

Improving pupils' skills in identifying the meaning of unfamiliar words through a five-day routine technique

Julieta A. Asuncion *, Ian Edrey I. Cruz, Mialyn M. Galang and Joshua B. Sincioco

College of Education, Bulacan Agricultural State College, San Ildefonso, Bulacan, Philippines.

World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews, 2025, 26(03), 579-586

Publication history: Received on 28 April 2025; revised on 31 May 2025; accepted on 03 June 2025

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30574/wjarr.2025.26.3.2180>

Abstract

This study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of the Five-Day Routine Technique in improving pupils' skills in identifying the meaning of unfamiliar words. This study included thirty-three (33) Grade 5 pupils that served as the participants. This employed a pre-experimental pretest- posttest design as the main research approach. Mean, paired t-test and thematic analysis used as statistical tools to evaluate and interpret the data. The intervention was developed for the purpose of improving the skills of Grade 5 pupils in identifying the meaning of unfamiliar words. The intervention was about the different activities that pupils must complete each day of the five- day routine. The result of the study found out that before the intervention the pre-test mean was computed at 4.91 which was described as low mastery. The post-test mean was recorded at 18.36 which was described as closely approximately mastery. When the pupils' pre-test and post-test were compared, highly significant difference was found which only proved that Five-Day Routine Technique was effective. An interview was also conducted to determine the pupils' perceptions as regards to the implementation of the proposed intervention. It showed that respondents liked the implementation of the intervention throughout their learning of new words.

Keywords: Action Research; Five-Day Routine; Vocabulary; Unfamiliar Words

1. Introduction

Improving a child's vocabulary helps them to fully comprehend the meaning of a sentence and paragraph. The words in one's vocabulary as building blocks is an advantage not only for understanding concepts but also for expressing diverse ideas, describing observations and for making predictions. It also improves a child's macro skills and all areas of communication will be enhanced too for having good vocabulary.

According to Moody et al. (2018) critical literacy skills, such as letter-sound understanding and morphological awareness, are aided by vocabulary knowledge. Lack of vocabulary, however, may hinder the development of basic reading abilities and text comprehension in the target language. Vocabulary is productive if the learners can produce and understand words correctly and use it constructively in speaking and writing.

Understanding new words is an issue that every person faces. Because language evolves over time, older texts may contain unfamiliar words that are no longer regularly used. Or even a text might contain technical terms used only in a specific field or area that's why it's unfamiliar to many. Moghadam et al. (2012) states that knowing a word means that knowing more than its single meaning in a specific context. They need to know the pronunciation, spelling, collocation, synonyms, antonyms etc. If a learner can understand that, he will find it easier to absorb teachings and lessons. He will also be better advanced in a variety of learning areas and be ready for more in-depth instruction.

* Corresponding author: Julieta A Asuncion

Phonological awareness and vocabulary knowledge work together to enhance word recognition skills and the ability to comprehend the meaning of a wide range of words presented in varied literary contexts. The first stage in learning to read is to be able to identify words (Tuncay & Dedeoglu, 2019). It is vital for individuals in the process of learning to read to accurately distinguish words; because it is impossible to read without looking up words.

In addition, it is necessary to know the meaning of each word in the text to accurately evaluate the overall meaning of a reading. A pupil who has a large vocabulary is better able to read complex texts and write better. As children read more texts, they come across new words, and as they become more familiar with these words, their vocabulary grows. Taslim et al. (2019) indicates that students with a large vocabulary performed comparably to students with a much smaller vocabulary in speaking activities. As one's vocabulary grows, so does one's capacity to communicate.

According to the report on the results of the Regional Diagnostic Assessment (RDA) for the School Year 2022-2023, identifying meaning of unfamiliar words using antonyms ranked first among the least learned competencies of grade 5 pupils in the English subject at Pinaod Central School.

The need to think of innovative ways to meet the need of students to improve their skills in identifying unfamiliar words leads to the idea of having a routine for Grade 5 pupils. Studying English for 15 minutes every day is more successful than studying for 5 hours once a month. The researchers proposed a five-day routine for students in which they had to discover, define, dilate, draw, and develop unfamiliar words from different reading selections on their English lessons within five days. According to Senoo and Yonemoto (2014), new words are only acquired when learners have needs: the need to know what the word means, the need to discover the significance of that word on their own, and the need to compare the different meanings of words.

