

## Toward Effective Vocabulary Acquisition in EFL Classrooms: Examining the Effect of Differentiated Learning at the Junior High School Level

(Menuju Akuisisi Kosakata yang Efektif di Kelas EFL: Mengkaji Pengaruh Pembelajaran Diferensiasi di Tingkat Sekolah Menengah Pertama)



St. Nur Aima Fatima <sup>a,1\*</sup>, Nurdin Noni <sup>a,2</sup>, Nur Aeni <sup>a,3</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Universitas Negeri Makassar, Makassar, 90145, Indonesia

E-mails: <sup>1</sup>stnuraima.s22024@student.unm.ac.id; <sup>2</sup>nurdinnoni@unm.ac.id; <sup>3</sup>nur\_aeni@unm.ac.id

\*Corresponding Author.

E-mail address: stnuraima.s22024@student.unm.ac.id (Fatima, S. N. A)

Received: April 22, 2026 | Revised: April 29, 2026 | Accepted: April 30, 2026



**Abstract:** This study examined the effect of the differentiated learning approach on EFL students' vocabulary acquisition at the junior high school level. Vocabulary is a fundamental component of language learning; however, many EFL students still experience difficulties due to differences in readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles. Although differentiated learning has been widely discussed in previous studies, its empirical implementation in improving vocabulary acquisition in junior high school EFL contexts remains limited. Therefore, this study aimed to determine whether the differentiated learning approach significantly affects students' vocabulary acquisition. This study employed a quantitative method using a quasi-experimental design with a non-equivalent control group. The population consisted of all ninth-grade students at UPT SMPN 3 Kelara, and the sample was selected through purposive sampling, involving two classes as the experimental and control groups. Data were collected through pre-tests and post-tests, and analyzed using statistical tests to measure the differences between groups. The findings revealed that the experimental group demonstrated significantly greater improvement compared to the control group. The mean score of the experimental group increased substantially from 30.71 in the pre-test to 65.95 in the post-test, indicating the effectiveness of differentiated learning in enhancing students' vocabulary acquisition. In conclusion, the differentiated learning approach significantly improves EFL students' vocabulary acquisition and provides an effective alternative to conventional teaching methods in promoting student-centered learning at the junior high school level.

**Keywords:** Differentiated learning; vocabulary acquisition; EFL students.

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini mengkaji pengaruh pendekatan pembelajaran berdiferensiasi terhadap pemerolehan kosakata siswa EFL di tingkat sekolah menengah pertama. Kosakata merupakan komponen fundamental dalam pembelajaran bahasa; namun, banyak siswa EFL masih mengalami kesulitan akibat perbedaan tingkat kesiapan, minat, dan profil belajar. Meskipun pembelajaran berdiferensiasi telah banyak dibahas dalam penelitian sebelumnya, implementasi empirisnya dalam meningkatkan pemerolehan kosakata pada konteks EFL di SMP masih terbatas. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui apakah pendekatan pembelajaran berdiferensiasi berpengaruh signifikan terhadap pemerolehan kosakata siswa. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kuantitatif dengan desain kuasi-eksperimen menggunakan kelompok kontrol non-ekivalen. Populasi penelitian adalah seluruh siswa kelas IX di UPT SMPN 3 Kelara, dan sampel dipilih melalui purposive sampling yang melibatkan dua kelas sebagai kelompok eksperimen dan kelompok kontrol. Data dikumpulkan melalui pre-test dan post-test, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan uji statistik untuk mengukur perbedaan antar kelompok. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kelompok eksperimen mengalami peningkatan yang secara signifikan lebih besar dibandingkan kelompok kontrol. Nilai rata-rata kelompok eksperimen meningkat secara signifikan dari 30,71 pada pre-test menjadi 65,95 pada post-test, yang menunjukkan efektivitas



*pembelajaran berdiferensiasi dalam meningkatkan pemerolehan kosakata siswa. Sebagai kesimpulan, pendekatan pembelajaran berdiferensiasi secara signifikan meningkatkan pemerolehan kosakata siswa EFL dan menjadi alternatif yang efektif dibandingkan metode pengajaran konvensional dalam mendorong pembelajaran yang berpusat pada siswa di tingkat sekolah menengah pertama.*

