



Exploring Efl Students' Perception Towards Learning Challenges in Vocabulary and Pronunciation Test

Ayustin^{1*}, Happy Kusuma Wardani²,

^{1,2} Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Universitas Qomaruddin, Gresik, Indonesia, 61152

*Corresponding author: thisisayus@gmail.com

Received: 2026-05-15

Revised: 2026-06-01

Accepted: 2026-06-29

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi persepsi mahasiswa EFL terhadap tes kosakata dan tes pelafalan, serta strategi pengajaran dan media pembelajaran yang digunakan dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain kuantitatif deskriptif dengan melibatkan 11 mahasiswa EFL sebagai partisipan. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner skala Likert yang terdiri dari 20 pernyataan terkait tes kosakata, tes pelafalan, strategi pengajaran, dan media pembelajaran. Data dianalisis menggunakan analisis kuantitatif deskriptif dalam bentuk persentase. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa umumnya memiliki persepsi positif terhadap tes kosakata dan tes pelafalan karena tes tersebut membantu mereka mengidentifikasi kelebihan, kelemahan, serta kesalahan pengucapan. Namun, mahasiswa masih mengalami beberapa tantangan pembelajaran seperti kecemasan saat menghadapi tes kosakata, kesulitan mengingat kosakata, rasa gugup saat melakukan pelafalan, dan pengaruh bahasa pertama. Selain itu, hasil penelitian juga menunjukkan bahwa strategi pengajaran dan media pembelajaran memberikan dukungan positif terhadap penguasaan kosakata serta pembelajaran pelafalan mahasiswa. Kesimpulannya, tes kosakata, tes pelafalan, strategi pengajaran, dan media pembelajaran memiliki peran penting dalam mendukung pengalaman belajar bahasa Inggris mahasiswa serta meningkatkan kepercayaan diri dan kompetensi komunikatif mereka dalam pembelajaran EFL.

Kata Kunci: mahasiswa EFL, persepsi, tes pelafalan, tes kosakata, strategi pengajaran.

Abstract

This study aimed to explore EFL university students' perceptions of vocabulary and pronunciation tests, as well as the teaching strategies and learning media used in English learning. This research employed a descriptive quantitative design involving 11 EFL university students as the participants. The data were collected using a Likert-scale questionnaire comprising 20 statements on vocabulary tests, pronunciation tests, teaching strategies, and learning media. The data were analyzed using descriptive quantitative methods, expressed as percentages. The findings showed that students generally had positive perceptions of vocabulary and pronunciation tests because they helped them identify their strengths, weaknesses, and pronunciation errors. However, students still experienced several learning challenges, such as anxiety during vocabulary tests, difficulty remembering vocabulary, nervousness during pronunciation performance, and first-language interference. In addition, the findings revealed that teaching strategies and learning media positively supported students' vocabulary mastery and pronunciation learning. In conclusion, vocabulary tests, pronunciation

How to Cites: Ayustin., & Wardani, HK. (2026). Exploring EFL Students' Perception Towards Learning Challenges in Vocabulary and Pronunciation Test. *Eduloka: Nusantara Education Research Journal*. 1(2):96-106. <https://doi.org/xx.xxxx/eduloka>

This is an open access article under the CC-BY-SA license: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/> | 96

tests, teaching strategies, and learning media play important roles in supporting students' English learning experiences and improving their confidence and communicative competence in EFL learning.

Keywords: *EFL students, perception, pronunciation test, vocabulary test, teaching strategies.*

INTRODUCTION

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) In Indonesia, English is considered a foreign language rather than a second language. Nevertheless, English is taught as a compulsory subject from elementary school to university level to improve students' English proficiency. English learning covers four fundamental skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing, which are essential in mastering the language (Arianda et al., 2023). One important aspect that supports these language skills is vocabulary. Vocabulary encompasses all words in a language and becomes a key component in mastering English. Students need adequate vocabulary mastery to understand and use English effectively in various contexts. Conversely, limited vocabulary may hinder students' ability to write, read, and communicate fluently in English (Harselina et al., 2024)

In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, students often face various challenges in mastering vocabulary and pronunciation. Difficulties in vocabulary acquisition are not only related to memorizing words but also to understanding their meanings, using them appropriately, and retaining them in long-term memory. Elmahdi & Hezam (2020) explain that students frequently experience problems such as quickly forgetting new vocabulary, limited comprehension of word meanings, and excessive reliance on translation, which hinder vocabulary acquisition. In addition, limited exposure to English in EFL contexts restricts students' opportunities to develop lexical and phonological awareness. As a result, inadequate vocabulary mastery affects students' ability to recognize and pronounce English words accurately.

