100% reported having insufficient vocabulary. Additionally, 84.44% indicated that their speaking proficiency was low to moderate. Despite this low vocabulary knowledge, 95.56% of learners acknowledged that vocabulary enhances speaking skills. However, only 15.5% reported using new vocabulary frequently. Many learners (81.11%) felt that vocabulary development improved their self-expression, and 54.44% noted increased confidence in speaking English. Motivation was the highest-ranked factor influencing speaking skill development ($M=4.40$, $SD=0.85$), while assessment ranked lowest ($M=2.96$, $SD=0.97$). The study concluded that S5 learners in the selected schools have insufficient vocabulary knowledge to achieve the required level of speaking proficiency. The study recommended reinforcing vocabulary acquisition instructions and opportunities for learners to practice communicative English and assigns that future work should emphasize formal tests that examine English proficiency in correlational and experimental studies.

Keywords: EFL, English-Speaking Skills, Vocabulary Knowledge

I. INTRODUCTION

English has been a leading lingua franca in today's globalized society, serving as a primary conduit for communication across diverse cultural and linguistic contexts. It was estimated that there are 1.5 billion people across the world who speak English as their second language (ESL) or as a foreign language (EFL) while 400 million speak it natively (Ly, 2024). These figures show that around a quarter of the world's population speaks English, underscoring the importance of developing English proficiency. Particularly in EFL educational contexts, English proficiency is significant in terms of academic, professional, and social success. Moreover, according to the report published by the British Council, "English is the go-to language across the region for success in education, employment and communication", in Sub-Saharan Africa (Patel et al., 2023, p. 12), English is viewed as a pillar of academic success.

Nevertheless, continuous research outputs indicate that EFL learners grapple with significant challenges in attaining adequate English proficiency in terms of fluency level and accuracy in speaking. For example, it is reported that EFL learners exhibit English-speaking anxiety (Alazeer & Ahmed, 2023; Daflizar, 2024). Speaking anxiety in English includes EFL learners' fear and panic in public speaking, which can lead to their poor performance in communication while using the English language, which has been linked to EFL learners' passiveness in speaking English, as reported by Leyale (2023).

Other studies also indicate that EFL learners struggle with English word pronunciation while speaking (Mohammed & Idris, 2020; Muradi & Amarkhil, 2024). As highlighted by these studies, the lack of proper pronunciation may originate from EFL learners' weak oral vocabulary knowledge. Further, EFL learners may have difficulty using English polysemous words in unusual contexts compared to proficient English speakers (Alnamer, 2017, p. 112). This indicates the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and speaking skills in terms of pronunciation for

EFL learners. Many studies across the world have reported that developing speaking skills in English for EFL learners requires adequate vocabulary knowledge (Fajaryani et al., 2023; Hibatullah, 2019; Khan et al., 2018; Ratnasari, 2020).

For speaking skills development, a solid vocabulary repertoire is crucial for students to articulate thoughts and engage in meaningful conversations while conveying messages with clarity and precision (Idayani et al., 2022). Correspondingly, studies have identified various components of vocabulary knowledge and their specific impacts on the diverse speaking skills of EFL learners. However, the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and speaking skills in English remains varied across different contexts. This diversity makes it challenging for researchers to generalize findings without considering the unique aspects of each EFL context. Referencing specific studied contexts is beneficial for researchers, as it helps them understand similarities and differences that can inform their work. Given the dynamic nature of educational settings, it is crucial to conduct studies on vocabulary knowledge and speaking skills in any particular EFL context that becomes the beneficial interest of the researcher.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Empirical studies globally have consistently demonstrated a strong positive correlation between EFL learners' vocabulary knowledge and their English-speaking skills (Ani & Sinaga, 2021; Bangun & Simanjuntak, 2022; Zaitun et al., 2021). This has prompted the development of teaching interventions focused on effective vocabulary learning to enhance speaking skills. However, the diversity of educational contexts presents different perspectives on this relationship (Miralpeix & Muñoz, 2018; Niyazi & Khoshshima, 2022; Uchihara & Saito, 2019).

EFL learners' English-speaking difficulties in the Rwandan educational context have been uncovered by some few studies including Uwizeyimana (2018) and Uwababyeyi et al. (2021), who found out that English-speaking difficulties still exist while other studies identified problems emanating from the influence of the mother tongue on English-speaking (Ntabwoba & Sikubwabo, 2024). These researchers highlighted that the language used in EFL learners' families in Rwanda influences their speaking proficiency in English. Although the studies focused on investigating speaking proficiency in English in Rwanda, there has been a lack of detailed information about the relationship between secondary school students' vocabulary knowledge and their speaking skills in English, particularly in rural areas, which this paper endeavoured to reveal for covering the gap between learner's speaking ability and their vocabulary knowledge.

Therefore, the present study aimed to evaluate the impact of senior five (S5) learners' vocabulary knowledge on developing their English-speaking skills at three selected schools in Gakenke District, Rwanda. More specifically, the interest was to find more details about the relationship between S5 learners' vocabulary knowledge and their English-speaking skills given that other studies focused on English proficiency challenges in Rwanda.

1.2 Research Objectives

This study had the following specific objectives for evaluating the impact of senior five (S5) learners' vocabulary knowledge on developing their English-speaking skills at three selected schools in Gakenke District, Rwanda:

- i. To assess the current status of S5 learners' vocabulary knowledge and speaking skills in English at three selected schools in Gakenke District.
- ii. To examine the extent to which S5 learners' vocabulary knowledge impacts the development of their English-speaking skills at three selected schools in the Gakenke District.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Dimensions of Vocabulary Knowledge

This section explains that English vocabulary knowledge, or lexical knowledge, encompasses the understanding of the meanings, forms, and usage of words across different contexts, which is fruitful for language comprehension and communication. It discusses two key aspects of vocabulary knowledge: breadth (the number of words a learner already knows) and depth (how well these words are understood, including their associations and frequency). Researchers like Caro and Mendinueta (2017, pp. 208–209) emphasize that vocabulary knowledge is crucial for EFL learners, who need to know between 4,000 to 9,000 word families to achieve significant lexical coverage in English. As described in Schmitt's (2014) review, the number of words known is defined as the breadth of vocabulary knowledge whereas how well words are known is described as the depth of vocabulary knowledge. According to Stoeckel et al. (2021, p. 4), lexical knowledge entails the size of English words that one knows, knowledge of specific word bands, and frequency for certain contexts in which English is used. In the study by Caro and Mendinueta (2017, p. 208), English vocabulary knowledge is similarly viewed as lexical knowledge in terms of the word's linguistic knowledge and knowledge of the word's syntactic and semantic relationships with other words in English.