The intervention called Five- Day Routine Technique is about different activities that pupils must complete each day. They will run upon unexpected or unfamiliar words from the literature on Monday. Every Tuesday, they will find its meaning using a dictionary. They will search for its synonyms and antonyms on Wednesday. On Thursday, they will illustrate pictures to go along with the words, and on Friday, they will use those unfamiliar words to construct their own phrases.

Moreover, Marye (2022) states that this routine worked great because it gave students the opportunity to practice using context clues, but also was a great way to build their vocabulary.

Through this, the study aims to improve the skills of grade 5 pupils in identifying the meaning of unfamiliar words through the use of Five-Day Routine Technique at Pinaod Central School.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Design

The researchers used a Pre-experimental Pretest- Posttest Design as the main research approach of the study. Both quantitative and qualitative research were utilized. The quantitative approach was employed to analyze the pre-test and post-test results in this study. However, the qualitative method was used for the analysis of the data gathered from selected Grade 5 pupils through questionnaire to assess their perceptions on the implementation of the Five-Day Routine Technique.

2.2. Sampling Method

To obtain the sampling size needed in the study, the purposive sampling was utilized. Purposive sampling was used to select respondents that are most likely to yield appropriate and useful information.

2.3. Respondents

The Grade 5 pupils of Pinaod Central School served as the participants of the study. The participants in the study were selected from Grade 5- Miguel Malvar. They were identified as the class section who contributed the most on the least learned competency based on the results of Regional Diagnostic Assessment. This class section underwent a preliminary test. The learners who were classified as average mastery, low mastery, very low mastery and absolutely no mastery in terms of the level of their performance in identifying the meaning of unfamiliar words became the official participants who underwent the intervention process.

2.4. Instruments

The researchers used readings and works of literature from the students' learning modules during the intervention. The researchers utilized a total of four literatures from English 5 Quarter 3: Module 1 to English 5 Quarter 3: Module 4. The titles of the literatures were as follows: (1) Turtles; (2) Yam and His Baby Brother Sam; (3) Everything is Easy; (4) Bulacan: The Prosperous Province Forged.

Pre-test and post-test questionnaires made by the researchers and validated by the school's master teacher were employed. The test consisted of 20 items. Questions were also based on the literature used by the researchers in the learning module. The pre-test and post-test questionnaires were administered twice. First is the preliminary test, and the results of the test were used to choose who would participate in the study. While the post-test was utilized to determine whether there was a significant difference in the scores of the participants after the intervention was employed.

In addition, the researchers employed a rating scale instrument adapted from DepEd Order No.70, s. 2003, "Revised Grading System for Elementary and Secondary Schools". It was used to determine the level of performance and skills of pupils in identifying the meaning of unfamiliar words based on their scores. Pupils with scores that classified as "low mastery," "very low mastery," and "absolutely no mastery" became the official participants of the study.

Moreover, the researchers also used a scoring rubric for the weekly assessment that was conducted every fifth day of the routine intervention. This scoring rubric was adapted and modified by researchers.

Last instrument was the open- ended questionnaire developed by the researchers and validated by the school's master teacher. This questionnaire was used to assess the pupils' perceptions as regards to the intervention. The questionnaire has five questions. The questions were as follows: (1) Did you like the implementation of the intervention throughout your learning of new words? Why or why not? [transl. Nagustuhan mo ba ang pagsasagawa ng interbasyon sa kabuuan ng iyong pag-aaral ng mga bagong salita? Bakit o bakit hindi?]; (2) Out of all the routine activities throughout the week, which day excites you the most? Why? [transl. Sa lahat ng routine activities sa buong Linggo, ano ang pinaka nakapagpasabik sa'yo? Bakit?];

(3) In your perception, was the Five-Day Routine Technique effective in improving your skills in identifying the meaning of unfamiliar words? Explain. [transl. Sa iyong pangunawa, naging epektibo ba ang Five-Day Routine Technique sa pagpapabuti sa iyong kasanayan sa pagtukoy ng kahulugan ng mga hindi pamilyar na salita? Ipaliwanag.]; (4) Will you continue to do this Five- Day Routine Technique even after the intervention period is over? Explain. [transl. Itutuloy mo ba itong Five-Day Routine Technique kahit tapos na ang intervention period? Ipaliwanag.]; (5) If given a chance, would you share with others what you know about this Five-Day Routine Technique? Explain your reason. [transl. Kung bibigyan ka ng pagkakataon, ibabahagi mo ba sa iba ang iyong nalalaman tungkol sa Five-Day Routine Technique na ito? Ipaliwanag ang iyong dahilan.].