Pronunciation difficulties become more apparent when students attempt to pronounce unfamiliar words that they have not fully mastered lexically. Factors such as first-language interference, lack of pronunciation models, and limited phonological learning strategies contribute significantly to students' inaccurate pronunciation. Elmahdi & Hezam(2020) further emphasize that limited teaching techniques and ineffective instructional methods may negatively affect vocabulary acquisition and pronunciation accuracy. Therefore, understanding students' perceptions is important to identify the main learning difficulties and formulate more effective teaching strategies to improve students' vocabulary mastery and pronunciation proficiency.

Vocabulary and pronunciation mastery are essential foundations for successful communication in EFL learning. Vocabulary is the primary source of meaning in reading comprehension and speaking activities. Rudianto & Aldriani (2018) emphasize that game-based vocabulary teaching can make learning more enjoyable and help

students remember and use vocabulary in communication contexts. Meanwhile, pronunciation determines intelligibility in oral communication. Inaccurate pronunciation may hinder communication and reduce students' confidence in speaking English. Pronunciation errors commonly occur because of first-language interference, limited practice opportunities, and inadequate pronunciation models.

Weak vocabulary mastery and poor pronunciation create interconnected problems that negatively affect students' communicative competence and assessment performance. Students often experience difficulties in remembering vocabulary, understanding meanings in context, and using words appropriately in communication (Ali Derakhshan, 2015). In learning to pronounce English, students may substitute sounds from their first language, resulting in inaccurate pronunciation. These problems may lower students' confidence and motivation during vocabulary and pronunciation tests.

To address these challenges, EFL classrooms should integrate vocabulary teaching with systematic pronunciation practice. It is important to understand students' learning style preferences so that teachers can design more varied learning strategies that match students' characteristics (Siki & Amrullah, 2026). Effective pronunciation instruction and digital learning tools can help students improve pronunciation accuracy and increase engagement in English learning. Activities such as vocabulary games, collaborative learning, and context-based learning materials can also help students process vocabulary more effectively (Sabat et al., 2026). Furthermore, technology-based learning media such as digital flashcards, pronunciation applications, and blended learning platforms provide students with greater opportunities to practice independently and improve their vocabulary and pronunciation skills.

Perception is the mental process through which individuals select, organize, and interpret information from their surroundings. Rima et al. (2021) describe perception as an active process in which individuals evaluate information based on their prior knowledge, experiences, and expectations. In language learning, students' perceptions are important because they influence students' motivation, engagement, and learning experiences in the classroom. Students with high motivation tend to be more active in asking questions and making efforts to understand the learning materials (Evi & Rika, 2026).

Despite the important role of vocabulary and pronunciation tests in EFL learning, students' perceptions toward these assessments and teaching strategies have not been widely explored. Most previous studies focus more on students' achievement and teaching methods rather than students' perceptions of vocabulary and pronunciation assessments. Therefore, this study explores EFL university students' perceptions of vocabulary and pronunciation tests as well as the teaching strategies used in English

learning. Specifically, this study aims to identify how students perceive the difficulty, usefulness, and relevance of vocabulary and pronunciation assessments, and how teaching strategies and learning media support their vocabulary understanding, pronunciation accuracy, and learning experiences in the classroom.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a descriptive quantitative research design. The purpose of this design was to describe EFL university students' perceptions of vocabulary and pronunciation tests, as well as the teaching strategies and learning media used in English learning. Descriptive quantitative research was used because the data were presented numerically and analyzed using statistical measurements such as percentages. In this study, students' perceptions were measured through a Likert-scale questionnaire, and the results were analyzed descriptively to identify the level of students' agreement toward statements related to vocabulary tests, pronunciation tests, teaching strategies, and learning media. This design enabled the researcher to systematically describe students' perceptions using the numerical data obtained.