Dagnaw (2023, p. 12), presents a three-dimensional model for vocabulary knowledge, taking into account breadth, fluency, and depth, where the concept of lexical space is represented. The researcher sought to indicate a more inclusive definition of vocabulary knowledge with optimum resemblance to lexical knowledge while considering a three-dimensional (3D) linguistic function. This means that vocabulary knowledge V_k , can be defined using a mathematical expression as indicated by Equation (1), in which the variables relate to knowing the English word in terms of breadth (b), fluency (f), and depth (d).

$$V_k = V_k(b, f, d) \dots\dots\dots(1)$$

In these 3 dimensions associated with word knowledge, the ability and breadth, are concerned with the number of English words known by the speaker, as also observed by Schmitt (2014). As it is reported in the study aiming to find the answer to the question of how much vocabulary is needed to use English (vocabulary size), it was found that EFL learners are required to know 4000 of the most frequent word families and proper nouns to reach 95% of lexical coverage and between 8000-9000 up to 98% of lexical coverage (Schmitt et al., 2017, pp. 216–217). These figures show that learners will differ in terms of their breadth of vocabulary knowledge, implying that there will be diverse patterns of EFL vocabulary knowledge across different contexts, levels of education, and age.

Based on Equation (1), the vocabulary knowledge of EFL learners depends on the depth at which they know English words. As it is described by different scholars in Qian’s (1998, pp. 24–25) study, Figure 1 indicates different aspects characterizing the depth of English word knowledge for EFL learners:

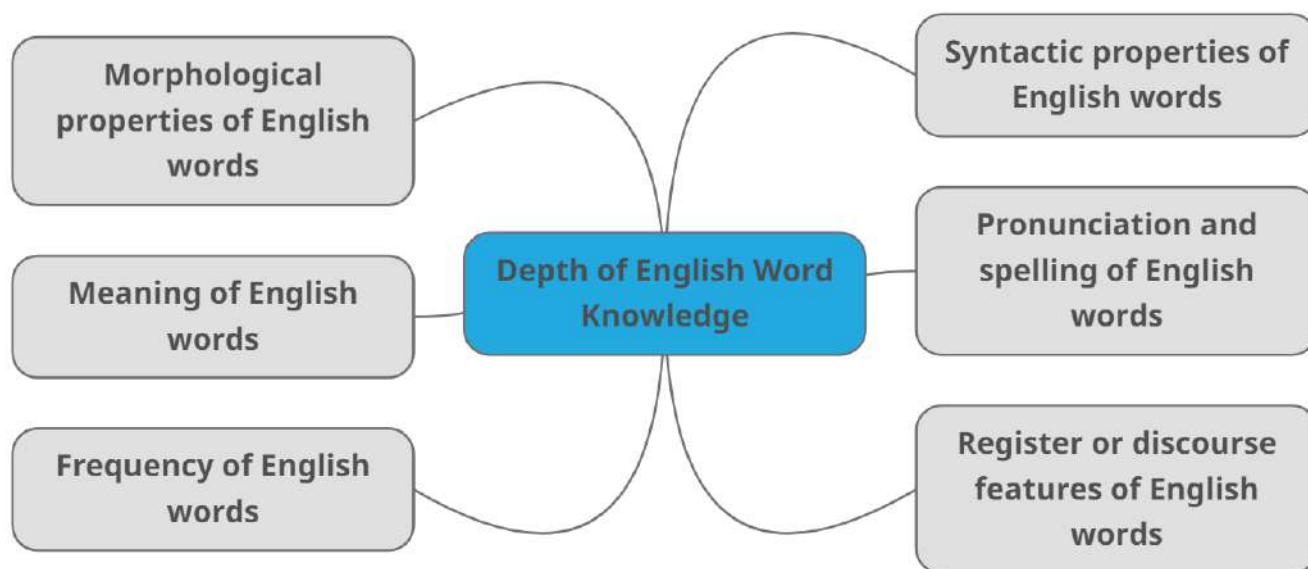


Figure 1
The Depth of English Word Knowledge as one Dimension of Vocabulary Knowledge

Meaningful vocabulary learning should foster learners’ awareness of morphological structures in English, which cover word inflection, derivation, and compounding (Haomin & Biliü, 2017, p. 44). It is further stressed that derivational morphology and compounding morphology are fundamental to generating the meanings of new words for oral and written communication. On the other hand, syntactic aspects of word knowledge require learners to know English words’ appropriate positions and collocational relations in a sentence (Qian, 1998). In EFL contexts, mastering vocabulary requires understanding word frequency to prioritize commonly used words, grasping register features to use words appropriately in different social contexts, and knowing precise meanings to ensure accurate communication.

If the vocabulary knowledge of EFL learners is only viewed in terms of breadth and depth, the framework of lexical knowledge is not complete, as is reported in Dagnaw’s (2023, p. 12). Their fluency is another important dimension and this can be measured by focusing on learners’ ability to use English words, and this is referred to as productive vocabulary knowledge (Dagnaw, 2023; Faraj, 2015; Heidari, 2019; Kilic, 2019; Rafique et al., 2023). As the mental lexicon of learners differs, the difference can be manifested through the lexical availability and the word frequency of EFL learners (Akbarian et al., 2020). Thus, a comprehensive framework of vocabulary knowledge for EFL learners must cover not only breadth and depth but also the ability to use vocabulary fluently in writing and speaking.

2.1.2 Development of EFL Learners' English-Speaking Skills

EFL learners' English-speaking skills can be understood using different frameworks. For example, Harmer's (2001) the theory explaining that speaking fluency entails the learner's ability to combine the knowledge of both language features and the accuracy of using the language on the spot is reported by (Macías et al., 2015, p. 38). Based on Harmer's concept, the speaking skills acquired by EFL learners in different contexts should be founded on their understanding of English language features. This reflects the concept of lexical space where learners need to have a sufficient number of English words (vocabulary breadth), have a deep understanding of the English words (vocabulary depth), and then be able to use the words with accuracy in different contexts (fluency).

In the development of EFL for learners, English-speaking skills involve the methods and paradigms used in learning the language up to their desired level. In line with that, the current study was guided by Harmer's and Bygate's vocabulary knowledge hypothesis highlighted as essential for developing speaking proficiency and communicative competence theories. Bygate's work emphasized the importance of vocabulary knowledge in developing speaking skills, showing that learners require vocabulary knowledge to achieve fluency in English for effective real-world communication, in line with communicative competence theory. The different frameworks are used to practice and develop EFL learners' English-speaking skills—for example, Aprilia et al. (2023) emphasizes the utilization of Harmer's Engage-Study-Activate (ESA) method, which is said to be effective in enhancing EFL learners' speaking proficiency. As was reported in the study about EFL high school learners' difficulties in English-speaking (Sabariyanto, 2021, p. 45), Harmer's theory suggests that overcoming speaking difficulties requires adequate learners' preparation, repetition, and mandatory participation in big or small group discussions. Moreover; the effectiveness of the ESA model contributes to enhancing EFL language proficiency, by emphasizing structured engagement and active engagement of students in real-life environments of speaking English.

On the other hand, Bygate's (1998) theory of speaking skills is also concerned with fluency but places a significant focus on interaction skills. In this theory, the development of speaking skills to achieve a communication purpose is aligned with proficiency and knowledge of language vocabulary. Comparatively, Bygate's theory also emphasizes the importance of fluency but interaction skills are given much value. They include managing conversations and using language appropriately in social contexts. The literature indicates that there are different EFL contexts across the world. For example, some EFL learners have English as a medium of instruction at all levels of education while others have it as a learning subject only. The former context may allow EFL learners to be more fluent in the academic context than the latter. Culture may also be a context-based factor in English fluency.