**Kata kunci:** Pembelajaran berdiferensiasi; pemerolehan kosakata; siswa EFL.

## Introduction

Learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) plays a crucial role in equipping students with the ability to communicate effectively in both academic and social contexts (Ayana et al., 2024). Among the core components of language learning, vocabulary acquisition serves as the foundation for developing other language skills, including speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Without sufficient vocabulary, students encounter difficulties in understanding texts and expressing ideas accurately (Raza, 2022; Useini, 2023). Furthermore, vocabulary acquisition is not merely a process of memorization but involves meaningful interaction with language, enabling students to use words appropriately in various communicative contexts (Chotimah & Astiyandha, 2022; Khaeriza N, 2024). Therefore, effective vocabulary is essential to support overall language proficiency in EFL classrooms.

Despite its importance, many EFL students still experience significant challenges in vocabulary acquisition. Empirical evidence indicates that limited vocabulary acquisition directly affects students' ability to communicate and comprehend learning materials (Safii, 2022). In addition, EFL classrooms are characterized by student diversity in terms of readiness, prior knowledge, learning styles, and interests, which influence how students process and retain new vocabulary (Aizawa et al., 2023; Briones et al., 2022). This heterogeneity requires teachers to adopt adaptive instructional strategies that accommodate individual differences and promote inclusive learning environments (Azzahra, 2024; Li & Singh, 2022). Moreover, research shows that structured and contextualized vocabulary instruction significantly contributes to students' language development and writing performance (Wu & Schunn, 2021).

However, classroom practices often fail to address these diverse needs. Based on preliminary findings at UPT SMPN 3 Kelara, students demonstrated low vocabulary acquisition, as indicated by diagnostic test results and teacher interviews. Most students scored below the minimum standard score of 75, and many experienced difficulties in both receptive and productive vocabulary. Students frequently failed to understand key words in reading texts and tended to use repetitive and limited vocabulary in writing tasks. These findings highlight a significant gap between expected learning outcomes and actual student performance. Furthermore, the teaching approach applied in the classroom was predominantly uniform, relying on memorization and standardized exercises, which did not accommodate students' varying abilities and learning preferences. As a result, students with lower proficiency struggled, while higher-achieving students remained insufficiently challenged, leading to unequal learning outcomes.

To address this issue, differentiated learning has been proposed as an effective instructional approach. Differentiated learning emphasizes the adaptation of content, process, and product to meet students' diverse needs, readiness levels, and learning profiles (Ritonga & Halimatusyakdiah, 2024; Tomlinson et al., 2003). This approach allows teachers to design flexible learning experiences that engage students at different levels and promote meaningful vocabulary acquisition (Mahmud et al., 2024; Purwowidodo & Mufidah, 2024). In differentiated classrooms, students are provided with varied learning activities, instructional materials, and assessment methods, enabling them to learn according to their individual characteristics (Sapan & Mede, 2022). Consequently, differentiated learning is considered a promising approach to enhance both student engagement and academic achievement.

This study offers a specific contribution to the existing literature by focusing on the implementation of differentiated learning to improve vocabulary acquisition among ninth-grade EFL students in junior high school context, particularly at SMPN 3 Kelara. While previous

studies have generally examined differentiated learning in relation to broader language skills such as writing (Mangnguluang, 2025; Sukmayani et al., 2023), grammar (Melka & Jatta, 2022), and overall language achievement (Yavuz, 2020). This study also narrows its focus to vocabulary acquisition as a fundamental yet underexplored area at the secondary school level. Importantly, limited study has specifically investigated the application of differentiated learning at the ninth-grade level, a critical stage where students are expected to consolidate their vocabulary knowledge before transitioning to higher levels of education. Moreover, this study emphasizes not only students' learning outcomes but also the alignment of differentiated instruction with students' diverse learning profiles, including readiness levels and learning styles (Sapan & Mede, 2022; Tomlinson et al., 2003), which has received limited empirical attention in prior study. By integrating differentiated learning approach (content, process, and product) with students' learning characteristics in a quasi-experimental design, this study provides a more context-specific and practical model for optimizing vocabulary learning in EFL classrooms.