2.5. Classroom Intervention Implementation

The classroom intervention was implemented in the third quarter of the school year 2022- 2023. The researchers asked authorization from the school principal, teachers and parents through a formal letter signed by the researchers' adviser and Institute Dean to conduct the research and gather the relevant data needed for the study.

Twenty-item preliminary test was conducted. The intervention was held in every remedial class in the afternoon for four weeks. From day one until last day of the week, pupils performed different routine activities.

- Day 1. This is when the pupils encountered unfamiliar words coming from the literature related to the lesson based on the MELC and K-12 curriculum guide. The teacher asked pupils what words were new in their vocabulary and unfamiliar to them. After that, pupils gave the connotative meaning of these new words. They guessed what those words were all about.
- Day 2 is the day when a dictionary is needed. They looked up the meaning of new words and confirmed if their predictions were correct or incorrect. The teacher discussed the meaning of those words. Correct pronunciation of words was also taught. If the pupils do not have a traditional dictionary, digital dictionary applications were utilized using a flat screen television and internet. This also gave way to the integration of technology inside the classroom.
- On Day 3, the pupils dug deeper into the meaning of unfamiliar words. They found the synonyms and antonyms of the given unfamiliar words. This helped them expand their vocabulary.

- Day 4 is art day. They drew pictures and created symbols about those unfamiliar words based on how they used the words in sentences. Each pupil was given a chance to explain the meaning of their work in front of the class and justify how it was related to the unfamiliar words. Finally, Day 5. This day was the most challenging part because pupils created their own sentences using unfamiliar words that they have studied for the past few days. To ensure that the pupils understood the new words they had been studying for a week, the teacher graded their work so that they could see right away if they had completed it correctly.

The same cycle was repeated for the next consecutive weeks using different reading materials.

At the end of the intervention period, a 20-item post-test was conducted. Subsequently, an open-ended interview was also carried out to obtain students' perceptions as regards to the implementation of the Five- Day Routine Technique.

2.6. Data Collection

Scores from the pre-test and post-test were recorded, and the results of the interviews were combined. Pupils' skills in identifying the meaning of unfamiliar words were assessed using a rating scale with a seven-point verbal description. The verbal descriptions were: Mastered (96%-100%), Closely Approximately Mastery (86-95%), Moving Towards Mastery (66%-85%), Average Mastery (35%-65%), Low Mastery (16%-34%), Very Low Mastery (5%- 15%), Absolutely Mastery (0%-4%).

2.7. Data Analysis

Mean was utilized to describe the result of the pre-test and post-test given to Grade 5 pupils. The paired sample T-test was used to determine if there was a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test score in order to determine whether a student's skill in identifying the meaning of unfamiliar words improves. All quantitative data were processed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

The Thematic Analysis employed to interpret the data acquired and determine the pupil's perception of the Five-Day Routine Technique's implementation. According to Kiger and Varpio (2020), the basic premise of thematic analysis is used to analyze and understand the different experiences, thoughts and behavior of the learners during data collection. It also involves describing experiences created by the researcher during the data analysis

3. Results and discussion

Pupils' Skills in Identifying the Meaning of Unfamiliar Words through a Five-Day Routine Technique

Table 1 Descriptive statistics of pre-test and post-test

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	MPS	Verbal Description
Pretest	33	4.91	1.99	0.34	0.25	Low Mastery
Posttest	33	18.36	1.22	0.21	0.92	Closely Approximately Mastery

Mastered (96% - 100%), Closely Approximately Mastery (86% - 95%), Moving Towards Mastery (66% - 85%), Average Mastery (35% - 65%), Low Mastery (16% - 34%), Very Low Mastery (5% - 15%), Absolutely No Mastery (0% - 4%).