While Harmer's theory underscores the balance between fluency and accuracy, Bygate's framework includes a broader view of interaction skills, highlighting the pragmatic aspects of language use (Aprilia et al., 2023). Both theories acknowledge the critical role of vocabulary complementing Harmer's approach aligning vocabulary acquisition directly with achieving fluency and accuracy. On the other hand, Bygate links it to both foundational motor-perceptive skills and higher-level interaction skills. Thus, while both frameworks address key aspects of speaking, Harmer's theory focuses more on the dichotomy of fluency and accuracy than Bygate, who provides a more holistic view encompassing both mechanical and social dimensions of speaking.

For understanding the phenomenon of the impact of S5 learners' vocabulary knowledge on the development of their English-speaking skills, the present study was guided by both Harmer's ideas of linking the knowledge of language features and its use on the spot and Bygate's framework of interaction environments as the foundation of speaking-skills development. It is thought that vocabulary acquisition and knowledge may be improved through communicative experiential environments, which turns out to be an opportunity for the development of speaking skills.

2.2. Empirical Review

2.2.1 Correlation between EFL Learners' Vocabulary Knowledge and their English-Speaking Skills

Various research studies have investigated the relationship between EFL learners' vocabulary knowledge and their English-speaking skills development. For example, in the study that focused on vocabulary knowledge as a predictor of EFL learners' performance in writing and speaking, multiple regression analysis showed that vocabulary knowledge had a 26% variance in writing performance and a 17% variance in speaking performance (Kilic, 2019), revealing a significant correlation between vocabulary knowledge and English speaking skills. As detailed in this study, receptive vocabulary size entails the ability to understand words while reading or listening to a second language (L2) speaker. On the other hand, productive vocabulary size is linked to the mastery of using words in speech or writing. The common understanding of this means that developing English speaking skills for EFL learners requires leveraging learners' vocabulary knowledge. Other studies have examined the correlation between vocabulary knowledge and speaking skills in EFL contexts. In the study that they conducted on 8th-grade high school students in Indonesia, Zaitun et al. (2021) found a strong correlation ($r = 0.703$) between students' vocabulary mastery and speaking ability. In this study, 73.34% were in the classifications of fair and good for vocabulary mastery whereas 83.33% were classified as fair and good regarding their speaking skills. Moreover, very similar findings were found for SMPN 5 Padangsidempuan

where the coefficient of correlation between 8th-grade students' vocabulary mastery and speaking mastery was 0.737 (Ani & Sinaga, 2021) and in the research study carried out by Rafique et al. (2023), where a strong correlation ($r = 0.784$) was identified between undergraduate students' speaking performance the size of their receptive and productive vocabulary, as well as the depth of their vocabulary knowledge. These three studies indicate a strong association between EFL learners' vocabulary knowledge and their English-speaking skills. They inform educators in EFL contexts that equipping students with appropriate vocabulary knowledge can help them develop their English-speaking skills.

In a receptive vocabulary size test conducted on ten-word frequency levels for 42 university students in Spain, it was found that vocabulary size explains language proficiency to a large extent (Miralpeix & Muñoz, 2018). This was revealed by a strong correlation of 0.618 between vocabulary size and general EFL proficiency. However, in the same study, this correlation in specific four language skills was moderate (writing and reading) and low (speaking and listening). Based on this research study, it can be seen that there was a weak relationship between vocabulary size and students' ability to speak English. Similarly, another research study was carried out by Uchihara and Clenton. (2020) on international students in the UK, revealed other similar traits in vocabulary size and (L2) speaking skills. For them, learners with large vocabulary sizes did not necessarily produce lexically sophisticated L2 words during speech. These weak correlations between vocabulary size and speaking and writing skills in some contexts inform us that we must still investigate this relationship in all diverse contexts.

2.2.2 Impact of EFL Learners' Vocabulary Knowledge on the Development of their English-Speaking Skills

Some empirical studies that focused on particular components of either vocabulary knowledge or speaking skills in English have successively shown that adequate English vocabulary knowledge impacts the development of EFL learners' speaking skills. For example, a meta-analysis of empirical studies between 2017 and 2022, focusing on the correlation between students' sufficient academic vocabulary and English-speaking ability found that having adequate academic vocabulary improves English-speaking skills (Bangun & Simanjuntak, 2022). One of the outcomes of this study is the development of EFL learners' English-speaking skills, influenced by teachers' techniques in enhancing their students' understanding and knowledge of using the right words or phrases.

Furthermore, other studies have shown that solid receptive vocabulary knowledge enables learners to grasp the context and meaning of conversations, thus allowing them to respond more appropriately and accurately in spoken interactions (Miralpeix & Muñoz, 2018; Nation, 2013). This foundational knowledge is crucial as it provides learners with the necessary lexical resources to comprehend spoken language, and influences their ability to produce coherent and fluent speech. Furthermore, EFL learners' transition of lexical knowledge from receptive to productive mode has been manifested in learners' willingness to communicate (Heidari, 2019). This study evidences that the EFL learners' confidence to communicate in English, including speaking, has some roots in receptive vocabulary knowledge.

Additionally, receptive vocabulary knowledge aids in developing other critical communicative language skills such as pronunciation, syntax, and pragmatic competence. For example, in the study aimed to verify the correlation between receptive vocabulary knowledge, syntactic awareness, and single-word orthographic writing tests for 3rd-grade learners, it was concluded that the acquisition and comprehension of receptive vocabulary enable learners to handle grammatical structures associated with syntactic awareness (Barbosa & Silva, 2020). In another study, the depth of receptive vocabulary knowledge was determined to be the most powerful predictor of pragmatic knowledge for Iranian upper and intermediate EFL learners (Niyazi & Khoshshima, 2022). Pragmatic competence is also at the heart of achieving communicational goals, the results in the later study indicated how strongly receptive vocabulary knowledge affects the EFL learners' communication skills. It is not logical enough to speak of vocabulary knowledge without considering the lexis when focusing on EFL contexts. Lexical richness pertains to the variety and complexity of used vocabulary by English speakers, as it contributes to developing both spoken and written English skills for EFL learners. A lexically rich vocabulary enables learners to express ideas more precisely and creatively, without frustration, leading to more engaging and effective communication (Caro & Mendinueta, 2017). Lexical richness, or the diversity and sophistication of vocabulary used, is a key indicator of speaking quality. Crossley and Skalicky (2019) conducted a study examining lexical development in second-language learners and found that learners with higher lexical richness produce more coherent and engaging spoken language. This lexical richness was associated with better overall speaking performance.

Moreover, lexical richness is closely associated with improved language proficiency and communicative competence. EFL learners with a rich vocabulary are better equipped to handle diverse communicative situations, from casual conversations to formal presentations. This extensive vocabulary base allows them to select precise words, avoid repetition, and use varied expressions. Furthermore, a higher degree of lexical richness often correlates with greater fluency, as learners can draw on a broad range of vocabulary to articulate their thoughts smoothly and spontaneously. The findings of the study conducted by Heidari (2019) concluded that being a good communicator in English requires a strong command of lexical knowledge. Consequently, fostering lexical knowledge should be the primary focus in EFL instruction, as it directly impacts learners' ability to communicate clearly and effectively in spoken English.