This gap indicates the need for further empirical investigation into how differentiated learning affects vocabulary acquisition in EFL classrooms. Specifically, there is a lack of research focusing on junior high school students, who are at a critical stage of language development and require appropriate instructional support. Addressing this gap is essential to provide evidence-based strategies for improving vocabulary acquisition and supporting student-centered instruction.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the effect of the differentiated learning approach on EFL students' vocabulary acquisition at the junior high school level. The objective of this study is to determine whether the implementation of differentiated learning significantly improves students' vocabulary acquisition compared to conventional teaching methods. The findings of this study are expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of EFL teaching literature by providing empirical evidence on the effectiveness of differentiated learning in vocabulary acquisition. Practically, it offers insights for teachers, schools, and policymakers in designing more adaptive and effective instructional approach to address students' diverse learning needs.

## Methods

This study employed a quantitative approach using a quasi-experimental design with a non-equivalent control group to examine the effect of differentiated learning on EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students' vocabulary acquisition. This design was used because the researcher could not randomly assign participants into groups, which is common in classroom-based research (Creswell, 2023). It was conducted at UPT SMPN 3 Kelara, Jeneponto, Indonesia, during the second semester of the 2024/2025 academic year, from February to April 2026, over a period of six weeks.

The population consisted of all ninth-grade students. The sample was selected using purposive sampling based on specific criteria. First, preliminary data from a diagnostic vocabulary test and teacher interview showed that most students had low vocabulary acquisition, with scores below the minimum standard of 75. Second, ninth-grade students were selected because they are at a crucial stage of learning and the material used in this study (procedure text) is part of their curriculum. Third, the two selected classes had similar initial ability, were taught by the same teacher, and shared comparable classroom conditions. These criteria were used to ensure the comparability of the groups and to accurately measure the effect of the treatment.

Data were collected using vocabulary tests administered in the form of pre-test and post-test to measure students' vocabulary acquisition before and after the treatment. The English vocabulary test was designed to measure students' vocabulary acquisition related to procedure text material. To ensure the appropriateness of the instrument, content validity was

established through expert judgment, in which the test items were reviewed by English education experts to ensure their alignment with the research objectives and the curriculum. In addition, the instrument was piloted prior to the main study to check the clarity, suitability, and consistency of the test items. The results of the pilot testing indicated that the instrument was appropriate for use in this study.

The research procedure consisted of three stages. First, a pre-test was administered to both the experimental and control groups to determine students' initial vocabulary acquisition. Second, the experimental group received treatment through differentiated learning, which involved adapting content, process, and learning activities based on students' needs, while the control group was taught using conventional methods. Third, a post-test was administered to measure students' vocabulary improvement after the treatment.

Before the implementation of the treatment, students demonstrated low vocabulary acquisition and experienced difficulties in both understanding and using vocabulary. In addition, teaching practices were generally uniform and did not accommodate students' diverse learning needs. This condition justified the implementation of differentiated learning as an instructional intervention to improve vocabulary acquisition.

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to identify mean scores and inferential statistics using paired samples t-test and independent samples t-test to determine the significance of differences within and between groups. The level of significance used in this study was 0.05.

## Results

This section presents the findings of the study on the effect of differentiated learning on EFL students' vocabulary acquisition. The data were obtained from pre-test and post-test scores of both the experimental and control groups and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

**Table 1.** The Distribution Score of Students in Control Group

Level	Classification	Range	Pre-test		Post-test	
			Freq.	Percentage	Freq.	Percentage
A	Excellent	85 -100	0	0%	0	0%
B	Good	71 -84	0	0%	0	0%
C	Satisfactory	60 -70	3	18.75%	4	25%
D	Insufficient	50- 59	4	25%	1	6.25%
E	Fail	0-49	9	56.25%	11	68.75%
Total			16	100%	16	100%

Table 1 above showed that in the pre-test results, some students were in the low category. No students achieved the excellent or good categories. Only 3 students (18.75%) were in the satisfactory category, 4 students (25%) were in the insufficient category, and 9 students (56.25%), were in the fail category.