The participants of this study were 11 EFL university students from the English Education Department (PBI) at Universitas Qomaruddin, Indonesia. The class was selected because it had a small number of students and offered specific courses on vocabulary and pronunciation, making it relevant to this study's focus. The participants were selected through purposive sampling based on the following criteria: (1) they were enrolled in the English Education Department (PBI), (2) they had taken vocabulary and pronunciation courses in the current semester, and (3) they were willing to participate in the study. All 11 students in the selected class met these criteria and were included as the research sample. The population of this study comprised all students in the English Education Department (PBI) at Universitas Qomaruddin, while the sample comprised students from one intact class. The small class size enabled the researcher to collect data from all participants and obtain more complete information reflecting the actual classroom context.

The research procedure of this study is presented in Figure 1. The process began with identifying the research problem, followed by determining the participants, designing and distributing the questionnaire, collecting the data, analyzing the responses using descriptive percentages, and drawing conclusions based on the findings.

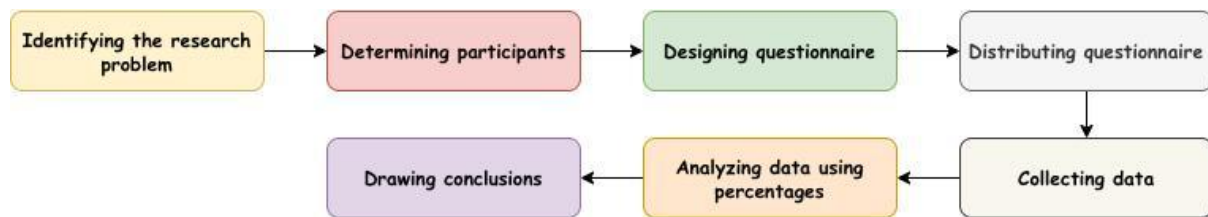


Figure 1. Research Flowchart

The data were collected using a questionnaire technique. According to Riyadi et al. (2025), questionnaires are effective instruments for collecting data related to learners' perceptions, attitudes, and experiences in language learning contexts. The questionnaire was distributed to the participants after they had completed vocabulary and pronunciation tests. The participants were asked to respond to several statements related to their perceptions of vocabulary tests, pronunciation tests, teaching strategies, and learning media used in the classroom. This technique enabled the researcher to collect data efficiently and systematically.

The main instrument of this study was a Likert-scale questionnaire designed to explore students' perceptions of vocabulary and pronunciation tests and teaching strategies in English learning. The questionnaire items were developed based on related theories and previous studies to ensure content validity (Sugiyono, 2019). The questionnaire consisted of three main aspects: Students' perceptions of vocabulary tests, Students' perceptions of pronunciation tests, & Students' perceptions of teaching strategies and learning media. Each statement was rated using a four-point Likert scale, namely Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), and Disagree (D). This scale was used to measure the students' level of agreement toward each statement.

The data obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive quantitative analysis. Students' responses were calculated in percentages to determine the overall tendency of students' perceptions toward each aspect investigated in this study. The percentage results were then interpreted using perception criteria adapted from (Sugiyono, 2019) The criteria were used to classify students' perceptions into five categories: very low, low, moderate, high, and very high.

RESEARCH RESULT

Students' Perceptions of Vocabulary Tests

The findings showed that students generally had positive perceptions toward vocabulary tests. Most students agreed that the vocabulary tested was relevant to the classroom materials and learning objectives. In Item 4, 72.7% of students agreed that the vocabulary tested matched the classroom material, while in Item 5, 72.7% agreed that the vocabulary tested matched the learning objectives. In addition, all students agreed that vocabulary tests helped them identify their strengths and weaknesses in

learning English. Specifically, 36.4% strongly agreed and 63.6% agreed with this statement.

However, several students still experienced difficulties during vocabulary tests. In Item 1, 54.5% of students gave neutral responses regarding anxiety during vocabulary tests. Similarly, in Item 2, 54.5% responded neutrally about difficulty remembering new vocabulary. These findings indicate that although students had positive perceptions toward vocabulary tests, some students still faced challenges related to vocabulary retention and confidence during assessments.