Speaking speed and speech tempo also determine oral communication proficiency in EFL contexts. As highlighted in the study by Miralpeix and Muñoz (2018), there is a positive correlation between vocabulary size and speaking speed among EFL learners, suggesting that adequate lexical knowledge facilitates faster speech production. Similarly, Yazdeli et al. (2016) showed that speaking fluency entails phonation-based temporal measures and pause-based temporal measures. Both Enhanced vocabulary knowledge and lexical fluency not only facilitate quicker retrieval of words instead, they reduce the frequency and length of pauses, leading to smoother and faster speech. This section highlights that vocabulary knowledge is dynamic and varieties of it based on learners' context, education, and age with more comprehensive vocabulary knowledge leading them to better English proficiency.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design and Study Setting

This study used a quantitative descriptive research design to gather quantitative data on the influence of vocabulary knowledge on the English-speaking skills of Senior five (S5) learners. Generally, secondary schools' English subject focuses on improving learners' English proficiency to foster academic and socio-economic success in Rwanda and abroad. The targeted schools follow the national education framework of a competence-based curriculum (CBC), in which the learning outcomes are what learners can do.

3.2 Sample and Data Collection

The target population for the present study was composed of one hundred and sixteen (116) learners enrolled in senior five, within the options having literature in English among the main subjects, at three (3) selected schools in the Gakenke District in the academic year of 2023/2024. The Taro Yamane formula was used to determine the sample size based on the research design and population size where The Yamane formula is expressed as $n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$. Here n stands for the sample size, N stands for the population size and e stands for the estimated sampling error, 0.05 in the present study. Thus, the sample size in the present study was estimated to be $n = 90$. Further, cluster sampling was followed to recruit 90 S5 learners who actively participated in the study.

Quantitative data was collected using a structured questionnaire and was administered to recruited S5 learners, in the paper-pencil format. This questionnaire was composed of 7 closed-ended items. Item 1 was a yes/no question that intended to know the number of S5 learners who take particular time to look up difficult or new English vocabulary in different resources. Item 2 focused on investigating the extent to which S5 learners possess English vocabulary whereas item 3 was the question about the S5 learners' level of expressing themselves through English speaking. These three items were intended to be related to the evaluation of S5 learners' current status of vocabulary knowledge and English-speaking skills.

The other four items were the questions intended to examine the extent to which S5 learners' vocabulary knowledge impacts the development of their English-speaking skills. Question 4 asked the frequency at which S5 learners use new vocabulary in spoken English. On the other hand, question 5 asked these learners their level of agreement about the statement that their English vocabulary knowledge improves their English-speaking skills. In this case, a 5-point Likert scale was used.

Further, in question 6, S5 learners had to select more than one area in which vocabulary knowledge improves their English-speaking skills. This part was completed by question 7 which targeted S5 learners' perceived vocabulary-based factors affecting their English-speaking skills. Question 7 was also formed in the 5-point Likert scale format and students had to rate each of six (6) prescribed potential factors.

3.3 Data Processing and Analysis Techniques

The questionnaires were distributed and filled between 27th November and 1st December 2023, at the selected schools in Gakenke District. The identification of schools and S5 learners was kept anonymous throughout the whole data processing. Subsequently, a tally method of counting was used to record the number of responses in each category. These numbers were carefully imported into MS Excel for further calculations and storage. Quantitative data analysis involved the calculation of percentages, arithmetic means, and standard deviations using built-in functions in MS Excel.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to assess the impact of senior five (S5) learners' vocabulary knowledge on developing their English-speaking skills at three selected schools in the Gakenke District. It intended to answer the following research questions: 1) What is the current status of S5 learners' vocabulary knowledge and speaking skills in English at three selected schools in the Gakenke District? 2) To what extent does S5 learners' vocabulary knowledge impact the development of their English-speaking skills at three selected schools in the Gakenke District? The corresponding findings and their interpretation are presented in the next sections.

4.1 Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1

Participation Rate

Schools	Sampled	Responded	Response rate (%)
School 1	35	35	100%
School 2	35	35	100%
School 3	20	20	100%
Total	90	90	100%

Table 1 indicates the response rate in percentage. As it is shown, all the distributed questionnaires to S5 learners at all three selected schools in Gakenke District were returned to the researcher. This reveals the commitment of S5 learners to voluntarily participate in the study and the support provided by the leaders during the research study.

4.1.1 Current Status of S5 Learners' Vocabulary Knowledge and English-Speaking Skills

In assessing the current status of S5 learners' vocabulary knowledge and English-speaking skills, the information provided in Tables 2, 3, and 4, reveals the main findings.

Table 2

Respondents who take a Particular Time to Look Up Vocabulary in the Dictionary and Learn others from School Resources

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	66	73.3%
No	24	26.7%
Total	90	100.0%

At the outset; Table 2 shows the number of learners who dedicate their time to learning vocabulary to upgrade their vocabulary knowledge in English. In this case, 73.3 % of respondents answered "Yes", whereas 26% did not have this dedication. These figures indicate that many S5 learners are eager to increase their English vocabulary knowledge, but some are not motivated.

Further, learners were asked to rank their perceived vocabulary knowledge as sufficient, insufficient, minimal, or lack of vocabulary. Data in Table 3 show the extent to which students are familiar with their English vocabulary knowledge.

Table 3

The Extent to which S5 Learners Possess English Vocabulary Knowledge

Respondents' level of knowing variables	Frequency	%
Sufficient vocabulary	0	0.00 %
Insufficient vocabulary	66	73.33 %
Minimal vocabulary	24	26.67%
Lack of vocabulary	0	0.00 %
Total	90	100%

As indicated in Table 3, there is no learner classified in the sufficient vocabulary category or in the category of lacking vocabulary, recording a percentage of 0.00% in both cases. However, more than half of respondents (73.33%) put themselves in the category of insufficient vocabulary whereas 26.67% see them as having minimal vocabulary knowledge in English. A sizable majority of learners indicated that they have a general understanding of

vocabulary; however, they highlighted that it is not adequate for their needs. On the other hand, a smaller group exhibited a moderate degree of confidence in their English vocabulary package. This distribution highlights how widely S5 learners acknowledge the differences in their vocabulary knowledge. Table 4 shows how the self-reported expressive English language competency levels of S5 learners are distributed.

Table 4

Level at which S5 Learners Reported that they Expressively Speak English

Level of expressive ability in English	Frequency	Percentage
Fluently excellent	1	1.11%
Minimal good	13	14.45 %
Moderate	38	42.22%
Low	38	42.22%
Total	90	100%

The data in Table 4 show that a small percentage of learners (1.11%), reported having fluent, excellent English-speaking skills, whereas another proportion of 14.45% saw themselves as having minimal good English proficiency. Additionally, a significant portion of learners equivalent to 42.22%, reported having intermediate proficiency, while an equal percentage reported having low proficiency. This noteworthy distribution highlights a common obstacle for S5 students as they strive to reach a high level of expressive English proficiency. Furthermore, the data in Table 4 show that most S5 learners acknowledge having moderate to low proficiency levels in speaking English, at a total of 84.44%. This figure highlights how common it is for these learners to struggle with English language fluency speaking. It shows that S5 learners at three selected schools in Gakenke are still developing their English-speaking skills.