The post-test results showed no significant improvement. No students achieved either the excellent or good category. The number of students in the satisfactory category increased slightly to 4 (25%), while the insufficient category decreased to 1 (6.25%). However, the number of students in the fail category actually increased to 11 (68.75%).

These results indicated that learning in the control group was unable to significantly improve students' vocabulary acquisition. In fact, the predominance of the fail category in the post-test indicated that most students still had difficulty in understanding and using English vocabulary.

**Table 2.** The Distribution Score of Students in Experimental Group

Level	Classification	Range	Pre-test		Post-test	
			Freq.	Percentage	Freq.	Percentage
A	Excellent	85 -100	0	0%	6	28.57%
B	Good	71 -84	0	0%	3	14.28%
C	Satisfactory	60 -70	0	0%	4	19.04%
D	Insufficient	50- 59	1	4.7%	4	19.04%
E	Fail	0-49	20	95.23%	4	19.04%
Total			21	100%	21	100%

Table 2 showed the distribution of student scores in the experimental group. In the pre-test, all students were predominantly in the fail category. No students achieved the excellent, good, and satisfactory categories. Only one (4.7%) was in the insufficient category, while twenty students (95.23%) were in the fail category.

However, after implementing the differentiated learning approach, in the post-test, a very significant change occurred. In the excellent category, six students (28.57%) successfully achieved it. In the good category, there were three students (14.28%). In the satisfactory, insufficient, and fail category, there were four students (19.04%).

This change showed that the implementation of the differentiated learning approach had a significant impact on improving students' vocabulary acquisition.

**Table 3.** Paired Sample Statistics

	Group	N	Mean Score	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pre-test Control	16	40.31	15.965	3.991
	Post-test Control	16	40.63	15.586	3.896
Pair 2	Pre-test Experiment	21	30.71	8.701	1.899
	Post-test Experiment	21	65.95	17.221	3.758

Table 3 showed descriptive statistics of the pre-test and post-test scores in the control and experimental groups, including the mean, number of samples (N), standard deviation, and standard error.

In the control group, the average pre-test score was 40.31, which increased very slightly to 40.63 in the post-test. This improvement was very small and still in the *fail* category. This indicated that learning without a differentiated approach did not significantly improved students' vocabulary acquisition.

In contrast, in the experimental group, the average pre-test score of 30.71 increased significantly to 65.95 in the post-test. This improvement indicated a shift from the fail to satisfactory category, indicating a significant increase in vocabulary acquisition after implementing the differentiated learning approach.

In addition, the standard deviation value in the experimental post-test (17.22) showed that there was variation in student abilities, which indicated that although all students experienced improvement, the level of improvement varied according to the characteristics each student.

**Table 4.** Paired Sample Correlation

	Group	N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Pre-test and	16	.609	.012
	Post-test Control			
Pair 2	Pre-test and	21	.771	.000
	Post-test Experiment			

Table 4 showed the correlation between pre-test and post-test scores in both groups. In

the control group, the correlation was 0.609 with a significance level of 0.012, indicating a moderate correlation between the pre-test and post-test. This means that students' abilities tended to not change significantly.

In the experimental group, the correlation was 0.771 with a significance level of 0.000, indicating a strong and significant correlation between the pre-test and post-test. This indicated that students who had certain initial abilities experienced consistent improvement after being given differentiated learning approach.