The findings indicate that vocabulary tests were considered beneficial because they helped students evaluate their vocabulary mastery and learning progress. Nevertheless, students still encountered difficulties in memorizing and understanding vocabulary in different contexts. Therefore, vocabulary learning activities should provide more meaningful and contextual practice to improve students' vocabulary retention and confidence.

Table 1. Students' Perceptions of Vocabulary Tests

No	Statement	SS (%)	S (%)	N (%)	TS (%)
1	I feel anxious when taking vocabulary tests	18.2	27.3	54.5	0
2	I have difficulty remembering new vocabulary	0	27.3	54.5	18.2
3	I rely on Indonesian translation	18.2	36.4	36.4	9.1
4	Vocabulary tested matches classroom material	0	72.7	27.3	0
5	Vocabulary tested matches learning objectives	0	72.7	27.3	0
6	Vocabulary difficulty matches my ability	18.2	18.2	54.5	9.1
7	Vocabulary tests help identify strengths and weaknesses	36.4	63.6	0	0

Students' Perceptions of Pronunciation Tests

The results revealed positive perceptions toward pronunciation tests. All students agreed that pronunciation tests helped them recognize pronunciation mistakes and improve their speaking skills. In Item 11, 45.5% strongly agreed and 54.5% agreed that pronunciation tests helped them recognize pronunciation errors. Likewise, in Item 12, 54.5% strongly agreed and 45.5% agreed that pronunciation tests were important for improving speaking skills.

Despite these positive perceptions, pronunciation learning remained challenging for several students. In Item 8, 36.4% strongly agreed and 36.4% agreed that they felt nervous when pronouncing English words. Furthermore, 45.5% strongly agreed and 36.4% agreed that first-language interference affected their pronunciation performance. These results show that nervousness and mother tongue interference still influenced students' pronunciation ability during pronunciation tests.

The findings suggest that pronunciation tests played an important role in helping students improve pronunciation accuracy and speaking performance. However,

students still needed more opportunities for pronunciation practice and exposure to accurate pronunciation models to reduce nervousness and pronunciation errors.

Table 2.Students' Perceptions of Pronunciation Tests.

No	Statement	SS (%)	S (%)	N (%)	TS (%)
8	I feel nervous when pronouncing words	36.4	36.4	27.3	0
9	My first language affects pronunciation	45.5	36.4	18.2	0
10	I rarely practice pronunciation outside class	0	18.2	54.5	27.3
11	Pronunciation tests help me realize my mistakes	45.5	54.5	0	0
12	Pronunciation tests are important for speaking skills	54.5	45.5	0	0
13	Pronunciation test results reflect my ability	45.5	54.5	0	0

Students' Perceptions of Teaching Strategies and Learning Media

The findings demonstrated positive perceptions toward teaching strategies and learning media used in English learning. Most students agreed that lecturers explained vocabulary clearly and provided adequate pronunciation practice opportunities. In Item 15, 36.4% strongly agreed and 54.5% agreed that lecturers provided sufficient pronunciation practice activities. In addition, all students agreed that pronunciation teaching strategies improved their pronunciation accuracy.

Learning media were also considered supportive in vocabulary and pronunciation learning. In Item 18, 45.5% strongly agreed and 54.5% agreed that learning media supported vocabulary learning. Meanwhile, in Item 19, 27.3% strongly agreed and 63.6% agreed that learning media supported pronunciation learning. These findings indicate that teaching strategies and learning media significantly contributed to students' learning experiences.

The results imply that interactive teaching strategies and supportive learning media can help students improve vocabulary mastery and pronunciation skills more effectively. Technology-based media, pronunciation practice, and meaningful learning activities may increase students' motivation, participation, and confidence in English learning.

Table 3.Students' Perceptions of Teaching Strategies and Learning Media.