4.1.2 Impact of S5 Learners' Vocabulary Knowledge on Developing their English-Speaking Skills

During the present study, four (4) items have been used to ask about the impact of S5 learners' vocabulary knowledge which they usually apply in developing their English-speaking skills. To find out how often learners use vocabulary in spoken English, one survey question was given to collect data on their self-assessment on how learners frequently use vocabulary for English speaking. To this end, Table 5 presents the results from 90 respondents.

Table 5

The Rate at which S5 Learners Use New Vocabulary in Spoken English Frequently

Frequency of using vocabularies in spoken English	Frequency	Percentage
Everyday	10	11.1%
Some time	58	64.4 %
Every time	4	4.4%
Once a week	5	5.5%
When the teacher gives us work to discuss	13	14.4 %
Total	90	100.0%

Remarkably, 4.4% of learners mentioned that they spoke English regularly during class hours, compared to 11.1% of learners who said they do it frequently though they did not confirm if it was every time. Furthermore, 14.4% of learners said they were prepared to speak in English with others when given assignments by their teachers. On the other hand, a huge number of participants (64.4%) indicated that they spoke English only occasionally, while 5.5% said they spoke English once a week.

Over half (64.4%) of learners indicated that they used vocabulary in spoken English only occasionally, which is a troubling trend revealed by these data. This study indicated that the opportunities for learners to use English vocabulary are limited because of their lack of frequent practice in real-life communication contexts. Furthermore, the small proportion of students (4.4%) who reported using vocabulary frequently in spoken English highlights the widespread lack of regular experience speaking English among S5 students who were assessed in the schools. For a reasonable understanding of how S5 learners' vocabulary knowledge impacts their English-speaking skills, learners were asked to agree or disagree with the statement claiming that their vocabulary knowledge helps them improve their English-speaking skills. A five-point Likert scale question was given to them and the corresponding agreement levels are presented in Table 6.

Table 6*S5 Learners Agree with the Statement “Vocabulary helps to Improve Speaking Skills in English”*

Respondents' opinions	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	46	51.12%
Agree	40	44.44 %
Neutral	0	0.00%
Disagree	4	4.44%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00%
Total	90	100%

As indicated in Table 6, the highest percentage of the participant, 51.12%, showed high consideration that vocabulary knowledge helps them improve their English-speaking skills by choosing “Strongly Agree”. Another big number, 44.44% of learners, smoothly agreed with the statement. These figures show that almost all surveyed learners (95.56%) recognize the positive impact that their vocabulary knowledge has on their English-speaking skills. However, few learners (4.44%) observed that their vocabulary knowledge helps in improving their speaking skills in English while no learner chose “Neutral” or “Strongly Disagree”. Other important information for understanding the impact of vocabulary on S5 learners’ development of English-speaking skills focused on the areas in which S5 learners’ vocabulary knowledge impacts their English-speaking skills, as it can be figured out in Table 7.

Table 7*The Areas in which Vocabulary helps S5 Learners Improve English Proficiency*

Areas impacted by vocabulary in English	Frequency	Percentage
Improving confidence	49	54.44%
Improving fluency to proficiency	28	31.11 %
Understanding of context clues	46	51.11%
Developing self-expressive ability	73	81.11%
Loud reading	37	41.11%

As can be seen in Table 7, 81.11% of S5 learners indicated that their vocabulary knowledge helps in improving the self-expressive ability to speak English. Further, 54.44% observed that vocabulary helps improve their confidence, which emphasizes the influence of vocabulary in making respondents confident while using English. Another subgroup, consisting of 28 participants (31.11%), recognized the significance of vocabulary in raising fluency levels in English. Further, 46 learners (51.11%) felt that vocabulary and contextual cue comprehension in spoken and written English are positively correlated. On the other hand, the last group of 37 respondents (41.11%) stated that vocabulary has a positive as it enhances their writing and reading skills, which are essential elements that support the acquisition of new vocabulary. These differing viewpoints on the impact of vocabulary highlight its wide-ranging influence across several linguistic domains. The combined results highlight the importance of vocabulary in enhancing English language competency and self-expression in supporting other fundamental language abilities.

Exploring the impact of S5 learners’ vocabulary knowledge on the development of their English-speaking skills required to have information regarding learners’ perceived factors affecting their speaking skills. Therefore, Table 8 summarises the corresponding results from a five-point Likert scale question given to ninety (90) learners surveyed.

Table 8*S5 Learners’ Perceived Vocabulary-Based Factors Affecting their English-Speaking Skills*

Potential Factor	M	SD
Vocabulary learning methods (methods used to learn new words)	4.28	0.85
Vocabulary retention (ability to remember and use new words learned)	4.34	0.82
Vocabulary size (amount of English vocabulary words you can remember and use)	4.32	0.80
Vocabulary practice (practice of using new vocabulary words)	4.26	0.82
Vocabulary assessment (assessing your vocabulary knowledge and growth)	2.96	0.97
Motivation to improve vocabulary knowledge	4.40	0.85
Average	4.09	0.85

As indicated in Table 8, the results reveal that S5 learners attribute considerable significance to multiple aspects of vocabulary acquisition and utilization. Notably, motivation to improve vocabulary knowledge was highly seen as a significant factor (M = 4.40, SD = 0.85), underscoring the crucial role of learner motivation in driving efforts toward

vocabulary enhancement and, consequently, English-speaking proficiency. On the other hand, factors such as vocabulary learning methods ($M = 4.28, SD = 0.85$), vocabulary retention ($M = 4.34, SD = 0.82$), vocabulary size ($M = 4.32, SD = 0.80$), and practice ($M = 4.26, SD = 0.82$) were rated highly (above 4.20), indicating their perceived positive impact on English-speaking proficiency of S5 learners. These findings suggest that learners recognize the integral role of diverse strategies in acquiring, retaining, and applying vocabulary knowledge, thereby emphasizing the multifaceted nature of vocabulary acquisition in enhancing language skills.

Moreover, while vocabulary knowledge and growth assessment received a comparatively lower rating ($M = 2.96, SD = 0.97$), which is the range of moderately important, it still reflects a valuable consideration by S5 learners. Despite this moderately perceived importance, assessment remains a factor influencing English-speaking skills, albeit to a lesser extent compared to other aspects. These findings underscore the solid interplay between various dimensions of vocabulary knowledge and English-speaking skills, highlighting the impact of vocabulary knowledge on the development of English-speaking skills for the surveyed learners in the Gakenke District.

4.2 Discussion and Relevance of Findings

In this section, we discuss the current status of S5 learners' vocabulary knowledge and speaking skills in English before we proceed with the impact that S5 learners' vocabulary knowledge has on the development of their English-speaking skills. To assess the current status of S5 learners' vocabulary knowledge and speaking skills in English at three selected schools in Gakenke District, the formulated research question "What is the current status of S5 learners' vocabulary knowledge and speaking skills in English at three selected schools in Gakenke District?" guided the assessment, with significant findings portrayed in Tables 2, 3, and 4. According to the results, Table 2 highlights that 73.3% of S5 learners dedicate their time to looking for vocabulary in school resources, a crucial component for language acquisition. Other learners showed that they do not self-engage in vocabulary learning. At this point, it is clear that many learners are aware that they need more vocabulary or they need to have more information about the words that they already know, depending on their experiences in the English language learning process. Thus, there can be two possibilities from these results. On the other hand, many learners must be aware that they lack enough words to use in English. On the other hand, it may be because their vocabulary depth is not sufficient.