Table 5. Paired Sample Test

	Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Differences		T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pre-test & Post-test Control	-.312	13.96	3.49	-7.75	7.127	-.09	15	.930
Pair 2	Pre-test & Post-test Experiment	-35.23	11.88	2.59	-40.64	-28.82	-13.59	20	.000

Based on the statistical results presented in Table 5 (Paired Samples Test), the experimental group obtained a significance value of Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000, which is lower than the alpha level of 0.05 ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) is accepted, indicating that there is a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores in the experimental group. The mean difference (-35.23) shows a substantial increase in students' scores from pre-test to post-test.

This result is further supported by the t-value ( $t = -13.59$ ), which indicates a strong statistical difference. In addition, the 95% confidence interval (-40.64 to -28.82) does not include zero, confirming that the difference is statistically significant. In contrast, the control group obtained a significance value of Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.930, which is greater than the alpha level of 0.05 ( $0.930 > 0.05$ ). Thus, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is accepted, indicating that there is no statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores in the control group. The mean difference (-0.312) indicates only a very slight change, and the 95% confidence interval (-7.75 to 7.127), which includes zero, further confirms that the difference is not statistically significant.

These results indicate that a significant improvement in vocabulary acquisition occurred only in the experimental group, while no significant change was observed in the control group. This finding addresses the objective of the study, which is to determine whether differentiated learning significantly affects students' vocabulary acquisition.

Table 6. Paired Samples Effect Size

		Standardizer <sup>a</sup>	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval of the Differences		
				Lower	Upper	
Pair 1	Pre-test Control	Cohen's d	13.961	3.490	-.512	468
	Post-test Control	Hedges' Correlation	14.322	-.022	-.499	456
Pair 2	Pre-test Exp.	Cohen's d	11.882	-2.966	-3.966	-1.951
	Post-test Exp.	Hedges' Correlation	12.111	-3.891	-3.891	-1.914

Based on the results presented in Table 6, the paired samples effect size values indicate

the magnitude of differences between pre-test and post-test scores within each group. In Pair 1 (Control Group), the effect size value based on Cohen's  $d^*$  was  $-0.022$ , with Hedges' correction also showing a similarly negligible value. These values fall within the category of a trivial or very small effect, indicating that the difference between pre-test and post-test scores in the control group is practically insignificant. This interpretation is further supported by the 95% confidence interval, which ranges from  $-0.512$  to  $0.468$  and includes zero, suggesting that the observed difference lacks consistency and may be attributed to random variation rather than a meaningful change.

In contrast, Pair 2 (Experimental Group) demonstrates a substantially larger effect size. The Cohen's  $d$  value of  $-2.966$  and Hedges' correction of  $-2.910$  indicate a very large effect according to conventional benchmarks. Although the values are negative due to the direction of the calculation (post-test scores exceeding pre-test scores), the magnitude reflects a strong practical difference between the two measurements. This interpretation is reinforced by the 95% confidence interval, which ranges from  $-3.966$  to  $-1.951$  and does not include zero, indicating that the effect is both consistent and statistically robust across participants.

The contrast between the two groups highlights a clear difference in the magnitude of change. While the control group shows a negligible effect size, the experimental group demonstrates a very large effect, indicating a substantial increase in scores from pre-test to post-test. These results suggest that the improvement observed in the experimental group is not only statistically significant but also practically meaningful in terms of effect magnitude.

## Discussion

The findings of this study revealed that the implementation of the differentiated learning approach significantly improved EFL students' vocabulary acquisition at the junior high school level. This improvement was clearly reflected in the substantial increase in students' post-test scores in the experimental group compared to the control group. The statistical analysis, particularly the paired samples t-test results (Sig. 2-tailed =  $0.000 < 0.05$ ), confirmed that the improvement was statistically significant and not due to chance. In contrast, the control group showed no meaningful improvement, as indicated by the insignificant t-test result (Sig. =  $0.930$ ) and minimal change in mean scores. These findings suggest that a flexible and adaptive learning approach is more effective than conventional, one-size-fits-all instruction (Goyibova et al., 2025).

The large effect size observed in the experimental group further strengthens this conclusion. The Cohen's  $d$  value indicated a very large effect, demonstrating that differentiated learning had a strong practical impact on students' vocabulary acquisition. Meanwhile, the control group showed a negligible effect size, indicating that traditional teaching methods were insufficient in facilitating meaningful learning progress. This contrast highlights the importance of instructional strategies that actively respond to students' diverse learning needs.