No	Statement	SS (%)	S (%)	N (%)	TS (%)
14	Lecturer explains vocabulary clearly	27.3	45.5	27.3	0
15	Lecturer provides pronunciation practice opportunities	36.4	54.5	9.1	0
16	Vocabulary teaching strategies ease understanding	0	72.7	27.3	0
17	Pronunciation teaching strategies improve accuracy	36.4	63.6	0	0
18	Learning media support vocabulary learning	45.5	54.5	0	0
19	Learning media support pronunciation learning	27.3	63.6	9.1	0
20	Teaching strategies and assessment are effective	45.5	45.5	9.1	0

RESEARCH DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that EFL university students generally have positive perceptions toward vocabulary and pronunciation tests in English learning. The results show that vocabulary tests help students identify their strengths and weaknesses in vocabulary mastery. Most students agreed that the vocabulary tested matched classroom materials and learning objectives. This finding is consistent with (Rudianto & Aldriani, 2018), who found that vocabulary learning plays an important role in helping students understand and use English effectively in communication contexts. Similarly, the participants in the present study perceived vocabulary tests as beneficial for monitoring their vocabulary development. The similarity between the findings may be explained by the role of vocabulary assessment in helping learners evaluate their learning progress and identify areas for improvement.

However, some students still experienced difficulties in vocabulary learning, especially in remembering new vocabulary and managing anxiety during vocabulary tests. This finding is in line with (Elmahdi & Hezam, 2020), who reported that EFL learners often face challenges such as forgetting vocabulary quickly and relying excessively on translation. Similar difficulties were also found in the present study, indicating that vocabulary retention remains a common challenge among EFL students. This similarity may be attributed to limited exposure to English and insufficient opportunities to use new vocabulary in meaningful contexts.

The findings also revealed that students had positive perceptions toward pronunciation tests. Students agreed that pronunciation tests helped them recognize pronunciation mistakes and improve their speaking skills. This finding is consistent with (Aliah Khusna Arsi et al., 2025) who stated that pronunciation is an important aspect of oral communication because it influences intelligibility and speaking confidence. Both studies suggest that pronunciation assessment can increase students' awareness of their pronunciation accuracy and encourage them to improve their speaking performance.

Nevertheless, several students still experienced nervousness and difficulties caused by first-language interference during pronunciation tests. This finding is also consistent with (Elmahdi & Hezam, 2020), who found that first-language interference and limited pronunciation practice frequently affect EFL learners' pronunciation performance. Similarly, the students in the present study reported difficulties in producing accurate English sounds because they were influenced by their mother tongue. The similarity between the findings may be explained by the limited exposure to authentic English pronunciation and the lack of regular pronunciation practice outside the classroom.

In addition, the study found that teaching strategies and learning media significantly influenced students' learning experiences. Most students responded positively toward lecturers' explanations, pronunciation practice opportunities, and learning media used in the classroom. This finding is consistent with (Sabat et al., 2026), who reported that pronunciation instruction supported by digital learning tools can enhance students' pronunciation development and learning engagement. Likewise, students in the present study perceived that interactive learning activities and supportive learning media helped them understand vocabulary and pronunciation more effectively. This similarity may be explained by the ability of appropriate teaching strategies and learning media to increase students' engagement, motivation, and confidence in learning English.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to explore EFL university students' perceptions toward vocabulary tests, pronunciation tests, teaching strategies, and learning media used in English learning. The findings revealed that students generally had positive perceptions toward vocabulary tests because the tests helped them identify their strengths and weaknesses in vocabulary mastery. Students also showed positive perceptions toward pronunciation tests, as the tests helped them recognize pronunciation errors and improve their speaking skills. Despite these positive perceptions, students still experienced several challenges, including difficulty remembering new vocabulary, anxiety during vocabulary tests, nervousness during pronunciation performance, and first-language interference in pronunciation. These challenges indicate that vocabulary retention and pronunciation accuracy remain important issues in EFL learning. Furthermore, the findings showed that teaching strategies and learning media played significant roles in supporting students' vocabulary learning and pronunciation development. Interactive teaching activities, pronunciation practice opportunities, and technology-based learning media contributed positively to students' motivation, confidence, and learning experiences. In conclusion, EFL students perceive vocabulary and pronunciation tests as beneficial learning tools, while effective teaching strategies and supportive learning media help overcome learning challenges and improve students' English proficiency.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The researcher would like to express the deepest gratitude to Allah SWT for all His blessings, guidance, and mercy so that this research could be completed successfully. There were many processes, challenges, and difficulties faced during the completion of this research, but with His permission, the researcher was able to go through every stage until the end. With great respect and appreciation, the researcher would like to sincerely thank the supervisor for the patience, guidance, knowledge, motivation, and support throughout the research process. Every suggestion and piece

of advice given became valuable lessons and meaningful encouragement for the researcher.