The table 1 displays descriptive statistics from the Grade 5 pupils' pre-test and post-test. A total of 33 respondents answered the tests. The table 2 compares the pupils' pre-test and post- test results. As can be seen the mean of the test result increased from 4.91 mean in their pre-test to 18.36 mean in their post-test after the intervention was employed. Furthermore, the standard deviation of the pre-test and post-test lowered from the standard deviation of 1.99 in the pre-test to a standard deviation of 1.22 in their post-test which is an encouraging indicator because it implies the pupils' scores tend to be closed to the mean in their post-test. The standard error also decreased from 0.34 in the pre-test to 0.21 in the post-test, implying the students' test mistakes were reduced in the post-test. Lastly, the difference in their mean percentage score can be seen, because the pre-test has a mean percentage score of 0.25 or 25% which falls within the range of low mastery as noted in the Skills Level Descriptive Equivalent table below, and increased to a mean percentage score of 0.92 or 92% with a verbal description of closely approximately mastery after using the Five- Day Routine Technique, indicating that the researchers' intervention had a positive impact on student skills in identifying the meaning of unfamiliar words.

The intervention called Five-Day Routine Technique was composed of five routine tasks and activities that widen the knowledge and the ability of students to transfer and retain information into long-term memory. Thereby, there was a high change in the result of pretest and posttest after the children were involved in the intervention. According to Kim (2011), higher engagement to routine activities resulted in more effective initial vocabulary learning and better retention of the meaning of the words.

3.1. Test for Significant Difference of the Pre-test and Post-test Scores of the Participants

Table 2 Comparison of the pre-test and post-test scores of Grade 5 pupils through the implementation of Five-Day Routine Technique

	Mean Difference	Mean Score \pm SEM (n=33)		Standard Deviation		T stat	df	P <0.05
		Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test			
Pre-test –Post-test	-13.45	4.91 \pm 0.35	18.36 \pm 0.21	1.99	1.22	-29.33	32	0.01

Table 3 shows the comparison of pre-test and post-test conducted before and after the intervention called Five-Day Routine Technique. It can be observed from the table that the use of Five-Day Routine Technique among Grade 5 pupils of Pinaod Central School is effective in improving the skills of the participants. Results of the paired t-test indicated that there is a high significant difference in the pre-test scores of Grade 5 pupils ($M=4.91$, $SD=1.99$) and their post- test scores ($M=18.36$, $SD=1.22$); $t(-29.33)$, $p\leq 0.01$.

Based on Coogler et. al (2022), they found in their study that the use of classroom routines had a significant effects in learner's performance and vocabulary acquisition that provides opportunities for them to learn new words. Moreover, Sibhold (2011) believes that routine repetition is the key. He said that the more interaction students have with the vocabulary words, the more likely they will learn and remember them.

3.2. Pupils' Perception as regards to the Implementation of Five-Day Routine Technique

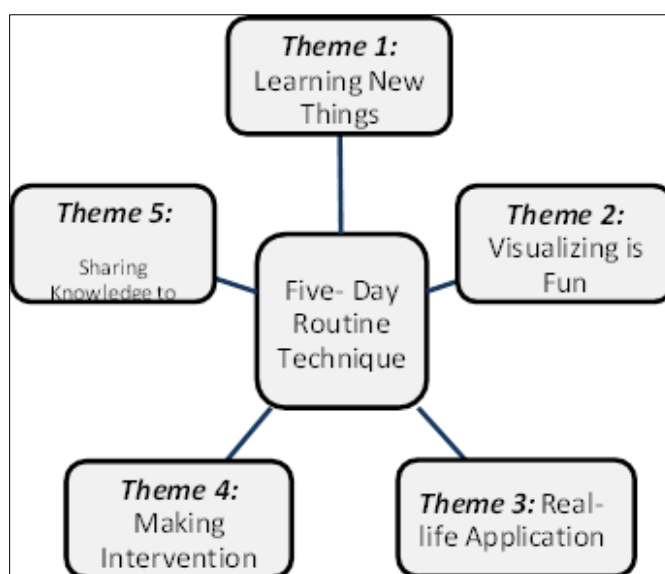


Figure 1 Thematic Map

3.2.1. Theme 1: Learning New Things

After four weeks of intervention, the pupils were asked to complete a survey questionnaire to assess their opinions about the intervention, with the first question asking, "Did you like the implementation of the intervention throughout your learning of new words? Why or why not?" The majority of respondents said they liked the intervention because they learned new words that were unfamiliar to them. Thus, the theme "learning new things" was created. Because the respondents learned not only the unfamiliar words, but also their meaning, synonyms, antonyms, illustrations, and how the unfamiliar words can be used in a sentence. For instance, the student said, "Opo, dahil ako ay natuto ng mga unfamiliar words at may mga bago pa akong natutunan".[transl.Yes, because I learned unfamiliar words and new

knowledge.] Because they can encounter words that are new to them and they are satisfied when they learn them, which causes them to learn new things. As according to Kashdan et al. (2004), that the students ability to have newly acquired skills and knowledge is associated with increased levels of pleasure and that when faced with new and varied tasks, feelings of enjoyment can be triggered. Because of this, the majority of students are satisfied with the way the intervention has been implemented.