These findings are consistent with Tomlinson (2017), which emphasizes that instruction tailored to students' readiness leads to more optimal learning outcomes. However, beyond this theoretical alignment, the results can be more critically explained through the mechanism of instructional alignment and cognitive accessibility. Differentiated learning enables teachers to adjust the level of task difficulty and instructional support, thereby reducing the gap between students' current ability and task demands. In this condition, students are more likely to engage with vocabulary at an appropriate level of challenge, which facilitates more effective processing and reduces the likelihood of cognitive overload.

In addition, the improvement in vocabulary acquisition can be interpreted in terms of the depth of processing. Through differentiated activities, students are not only exposed to vocabulary items but are also required to engage with them in varied and meaningful contexts. This type of engagement encourages deeper semantic processing, which is essential for retention and recall, as suggested by Nation (2013). Thus, the effectiveness of differentiated

learning in this study may not simply result from increased exposure, but from the quality and meaningfulness of that exposure.

Furthermore, differentiated learning appears to function through a mechanism of instructional responsiveness, in which teaching is continuously adjusted based on students' progress. This responsiveness allows immediate support for students who experience difficulty while maintaining appropriate challenges for more advanced learners. In contrast, the absence of such adaptive adjustment in the control group may explain why no meaningful improvement was observed, despite exposure to similar learning content.

The significant improvement in students' vocabulary acquisition can also be linked to the concept of instructional alignment, where learning objectives, teaching strategies, and assessment are coherently matched with students' readiness levels. This alignment ensures that students engage in tasks that are neither too easy nor too difficult, thereby optimizing learning conditions. This finding is supported by Melka and Jatta (2022), and Mangnguluang (2025), who reported improvements in language learning outcomes through adaptive instruction.

Moreover, the effectiveness of differentiated learning can be interpreted through the concept of meaningful learning. When students engage in varied and interactive activities, such as discussions and collaborative tasks, they are more likely to construct knowledge actively. This active engagement contributes to deeper cognitive processing and better retention, as supported by Yavuz (2020), and Stefani et al. (2023).

In addition, differentiated learning promotes active participation by providing tasks that align with students' abilities. As students become more involved in the learning process, they are more likely to achieve better outcomes. This is supported by Iskandar (2021), and Hudriana & Sukinah (2025), who highlighted its effectiveness in supporting diverse learners.

However, despite the significant improvement, this study also indicates that learning outcomes varied among students, as reflected in the standard deviation of the post-test scores in the experimental group. This suggests that while differentiated learning is generally effective, its impact is not uniform and may depend on individual factors such as prior knowledge and learning pace. This finding implies that differentiated learning requires continuous adjustment rather than a one-time implementation.

## Conclusion

This study concludes that the implementation of the differentiated learning approach was associated with a significant improvement in EFL students' vocabulary acquisition within the context of this study. The findings showed an increase in students' post-test scores in the experimental group, supported by statistically significant results and a very large effect size. In contrast, the control group, which received conventional instruction, did not demonstrate a meaningful improvement. These results suggest that differentiated learning may be more effective than traditional, uniform teaching methods in addressing students' diverse learning needs in similar classroom contexts.

The application of differentiated learning in this study appeared to address the initial problems identified, particularly students' low vocabulary acquisition and the limitations of one-size-fits-all instructional practices. By adapting content, process, and learning activities to students' readiness levels, this approach facilitated more meaningful learning experiences and supported improved vocabulary outcomes. However, these findings should be interpreted as context-specific rather than universally generalizable.

In terms of implications, this study provides insights for teachers and schools in promoting more inclusive and student-centered learning environments. Differentiated learning may contribute to improved classroom interaction and student participation when implemented appropriately. It also highlights the importance of aligning instructional strategies with students' individual differences to support more effective learning.

