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The Psychological Role of the Borrowed Word "Insecure" in Shaping Classroom Engagement among Young EFL Learners

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Abstract:

Lexical borrowing has become a common phenomenon in English language learning. However, its psychological influence on young EFL learners remains underexplored, particularly regarding how borrowed words may relate to classroom engagement. Previous studies have examined lexical borrowing from linguistic and cognitive perspectives; however, little attention has been paid to its psychological and pedagogical implications in elementary school contexts. This study investigates students' awareness of the borrowed word *insecure* and its role in shaping classroom engagement at MI Khadijah Malang. Employing a qualitative case study approach, the research involved 21 students from Grades Four, Five, and Six. Data were collected through classroom observations and semi-structured interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings reveal that students demonstrated different levels of awareness of the borrowed word *insecure*, with their understanding developing through exposure to English instruction, social media, peer interaction, and other everyday social environments. Students interpreted the term not only as an expression of low self-confidence but also as a reflection of academic comparison, anxiety, and self-improvement. Furthermore, the borrowed word was internalized in three distinct ways: as a source of motivation, as a form of self-doubt, and as having limited psychological influence. Interview and observation data showed that some students who associated *insecure* with self-improvement became more motivated, increased their learning effort, or developed new learning strategies, such as learning through songs, increasing vocabulary exposure, and using language-learning applications. In contrast, some students who compared themselves with higher-achieving peers experienced self-doubt and showed reduced participation or motivation, while others reported little influence from the term and maintained stable classroom participation. These different interpretations were associated with varying patterns of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement in the English classroom. The study concludes that the relationship between the borrowed word *insecure* and classroom engagement is not uniform but varies according to how learners internalize and relate its meaning to their academic experiences and social interactions. By integrating lexical borrowing with learner engagement theory, this study demonstrates that borrowed words may function not only as linguistic resources but also as psychological labels that are associated with learners' engagement in English language learning.



Introduction (مقدمة)

Learning involves not only cognitive processes but also psychological dimensions (Ye, 2024). One psychological aspect that has received increasing attention is the influence of language use, particularly lexical borrowing, on students' classroom engagement (Sulis, 2022). Student engagement is widely recognized in educational psychology as a multidimensional construct consisting of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive components (Fredricks et al., 2004). Behavioral engagement refers to learners' observable participation in learning activities, emotional engagement relates to learners' affective reactions such as interest, enjoyment, or anxiety, and cognitive engagement involves learners' investment in understanding, effort, and self-regulated learning (Appleton et al., 2008; Fredricks et al., 2004). Recent research has also emphasized that psychological and classroom factors are closely related to EFL learners' engagement. For example, (Ye, 2024) highlights the importance of classroom and psychological conditions in supporting student engagement in EFL learning, while (Sulis & Mercer, 2025) explain that learner engagement develops through the dynamic interaction between learners and their classroom environment. These studies suggest that engagement cannot be understood only from learners' observable participation but also from the emotional and psychological experiences underlying their classroom behavior.

Within this engagement framework, language use itself, including the choice and circulation of lexical items, can influence how learners emotionally respond to learning and how actively they participate in classroom activities (Sulis & Mercer, 2025). Lexical borrowing, also referred to as loanword adoption, is the incorporation of lexical items from one language into another as a result of language contact (Durkin, 2020). Similarly, (Krylov, 2024) defines lexical borrowing as the transfer of foreign linguistic elements from one language to another as a consequence of language contact. In Indonesia, English lexical borrowing has become increasingly common, particularly as students are exposed to English through classroom learning, social media, digital platforms, and everyday communication. In learning English, students are therefore frequently exposed to English lexical borrowing, including words such as *insecure* (Rohbiah et al., 2026.). At MI Khadijah Malang, the use of the borrowed word *insecure* has become a noticeable phenomenon during classroom interaction. This phenomenon provides an opportunity to examine how a borrowed word may relate not only to learners' linguistic experiences but also to their psychological experiences and classroom engagement (Feng & Hong, 2022).

The borrowed word *insecure* is commonly associated with feelings of self-doubt, anxiety, low confidence, or perceived inadequacy. In educational contexts, these psychological experiences may be connected to how learners perceive their own abilities and respond to classroom activities. Previous research on EFL learning has shown that emotions and learners' perceptions of themselves can be related to their engagement in learning. (Feng & Hong, 2022), for example, found a relationship between emotion, engagement, and achievement among Chinese EFL learners, indicating that learners' emotional experiences are relevant to their participation in language learning. Similarly, recent research has examined the role of psychological and motivational factors in EFL engagement, showing that learners' emotions,

classroom experiences, and motivational conditions are connected to their willingness to participate and invest effort in learning (Jin, 2024; Wang et al., 2023). These findings provide a basis for considering *insecure* not only as a lexical item but also as a word that may carry psychological meanings when learners use it to describe themselves or their learning experiences.

At MI Khadijah Malang, students use the term *insecure* not only to describe their emotions but also to evaluate their English proficiency, classroom participation, and learning outcomes. This suggests that the word may function as more than a linguistic expression; it may also serve as a psychological label through which learners interpret their learning experiences. From the perspective of learner engagement, such interpretations may be associated with different behavioral, emotional, and cognitive responses. For example, feelings of self-doubt may be associated with reduced participation or reluctance to speak, while other learners may interpret the same feeling as motivation to improve their learning (Lee & Chiu, 2023). Therefore, the meaning attached to *insecure* may differ according to learners' personal experiences, emotions, and social comparisons (Inagaki, 2022). Rather than assuming that the word has one fixed psychological effect, this study examines how students themselves interpret and internalize the term and how these interpretations relate to their engagement in English learning.