Moreover, Table 3 represents S5 learners' self-assessed of the level of their vocabulary knowledge. Notably, no learners reported that they are sufficient or totally lack of vocabulary, with 73.33% identifying their vocabulary as insufficient and 26.67% as minimal. This distribution suggests that while learners possess a basic vocabulary, it is not extensive enough to meet their communicative needs effectively. Of course, these figures still confirm that these learners are aware of the level of their vocabulary knowledge. These data mean learners have experienced some difficulties in using English, in the four (4) language skills. The absence of learners in the extremes of vocabulary knowledge could indicate a homogeneous educational experience where most learners find themselves in a median state of lexical proficiency (insufficient vocabulary and minimal vocabulary).

Furthermore, Table 4 provides insights into the learners' self-reported expressive English proficiency level, showing a significant concentration in the moderate (42.22%) and low (42.22%) categories. Many S5 learners at the selected schools recognize the gap in their spoken English skills. This awareness explains why most learners (73.3%) prefer to focus on vocabulary learning. These findings reinforce those discussed in the previous paragraphs, as learners who recognize their spoken English level as moderate or low likely face challenges in speaking, which may stem from their vocabulary knowledge. Interestingly, a small percentage (1.11%) of learners demonstrate excellent fluency, which could be attributed to their high confidence in spoken English due to their experience, and the feedback they received.

The learners' engagement in pursuing vocabulary knowledge, as reported in these findings, aligns well with Harmer's Engage-Study-Activate (ESA) method (Aprilia et al., 2023) in terms of learners' engagement in vocabulary learning and the Krashen's Input Hypothesis (Krashen, 1989) focus on learners' vocabulary knowledge as a means for improving their speaking skills in English. Moreover, there are other studies from different contexts that reported EFL learners' deficiency in vocabulary knowledge (Boonraksa & Naisena, 2021; Muradi & Amarkhil, 2024; Ratnasari, 2020; Sabata et al., 2024) and low level of speaking proficiency in English (Alazeer & Ahmed, 2023; Al-Hassaani & Al-Saalmi, 2022; Jeff, 2019). These studies also confirmed the connection between deficiency in English-speaking skills and the low level of EFL students' vocabulary knowledge. This highlights the critical role that vocabulary knowledge plays in enhancing English-speaking proficiency among EFL learners, as evidenced by both the current findings and prior research.

To examine the extent to which S5 learners' vocabulary knowledge impacts the development of their English-speaking skills at three selected schools in Gakenke District, a research question asked the extent to which S5 learners' vocabulary knowledge impact the development of their English-speaking skills at three selected schools in Gakenke District? The corresponding findings were summarized in Tables 5, 6, 7, and 8 providing a comprehensive picture of how vocabulary knowledge influences English-speaking skills among S5 learners. Table 5 reveals that a very small number (4.4%) use new vocabulary every time whereas the majority of learners (64.4%) use new vocabulary in spoken English only occasionally. These findings indicate that there is limited practice, underscoring a critical barrier to

developing fluency, as consistent use of vocabulary in speech is essential for language acquisition. Based on the description of lexical space about the fluency dimension (Dagnaw, 2023), these learners may face difficulties in developing their English-speaking skills as indicated by Harmer's theory (Sabariyanto, 2021). The small proportion of students who regularly use new English vocabulary highlights a significant challenge in fostering an environment conducive to regular practice.

On the other hand, Table 6 indicates that the majority of learners (95.56%) positively agree that vocabulary knowledge improves their English-speaking skills. This consensus indicates a strong perceived connection between vocabulary acquisition and speaking proficiency in English. Learners' high level of agreement replicates the idea that vocabulary is integral to all four (4) language skills (Nation, 2001). Moreover, the same perceptions have also been observed in a study conducted on 113 EFL learners and 91 English language teachers, where 94.5% of teachers and 78.7% of learners believed that vocabulary has a key role in EFL proficiency (Alshumrani, 2024). The high level of agreement also reflects what is understood from the results of many correlational studies which continuously showed that there is a high and positive correlation between vocabulary knowledge and EFL learners' speaking skills (Ani & Sinaga, 2021; Hasanah, 2021; Heidari, 2019; Lateh et al., 2015; Zaitun et al., 2021), except Miralpeix and Muñoz (2018) who found a low correlation between vocabulary and speaking and listening skills. Also, the results from some teaching interventions incorporating lexical approaches can support learners' agreement in the present study (Albelihi, 2022; Getie et al., 2020). There is no doubt about how efficient vocabulary knowledge positively influences the development of English-speaking skills, as both empirical studies and theories recognize this phenomenon.

A deep investigation has also given insights into the specific areas where vocabulary knowledge impacts English proficiency and the related factors. In this sense, Table 7 indicated that most learners (81.11%) noted that vocabulary helps improve self-expressive abilities, and 54.44% mentioned increased confidence in speaking whereas a small number (31.11%) selected fluency. These findings are consistent with a previous study which found that EFL learners' confidence to communicate in English is owing to their receptive vocabulary knowledge (Heidari, 2019) and another revealing that adequate productive vocabulary knowledge helps EFL learners express their ideas in different contexts (Uchihara & Saito, 2019). However, the small number recognizing vocabulary's role in improving fluency, shows that many students are not aware of the vocabulary learning process in line with the lexical space concept.

Based on Table 8 data about vocabulary-based factors in the development of English-speaking skills, their high rating for motivation ($M = 4.40$, $SD=0.85$) and vocabulary retention ($M = 4.34$, $SD=0.82$) suggest that learners view these elements as critical to their success in spoken English. These perceptions align with Harmer's ESA method (Aprilia et al., 2023) in developing EFL learners' speaking skills which stipulates that, without learners' engagement (stimulated by motivation), they cannot have the opportunity to explore different vocabulary learning contexts (holding the inputs). Then, the more they engage, the more vocabulary is retained, leading to their enhanced speaking skills. The relatively lower rating for vocabulary assessment ($M = 2.96$, $SD=0.97$) indicates that learners give it less importance in helping them to develop their speaking skills. However, this result reveals that the S5 learners may have a low level of meta-evaluation and may not receive efficient and effective feedback about their language learning progress.