Nevertheless, this study has several limitations, including the relatively short duration of the intervention and the use of a single research setting with a limited sample size. These factors may restrict the generalizability of the findings. Therefore, future research is recommended to examine the long-term effects of differentiated learning, involve larger and more diverse samples, and explore its application across different language skills and educational levels. Additionally, further studies may investigate how technological support can enhance the implementation of differentiated instruction.

Overall, this study suggests that differentiated learning has the potential to support vocabulary acquisition in EFL classrooms, particularly in contexts with diverse learner needs. However, its effectiveness may depend on contextual factors, and broader application should be considered with caution.

## Acknowledgments

The researcher express their sincere gratitude to Prof. Dr. Nurdin Noni, M.Hum, and Dr. Nur Aeni, S.Pd., M.Pd, for their invaluable guidance, critical insights, and continuous academic support throughout this study. The researcher also acknowledges the support and collegial contributions from members of the Kelurahan LPDP UNM for their constructive discussions and encouragement. This study was financially supported by the Lembaga Pengelola Dana Pendidikan (LPDP) through a scholarship program, which is gratefully acknowledged.

## Conflict of Interests

The researcher declares that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this article. This study was supported by a scholarship from the Lembaga Pengelola Dana Pendidikan (LPDP). However, the funding body had no role in the design of the study, data collection and analysis, interpretation of the data, writing of the manuscript, or the decision to submit the article for publication. The authors also confirm that they are not affiliated with any organization that may benefit from the results of this study, and none of the authors currently serve or have previously served on the editorial board of J-IbM.

## References

- Aizawa, I., Rose, H., Thompson, G., & Curle, S. (2023). Beyond the threshold: Exploring English language proficiency, linguistic challenges, and academic language skills of Japanese students in an English medium instruction programme. *Language Teaching Research*, 27(4), 837–861. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168820965510>
- Ayana, H., Mereba, T., & Alemu, A. (2024). Effect of vocabulary learning strategies on students' vocabulary knowledge achievement and motivation: The case of grade 11 high school students. *Frontiers in Education*, 9, Article 1399350. <https://doi.org/10.3389/educ.2024.1399350>
- Azzahra, K. R. (2024). Differentiated instruction in English lessons: Teacher challenges. *Jurnal Basicedu*, 8(4), 3158–3164. <https://doi.org/10.31004/basicedu.v8i4.8423>
- Briones, S. K. F., Dagamac, R. J. R., David, J. D., & Landerio, C. A. B. (2022). Factors affecting students' scholastic performance: A survey study. *Indonesian Journal of Educational Research and Technology*, 2(2), 97–102. <https://doi.org/10.17509/ijert.v2i2.41394>
- Chotimah, C., & Astiyandha, T. (2022). Improving students' vocabulary knowledge through race to the board game for ESP (English for specific purposes). *Lingua*, 18(2), 241–251. <https://doi.org/10.34005/lingua.v18i2.2264>
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2023). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (6th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Goyibova, N., Muslimov, N., Sabirova, G., Kadirova, N., & Samatova, B. (2025). Differentiation approach in education: Tailoring instruction for diverse learner needs. *MethodsX*, 14, Article 103163. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mex.2025.103163>

