

ABSTRACT

Elisya, Vania., 2023, Exploring students' difficulties and strategies in learning English: A case study of a modern *pesantren*. Thesis. English Education Study Program. Faculty of Teacher Training and Education of Jambi University in Academic Year 2024/2025. The first supervisor is Dr. Hustarna, S.Pd., M.A. The second supervisor is Dr. Nyimas Triyana Safitri, S.Pd., M.Ed., St.

This study explores the difficulties students face and strategies they employ to overcome difficulties in learning English at a modern *pesantren*. The research was guided by three research questions: 1) What difficulties do students encounter in learning English at modern *pesantren*? 2) What are the internal and external factors contributing to student difficulties in learning English at modern *pesantren*? 3) How do students at the modern *pesantren* solve the difficulties they encounter when learning English? A qualitative research design was used to gain a thorough understanding of these issues. The study employed semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis. Using purposive sampling, the study involved six students from a modern *pesantren*. Thematic analysis revealed that students primarily encounter academic difficulties, followed by challenges in social interaction, cognition, motivation, and metacognition. Based on these findings, educational institutions should focus on creating environments that promote the use of English in both academic and social contexts. This includes integrating more interactive and engaging teaching methods that cater to diverse learning styles and needs. Moreover, this study suggests several key improvements. First, institutions should create more dynamic, supportive learning environments that promote active use of English inside and outside the classroom. Second, future research should explore the long-term impact of these strategies on students' language proficiency and personal development. Third, similar approaches should be tested in other educational contexts, particularly under-researched areas like *pesantren*. Finally, this study supports for a holistic approach to language instruction, focusing on both immediate challenges and lifelong learning skills to better prepare students for success in a globalized world.

Keywords: *EFL, students' difficulties, pesantren, qualitative research*