The researcher also would like to express sincere gratitude to all participants who willingly contributed their time and responses to this research. Without their cooperation and participation, this study would not have been completed properly.

Special thanks are devoted to the researcher's beloved family for their endless prayers, love, support, and encouragement. Their presence became the greatest source of strength and motivation for the researcher in completing this study. The researcher also would like to thank friends and all people who continuously provided help, support, and motivation during the completion of this research. Finally, the researcher realizes that this study is still far from perfect. Therefore, constructive criticism and suggestions are highly expected for the improvement of future research.

REFERENCES

- Ali Derakhshan, E. K. (2015). The Interference of FL and SL. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 5(10), 2112–2117.
- Aliah Khusna Arsi, Syarifah Farahdiba, & Amra Ariyani. (2025). The Influence of Pronunciation on Students' Speaking Confidence. *Journal of Excellence in English Language Education*, 4(1), 26–32.
- Arianda, S. M., Jaya, A., & Theriana, A. (2023). Efl (English As a Foreign Language) Students' Perception About the Effectiveness of Learning Reading By Using Electronic Books. *Esteem Journal of English Education Study Programme*, 6(2), 246–256. <https://doi.org/10.31851/esteem.v6i2.12322>
- Elmahdi, O. E. H., & Hezam, A. M. M. (2020). Challenges for Methods of Teaching English Vocabulary to Non-native Students. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal*, 7(5), 556–575. <https://doi.org/10.14738/assrj.75.8263>
- Evi, N., & Rika, H. (2026). Pengaruh Motivasi Belajar Terhadap Hasil Belajar Peserta Didik. *EDULOKA : JURNAL PENELITIAN PENDIDIKAN NUSANTARA*, 1(1), 10–17. <https://jurnal.lokantara.com/index.php/eduloka/article/view/2>
- Harselina, H., Idayani, A., & Sailun, B. (2024). Students' Difficulties with Vocabulary Mastery in English Language Education at the University Level. *J-SHMIC : Journal of English for Academic*, 11(2), 120–134. [https://doi.org/10.25299/jshmic.2024.vol11\(2\).18668](https://doi.org/10.25299/jshmic.2024.vol11(2).18668)
- Rima, S., Poujade, M., Maniglia, M., Durand, J., Rima, S., Poujade, M., Maniglia, M., Rewarding, J. D., Toulouse, D., Maniglia, M., & Durand, J. (2021). *Rewarding objects appear larger but not brighter To cite this version : HAL Id : hal-02341977*. 0–10.
- Riyadi, S., Munip, A., Junaidi, A., Buaja, T., Shaddiq, S., Nining, & Andriani. (2025). *Transformasi Pendidikan Luar Biasa di Era Digital: Inklusi dan Teknologi di Tahun 2025* (Vol. 6, Issue 0).

- Rudianto, G., & Aldriani, Y. (2018). Pengajaran Kosa Kata Bagi Mahasiswa Efl Dengan Menggunakan Game. *Jurnal Basis*, 5(2), 53.
<https://doi.org/10.33884/basisupb.v5i2.770>
- Sabat, Y., Syakur, A., & Musyarofah, L. (2026). *Pronunciation instruction in digital EFL programs at Indonesian university : Pedagogical challenges and opportunities*. 7(1), 209–224. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.22219/englie.v7i1.43307>
- Siki, M. E., & Amrullah, M. F. F. (2026). *PEMBELAJARAN BIOLOGI MATERI SEL DI SMPK MAUBESI*. 1(1), 1–9.
<https://jurnal.lokantara.com/index.php/eduloka/issue/view/1>
- Sugiyono. (2019). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D*. Alfabeta.