- Hudriana, R., & Sukinah, S. (2025). Enhancing learning outcomes for slow learner students through differentiated instruction in social studies education. *Journal of Innovation and Research in Primary Education*, 4(4), 2461–2471.
- Iskandar, D. (2021). Peningkatan hasil belajar siswa pada materi report text melalui pembelajaran berdiferensiasi di kelas IX.A SMP Negeri 1 Sape tahun pelajaran 2020/2021. *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran Indonesia (JPPI)*, 1(2), 123–140. <https://doi.org/10.53299/jppi.v1i2.48>
- Khaeriza, N. (2024). *Vocabulary acquisition and speaking skills in English: A correlational study at the second year of SMAN 29 Jakarta* [Unpublished thesis].
- Li, Y., & Singh, C. (2022). Inclusive learning environments can improve student learning and motivational beliefs. *Physical Review Physics Education Research*, 18(2), 020147. <https://doi.org/10.1103/PhysRevPhysEducRes.18.020147>
- Mahmud, A. F., Idul, M., & Sarmadani, S. (2024). Research gap on differentiated learning in the EFL classroom: A conceptual framework. *Journal of Language Learning and Assessment*, 2(1), 7–19. <https://doi.org/10.71194/jlla.v2i1.108>
- Mangnguluang, P. (2025). *Using differentiated learning model to improve students' ability in composing English sentences for eighth grade students at UPT SMPN 4 Binamu Jeneponto* [Unpublished thesis].
- Melka, Y. G., & Jatta, I. B. (2022). Study the effects of differentiated instruction on English grammar teaching in Ethiopia. *Development of Education*, 5(3), 19–31. <https://doi.org/10.31483/r-103546>
- Nation, I. S. P. (2013). *Learning vocabulary in another language* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139524759>
- Purwowidodo, A., & Mufidah, L. N. (2024). Differentiated learning models: Students' learning style, readiness, and interest in learning regarding the results of fiqh. *Al Qalam: Jurnal Ilmiah Keagamaan dan Kemasyarakatan*, 18(6), 4063. <https://doi.org/10.35931/aq.v18i6.3802>
- Raza, H. (2022). Difficulties in learning English vocabulary faced by college students of Pakistan. *Pakistan Languages and Humanities Review*, 6(2), 422–431. [https://doi.org/10.47205/plhr.2022\(6-ii\)36](https://doi.org/10.47205/plhr.2022(6-ii)36)
- Ritonga, R. H., & Halimatusyakdiyah. (2024). The application of differentiated learning in improving students' learning activeness and creativity. *Cakrawala: Journal of Citizenship Teaching and Learning*, 2(1), 31–39. <https://doi.org/10.70489/cakrawala.v2i1.330>
- Safii, I. (2022). *Study on vocabulary mastery and vocabulary learning strategies applied by eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Tarakan* [Undergraduate thesis]. <https://repository.ubt.ac.id/repository/UBT23-03-2022-140644.pdf>
- Sapan, M., & Mede, E. (2022). The effects of differentiated instruction (DI) on achievement, motivation, and autonomy among English learners. *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research*, 10(1), 127–144. <https://doi.org/10.30466/ijltr.2022.121125>
- Sukmayani, F. A., Susanti, Y., & Nurhajati, D. (2023). Differentiated teaching methods in teaching writing viewed from the students' learning style at SMKN 2 Kediri. *AT-Tawassuth: Jurnal Ekonomi Islam*, 8(1), 1–19.
- Tomlinson, C. A. (2017). Differentiated instruction. In *Fundamentals of gifted education* (pp. 167–186).
- Tomlinson, C. A., Brighton, C., Hertberg, H., Callahan, C. M., Moon, T. R., Brimijoin, K., Conover, L. A., & Reynolds, T. (2003). Differentiating instruction in response to student readiness, interest, and learning profile in academically diverse classrooms: A review of literature. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 27(2–3), 119–145. <https://doi.org/10.1177/016235320302700203>
- Useini, A. (2023). The importance of vocabulary in the classroom and suggestions for effective English vocabulary teaching in ELT. *Vision International Refereed Scientific Journal*, 8(2),

81–111. <https://doi.org/10.55843/ivisum2382081u>

- Wu, Y., & Schunn, C. D. (2021). The effects of providing and receiving peer feedback on writing performance and learning of secondary school students. *American Educational Research Journal*, 58(3), 492–526. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831220945266>
- Yavuz, A. C. (2020). The effects of differentiated instruction on Turkish students' L2 achievement and student and teacher perceptions. *Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 6(2), 313–335. <https://doi.org/10.32601/ejal.776002>
- Yossi Stefani, Simanjuntak, R. A., & Petrus, I. (2023). Differentiated learning approach for improving report text learning outcomes for tenth graders. *Didascein: Journal of English Education*, 4(2), 83–96. <https://doi.org/10.52333/djoe.v4i2.186>