V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

The purpose of the present study was to evaluate the impact of senior five (S5) learners' vocabulary knowledge on developing their English-speaking skills at three selected schools in Gakenke District in Rwanda. In this context, a structured questionnaire was used to assess the current status of S5 learners' vocabulary knowledge and English-speaking skills, to examine the extent to which vocabulary knowledge affects the development of their English-speaking skills across three selected schools in the Gakenke District. The study's findings indicate that S5 learners in these schools possess basic vocabulary; however, vocabulary is insufficient for them to fulfill communicative needs, as evidenced by their low to moderate English-speaking skills. Furthermore, the analysis revealed that learners do not actively use and reinforce new vocabulary to enhance their spoken English fluency, which has been associated with an unfavorable learning environment. Most S5 learners recognize the impact of vocabulary knowledge on developing their English-speaking skills, specifically when they are aware of the areas where vocabulary knowledge influences their spoken English proficiency. This awareness is further supported by insights into vocabulary-related factors as described in previous pages of this study.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the current study regarding vocabulary and the acknowledged limitations described this study identifies some key recommendations. It was revealed that S5 learners' vocabulary knowledge and English-speaking skills are not satisfying. Yet, these same learners recognize the positive impact of vocabulary knowledge on English-speaking skills. This means that curriculum developers and trainers of English subjects should reinforce the vocabulary acquisition instructions and provide opportunities for students to practice their English-speaking skills. Nonetheless, the current study depended on self-reported assessments, which may not give a reasonable understanding of S5 learners' vocabulary knowledge and its impact on their English-speaking skills. Therefore, future research could benefit from quantitative research designs, such as correlational and experimental studies, which could utilize a formal assessment of English proficiency.

REFERENCES

- Akbarian, I., Farajollahi, F., & Jiménez Catalán, R. M. (2020). EFL learners' lexical availability: Exploring frequency, exposure, and vocabulary level. *System*, *91*, 102261. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2020.102261>
- Alazeer, A. N. M., & Ahmed, Z. A. (2023). Students' Speaking Anxiety in EFL Classroom. *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences*, *8*(2), 100–107. <https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.82.14>
- Albelihi, H. H. M. (2022). Intermediate English as a Foreign Language learners' formulaic language speaking proficiency: Where does the teaching of lexical chunks figure? *Frontiers in Psychology*, *13*, 949675. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.949675>
- Al-Hassaani, A. M. A., & Al-Saalmi, A. F. M. Q. (2022). Saudi EFL Learners' Speaking Skills: Status, Challenges, and Solutions. *Arab World English Journal*, *13*(2), 328–337. <https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol13no2.22>
- Alnamer, S. A. S. (2017). On the Awareness of English Polysemous Words by Arabic-Speaking EFL Learners. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, *8*(2), 112. <https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.all.v.8n.2p.112>
- Alshumrani, H. A. (2024). Unveiling vocabulary teaching and learning beliefs of teachers and learners in an EFL context. *Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education*, *9*(1), 20. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40862-023-00242-0>
- Ani, A., & Sinaga, Y. (2021). The Correlation Between Students' Vocabulary Mastery and Speaking Mastery. *English Education: English Journal for Teaching and Learning*, *9*(1), 111–123. <https://doi.org/10.24952/ee.v9i01.4107>
- Aprilia, F. A., Ainol, A., & Kholili, A. (2023). The Effectiveness Of (Esa) Engage Study Activate Method On Student's Speaking Ability At The Eight Grade Students Of Islamic Junior High School of Syech Abdul Qadir Al Jailani. *ELT Worldwide: Journal of English Language Teaching*, *10*(1), 162. <https://doi.org/10.26858/eltww.v10i1.45515>
- Bangun, H. K. B., & Simanjuntak, D. C. (2022). The Effects of Vocabulary Mastery on English-speaking Ability: A Meta-analysis Study. *Journal of Languages and Language Teaching*, *10*(2), 211. <https://doi.org/10.33394/jollt.v10i2.4995>
- Barbosa, V. M., & Silva, C. D. (2020). Correlation between receptive vocabulary skill, syntactic awareness, and word writing. *Revista CEFAC*, *22*(3), 24–30. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1982-0216/20202232420>
- Boonraksa, T., & Naisena, S. (2021). A Study on English Collocation Errors of Thai EFL Students. *English Language Teaching*, *15*(1), 164. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v15n1p164>
- Bygate, M. (1998). Theoretical Perspectives on Speaking. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, *18*(7), 20–42. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190500003469>
- Caro, K., & Mendinueta, N. R. (2017). Lexis, Lexical Competence and Lexical Knowledge: A Review. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, *8*(2), 205. <https://doi.org/10.17507/jltr.0802.01>
- Crossley, S. A., & Skalicky, S. (2019). Examining lexical development in second language learners: An approximate replication of Salsbury, Crossley & McNamara (2011). *Language Teaching*, *52*(3), 385–405. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444817000362>
- Daflizar, D. (2024). Out-of-Class Speaking Anxiety among Indonesian EFL Students and Its Relationship with Self-Perceived Speaking Skills, Vocabulary Proficiency, and Gender. *Journal of Languages and Language Teaching*, *12*(1), 240. <https://doi.org/10.33394/jollt.v12i1.9342>
- Dagnaw, A. T. (2023). Revisiting the role of breadth and depth of vocabulary knowledge in reading comprehension. *Cogent Education*, *10*(1), 2217345. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2023.2217345>
- Fajaryani, N., Herliza, G., & Ali, Rd. M. (2023). EFL Students' Challenges In Learning Speaking Skills During Online-to-Offline Transition Era. *Ethical Lingua: Journal of Language Teaching and Literature*, *10*(2), 303–316. <https://doi.org/10.30605/25409190.602>
- Faraj, A. K. A. (2015). Effective Strategies for Turning Receptive Vocabulary into Productive Vocabulary in EFL Context. *Journal of Education and Practice*, *6*(27), 10–19. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1077387.pdf>