3.2.2. Theme 2: Visualizing is Fun

On the question, "Out of all routine activities throughout the week, which day excites you the most?" Why?" Most of the respondents' answers were about the day where the pupils have to visualize and draw and illustration of the word they learned. Hence, the theme "Visualizing is fun" came from. Because majority of the students are excited on the day of the intervention where they will draw an illustration of their understanding to the unfamiliar words. Because, in addition to demonstrating what they have learned, this activity also demonstrates students' creativity and artistic ability. As the student stated, "Ang pinaka nagustuhan ko ay ang pag- dodrawing dahil nagtutulungan kami sa pag gawa ng activity".[transl. What I liked the most was drawing because we are working together to do the activity.] As per respondents, it can be seen that day 3 of the routine was the day that excites the pupils the most because it is an activity that the children really enjoy and at the same time the activity is used in their learning. Because it is also important in learning that the activity used is engaging. According to Alhassan and Osei (2022), when students find an activity interesting and fun, they will be more engaged; when students are engaged, they are more likely to retain what is taught and what they learn.

3.2.3. Theme 3: Real Life Applications

When the respondents were asked, "In your opinion, was the Five-Day Routine Technique effective in improving your skills in identifying the meaning of unfamiliar words?" the majority of the respondents said yes, and they believe that what they learned in the intervention can be applied in the classroom and in their daily lives. As a result, the "Real Life Application" theme was created. The majority of respondents believed the intervention was effective in enhancing their skills in identifying the meaning of unknown words since they learned those words and can use them in learning and in everyday conversations. The student's response, "Opo natutunan at dagdag kaalaman ito at pwede po itong magamit kahit saan,". [transl. Yes, we learned it and it is additional learning that can be used anywhere.] demonstrates how the respondents believe that the five-day routine technique was able to teach them words that they could apply everywhere. According to Barkley et al., (2013), application of learning means that students take what they've learned and apply it to a different scenario, often one outside of the classroom. Which means that as the pupils believe that what they learned can be used everywhere shows that the intervention is effective.

3.2.4. Theme 4: Making the Intervention a Routine

Fourth, the respondents answered the question "Will you continue to do this Five-day Routine Technique even after the intervention process period is over? Explain." Most of the respondents' answers are about learning more unfamiliar words, still eager to learn and continuing the Five-Day Routine. Thus, the theme "Making an Intervention a Routine." was made. Majority of the respondent stated that they will continue to do the five-day routine technique on their own to be more familiar on different words. In addition, the intervention helped them to learn more about the new words, its meaning and uses. For example, student number 32 stated "Kasipo mas nagugustuhan po naming ang mga tinuturo nila at gusto po naming matuto po ng iba pang unfamiliar words at makakaganda din po ito.[transl. Because we likes what they teach to us and we want to learn more other unfamiliar words.] According to Katipour&Yazhi (2014) Learner should continuous to used vocabulary learning strategies in able the knowledge that they have will be remain, improved and to enhance their vocabulary learning in different unfamiliar words.

3.2.5. Theme 5: Sharing Knowledge to Others

On the last question, the respondents were asked "If given a chance, would you share with others what you know about this Five-Day Routine Technique? Explain your reason." Students' answers were focused about helping their classmates to learn and sharing to other kids what they have learned. Thus, the theme "Sharing Knowledge to Others" was made. According to the student number 33 "Opo, pwede ko po i-share dahil gusto ko rin po silang matuto ng sabay-sabay". [transl. Yes, I can share it to others because I also want them to learn at the same time.] According to Lin (2018) Individual student learning improve through interaction with others. This might be help to the learning of the students to be familiarized in different words. Through collaborative interaction students will be more knowledgeable with the help of others.

4. Conclusion

In this study, the five-day routine technique was utilized as a classroom intervention in Grade 5 and was observed to be effective in improving pupils' skills in identifying the meaning of unfamiliar words. This showed that the activities in the Five-Day Routine Technique, in which the pupils encountered unfamiliar words in different days had been successful. As a result, the null hypothesis was rejected since Grade 5 pupils who were exposed to the Five- Day Routine Technique showed a significant difference in pre-test and post-test scores before and after the intervention. Moreover, as indicated to the participants' response on the survey questionnaire, it can also be inferred that they liked the intervention.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

Statement of ethical approval

No conflict of interest to be disclosed. Reference to the attached cover letter.

Statement of informed consent

This research study, titled improving pupils' skills in identifying the meaning of unfamiliar words through a five- day routine technique," conducted by Ian Edrey I. Cruz^a, Mialyn M. Galang^a, Joshua B. Sincioco, Julieta A. Asuncion College of Education, Bulacan Agricultural State College], has received ethical approval from the College of Education Research Committee, Bulacan Agricultural State College.

The study protocol, including all research instruments (e.g., questionnaires, interview guides, consent forms), recruitment procedures, data collection methods, data storage and confidentiality measures, and dissemination plans, has been thoroughly reviewed and approved.

References

- [1] Alhassan, B. & Osei, M (2022). Effectiveness of integrating drawing in teaching English language in intellectual disability classroom. International Journal on Social and Education Sciences (IJonSES), 4(1), 74-86. <https://doi.org/10.46328/ijonSES.250>
- [2] Barkley, E. F., & Major, C. H. (n.d.). Getting students to apply what they have learned in a new context. CrossCurrents. <https://kpcrossacademy.org>
- [3] Kafipour, Reza&Yazdi, Mahdi. (2014). A qualitative study of vocabulary learning strategies applied by iranian undergraduate EFL learners in real learning setting. English Language Teaching, 7. <https://10.5539/elt.v7n7p1>
- [4] Kashdan, T. B., Rose, P., & Fincham, F. D. (2004). Curiosity and exploration: Facilitating positive subjective experiences and personal growth opportunities. Journal of Personality Assessment, 82(3), 291-305. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327752jpa8203_05
- [5] Kiger, M., & Varpio, L. (2020) Thematic analysis of qualitative data: AMEE guide no. 131,
- [6] Medical Teacher, 4(8), 846-854, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0142159X.2020.1755030>
- [7] Lin Su-Fei.(2018). The effect of group work on English vocabulary learning. Canadian Center of Science and Education. <https://doi.org/10.5539/jel.v7n4p163>
- [8] Marye, S. (2022). Teaching context clues in easy steps. The Stellar Teacher. <https://www.stellarteacher.com/blog/teaching-context-clues/>
- [9] Moghadam, S.H., Zainal, Z., Ghaderpour, M. (2012). A Review on the important role of vocabulary knowledge in reading comprehension performance. Procedia- Social and Behavioral Sciences. 66(0), 555-563. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.11.300>
- [10] Moody, S., Hu, X., Kuo, L., Jouhar, M., Xu, Z., Lee, S. (2018). Vocabulary instruction. A Critical Analysis of Theories, Research and Practice. 8(180), 1-2. <https://doi.10.3390/educsci8040169>

- [11] Sibhold, C. (2011). Building English language learners' academic vocabulary: Strategies and tips. *Multicultural Education*. 18(2), 24-28.
- [12] Senoo, Y., & Yonemoto, K. (2014). Vocabulary learning through extensive reading: A case study. *The Canadian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 17(2), 1-22. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1064814.pdf>
- [13] Taslim, T., Asrifan, A., Chen, Y., & NR, N. (2019). Correlation between student's vocabulary mastery and speaking skill. *Journal of Advanced English Studies*, 2(2), 65-76. <https://doi:10.47354/jaes.v2i2.64>
- [14] Tuncay, A.A. & Dedeoglu, H. (2019). Word recognition levels of first grade students: An application of word recognition inventory. *Educational Policy Analysis and Strategic Research*, 14(3), 237-267. <https://doi.org/10.29329/epasr.2019.208.11>
- [15] Wingerden, E., Segers, E., Balkom, H., & Verhoeven, L., (2018) Cognitive constraints on the simple view of reading. *A Longitudinal Study in Children With Intellectual Disabilities, Scientific Studies of Reading*, 22(4), 321-334. <https://10.1080/10888438.2018.1446435>