- Getie, A. S., Amogne, D., & Emiru, Z. (2020) The perceptions of intermediate EFL learners to the lexical instructional intervention. *Journal of Language and Cultural Education*, 8(3), 19–60. <https://doi.org/10.2478/jolace-2020-0019>
- Haomin, Z., & Bilü, Z. (2017) Multi-Faceted Morphological Awareness and Vocabulary Knowledge in English as a Second Language Learners: A Multivariate Analysis. *Chinese Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 40(1), 42–55. <https://doi.org/10.1515/cjal-2017-0003>
- Harmer, J. (2001) Book Review: The Practice of English Language Teaching. *RELC Journal*, 32(1), 135–136. <https://doi.org/10.1177/003368820103200109>
- Hasanah, U. (2021) The relationship among anxiety, vocabulary mastery, and students' speaking ability in oral presentation (Bachelor's thesis, Jakarta: FITK UIN SYARIF HIDAYATULLAH JAKARTA). https://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/bitstream/123456789/58597/1/21170140000006_Uswatun%20Hasanah%20-%20USWATUN%20HASANAH%20S2%20FITK%20UINJKT.pdf
- Heidari, K. (2019) Willingness to Communicate: A Predictor of Pushing Vocabulary Knowledge from Receptive to Productive. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research*, 48(4), 903–920. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10936-019-09639-w>
- Hibatullah, O. F. (2019) The Challenges of International EFL Students to Learn English in a Non-English Speaking Country. *Journal of Foreign Language Teaching and Learning*, 4(2), 88–105. <https://doi.org/10.18196/ftl.4240>
- Idayani, A., Sailun, B., & Yuliani, S. (2022) News and Media Literacy for Speaking Practice. *AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 14(2), 1733–1742. <https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v14i2.1002>
- Jeff, C. B. R. (2019) The Most Difficult Basic Skill Faced by Learners of English in First Year Undergraduate Classes at UEA/Bukavu, DR Congo. *Creative Education*, 10(2), 464–474. <https://doi.org/10.4236/ce.2019.102033>
- Khan, R. M. I., Radzuan, N. R. M., Shahbaz, M., Ibrahim, A. H., & Mustafa, G. (2018) The Role of Vocabulary Knowledge in Speaking Development of Saudi EFL Learners. *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 9(1), 406–418. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3151128>
- Kilic, M. (2019) Vocabulary Knowledge as a Predictor of Performance in Writing and Speaking: A Case of Turkish EFL Learners. *PASAA*, 57(1), 133–164. <https://doi.org/10.58837/CHULA.PASAA.57.1.6>
- Krashen, S. (1989) We Acquire Vocabulary and Spelling by Reading: Additional Evidence for the Input Hypothesis. *The Modern Language Journal*, 73(4), 440–464. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1989.tb05325.x>
- Lateh, N. H. M., Shamsudin, S., & Singh, M. K. S. (2015) Relationship Between Productive Vocabulary Knowledge and Speaking Performance. *Advanced Science Letters*, 21(7), 2466–2469. <https://doi.org/10.1166/asl.2015.6312>
- Leyaley, R. V. G. (2023) Students' Passiveness in Speaking English: The Culprit behind the Silence in the Classroom. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 11(8), 98–111. <https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2023.118007>
- Ly, C. K. (2024) English as a Global Language: An Exploration of EFL Learners' Beliefs in Vietnam. *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 3(1), 19–33. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4895696>
- Macías, F. A. D., Becerra, D. X. C., & Ibarra, C. M. P. (2015) Developing Speaking Skills Through Speaking—Oriented Workshops1. *Enletawa Journal*, 8(2), 35–45.
- Miralpeix, I., & Muñoz, C. (2018) Receptive vocabulary size and its relationship to EFL language skills. *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, 56(1), 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.1515/iral-2017-0016>
- Mohammed, M. A. A., & Idris, S. A. M. (2020) Challenges of Pronunciation to EFL Learners in Spoken English. *Multicultural Education*, 6(5), 193–203. <https://doi.org/10.5281/Zenodo.4408549>
- Muradi, A., & Amarkhil, A. M. (2024) The Difficulties of EFL Students in Speaking English at Sar-e-Pul Higher Education Institute. *Journal of Natural Language and Linguistics*, 2(1), 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.54536/jnll.v2i1.2331>
- Nation, I. S. P. (2001) Learning vocabulary in another language (1st ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139524759>
- Nation, I. S. P. (2013) Learning Vocabulary in Another Language (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139858656>
- Niyazi, M. P., & Khoshsim, H. (2022) Depth of Vocabulary Morphology and Inference Making as Predictors of EFLs' Pragmatic Knowledge. *Teaching English Language*, 16(2), 139–168. <https://doi.org/10.22132/tel.2022.158788>
- Ntabwoba, L., & Sikubwabo, C. (2024). Influence of family background on English language proficiency among learners in nine and twelve years basic education schools: A case of Musanze District, Rwanda. *African Journal of Empirical Research*, 5(2), 119-134. <https://ajernet.net/>
- Patel, M., Solly, M., & Copeland, S. (2023). *The future of English: Global perspectives*. British Council. https://mktgfiles.britishcouncil.org/hubfs/FoE_Research%20Summary_single%20page_for%20download_revisedV2.pdf?hsCtaTracking=81ca7ce5-cea1-48cd-909f-72f27e889f1f%7Cc4e6ffbb-8ec5-4ac6-b7bf-1bef797863ec

- Qian, D. D. (1998). *Depth of vocabulary knowledge: Assessing its role in adults' reading comprehension in English as a second language* (Doctoral thesis). University of Toronto, Canada. <https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/bitstream/1807/12079/1/NQ33914.pdf>
- Rafique, S., Waqas, A., & Shahid, C. (2023). The correlation between vocabulary knowledge and English language proficiency at undergraduate level. *Pakistan Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 11(2), 1132–1141. <https://doi.org/10.52131/pjhss.2023.1102.0422>
- Ratnasari, A. G. (2020). EFL students' challenges in learning speaking skills: A case study in mechanical engineering department. *Journal of Foreign Language Teaching and Learning*, 5(1), 20-38. <https://doi.org/10.18196/ftl.5145>
- Sabariyanto, S. (2021). The foreign learners' difficulties in English speaking and how to solve the problems. *Indonesian Journal of Instructional Media and Model*, 3(1), 38. <https://doi.org/10.32585/ijimm.v3i1.921>
- Sabata, Y. N., Mulyanti, R., Arrasul, A. R., Hardianti, S., & Nggolaon, D. (2024). Linguistics factors as speaking obstacle of the EFL students in classroom. In Z. B. Pambuko, M. Setiyo, C. B. E. Praja, A. Setiawan, F. Yulastuti, L. Muliawanti, & V. S. Dewi (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 4th Borobudur International Symposium on Humanities and Social Science 2022 (BIS-HSS 2022)* (Vol. 778, pp. 729–736). Atlantis Press SARL. https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-118-0_84
- Schmitt, N. (2014). Size and depth of vocabulary knowledge: What the research shows. *Language Learning*, 64(4), 913–951. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lang.12077>
- Schmitt, N., Cobb, T., Horst, M., & Schmitt, D. (2017). How much vocabulary is needed to use English? Replication of van Zeeland & Schmitt (2012), Nation (2006), and Cobb (2007). *Language Teaching*, 50(2), 212–226. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444815000075>
- Stoeckel, T., McLean, S., & Nation, P. (2021). Limitations of size and levels tests of written receptive vocabulary knowledge. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 43(1), 181–203. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S027226312000025x>
- Uchihara, T., & Clenton, J. (2020). Investigating the role of vocabulary size in second language speaking ability. *Language Teaching Research*, 24(4), 540–556. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168818799371>
- Uchihara, T., & Saito, K. (2019). Exploring the relationship between productive vocabulary knowledge and second language oral ability. *The Language Learning Journal*, 47(1), 64–75. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2016.1191527>
- Uwababyeyi, A., Ngoboka, J. P., & Anguru, P. (2021). MALL and CALL technologies as means to enhance learning English in higher learning institutions: Challenges and strategies to developing students' speaking skills. *Journal of Research in Innovation and Implications in Education*, 5(4), 260–273.
- Uwizeyimana, V. (2018). *An investigation into the effect of mobile-assisted language learning on Rwandan university students' proficiency in English as a foreign language* [Master's thesis, Stellenbosch University]. <http://hdl.handle.net/10019.1/104897>
- Yazdeli, J. R., Mellati, M., & Mehdizadeh, M. (2016). The relationship between lexical fluency, temporal fluency, and language proficiency in Iranian EFL context. *3L: The Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies*, 22(1), 111–125. <https://doi.org/10.17576/3L-2016-2201-09>
- Zaitun, Z., Hadi, M. S., & Zulfiana, R. (2021). The correlation between students' achievement in vocabulary and speaking ability at grade 8 junior high school students. *Bisma: The Journal of Counseling*, 5(2), 147–155. <https://doi.org/10.23887/bisma.v5i2.37789>