Previous studies have demonstrated that lexical borrowing extends beyond linguistic transfer and contributes to learners' cognitive processing, identity construction, and language use. (Ferries, 2022), through a corpus analysis, found that loanwords are related to second language production and become integrated into learners' linguistic and cognitive processing. (Rugaiyah & Ariyanto, 2025) reported that English borrowing among university students functions not only as a linguistic trend but also as a reflection of learners' identity and emotional expression in academic contexts. (Monaghan & Roberts, 2019) argued that familiarity, frequency of exposure, and cognitive similarity facilitate the adoption of borrowed words. (Alyunina & Nagel, 2020) further demonstrated that English loanwords contribute to cultural expression and influence self-perception within linguistic communities. Meanwhile, (Anggraeni, 2021) examined the types and meanings of English borrowing words in Indonesian academic writing, while (Al-Jarf, 2021) investigated the phonological, semantic, and morphological adaptation of Arabic and English loanwords in Bahasa Malaysia. Collectively, these studies indicate that lexical borrowing involves linguistic, cognitive, social, and cultural dimensions. However, most previous studies have focused on the linguistic adaptation, cognitive processing, identity, or cultural meaning of borrowed words, while limited attention has been given to how a specific borrowed word with psychological meaning is interpreted and internalized by young EFL learners.

Moreover, existing research on learner engagement has predominantly examined instructional practices, task design, classroom environment, or teacher-student interaction, with less attention to how learners' own lexical choices and self-labeling practices may relate to engagement or disengagement. Although recent studies have increasingly discussed psychological factors such as emotion, motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety in relation to EFL engagement (Feng & Hong, 2022; Jin, 2024; Wang et al., 2023), these studies do not specifically examine the role of a borrowed lexical item as a psychological label in elementary EFL learners' classroom experiences. In particular, little is known about how young learners internalize an emotionally meaningful borrowed word and how this internalization may be associated with their behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement during English learning. This gap is particularly evident in elementary school contexts, especially within Islamic educational settings in Indonesia.

Addressing these gaps, the present study focuses on the borrowed term *insecure* among elementary EFL learners at MI Khadijah Malang. The novelty of this study lies in connecting lexical borrowing research with learner psychology and student engagement by examining how

students interpret, internalize, and attach personal meanings to a borrowed word and how these meanings are related to their classroom engagement. Rather than treating *insecure* only as a borrowed lexical item, this study considers it as a possible psychological label through which learners understand their academic experiences and social comparisons. Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following research questions: (1) How do students interpret and use the borrowed word *insecure* in the English classroom?; and (2) How does the internalization of the borrowed word *insecure* relate to students' behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement during English learning? By integrating lexical borrowing research with learner engagement theory, this study aims to contribute to a broader understanding of the psychological and pedagogical implications of lexical borrowing in young learners' English classrooms.



Method (منهج)

Research Instruments

Two complementary instruments were employed to collect data in this study: a classroom observation checklist accompanied by field notes and a semi-structured interview guide. The use of multiple instruments enabled methodological triangulation by combining observable classroom behaviors with students' personal perceptions and experiences regarding the borrowed word *insecure*. While classroom observations provided evidence of students' behavioral engagement during English learning, the semi-structured interviews allowed the researchers to explore participants' interpretations, emotions, and cognitive reflections that could not be directly observed (Cresswell & Poth, 2018). Both instruments were developed based on the research questions and Student Engagement Theory proposed by Fredricks et al. (2004), ensuring alignment between the theoretical framework, data collection, and data analysis.

1. Classroom Observation

Classroom observation served as the first research instrument to examine students' classroom engagement during English learning activities. The researchers acted as a non-participant observer in order to minimize disruption to the natural classroom environment while systematically documenting students' behaviors and interactions. Observation was selected because behavioral engagement is more accurately captured through direct observation of students' participation than through self-reported accounts alone (Fredricks et al., 2004).

An observation checklist accompanied by descriptive field notes was developed based on the three dimensions of student engagement proposed by Fredricks et al. (2004). The checklist focused on observable indicators of classroom engagement, including students' participation in classroom activities, willingness to answer questions, interaction with teachers and peers, verbal use of the borrowed word *insecure*, expressions of confidence or hesitation, and emotional responses during English learning. Meanwhile, field notes were used to record contextual information, classroom atmosphere, and unexpected events that could not be sufficiently represented through the checklist alone.

The observation data complemented the interview findings by providing direct evidence of how students behaved in authentic classroom situations. These observational records were later compared with participants' interview responses during the data analysis process to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the psychological influence of the borrowed word *insecure* on classroom engagement.

2. Semi-structured interviews

The primary instrument of this study was a semi-structured interview guide designed to explore students' understanding of the borrowed word *insecure* and its perceived influence on their classroom engagement. Semi-structured interviews were considered appropriate because they provide sufficient structure to address the research questions while allowing flexibility for follow-up questions that explore participants' experiences in greater depth (Cresswell & Poth, 2018).

The interview guide was developed based on the two research questions and the theoretical framework of Student Engagement Theory (Fredricks et al., 2004). The interview questions were organized into three broad areas: (1) students' awareness and interpretation of the borrowed word *insecure*, (2) the sources through which students encountered and learned the borrowed word, and (3) the perceived influence of the borrowed word on students' behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement during English learning. Open-ended questions were used throughout the interview to encourage participants to explain their experiences freely, while follow-up questions were employed whenever clarification or further elaboration was required. Prior to the main data collection, the interview guide underwent expert review by an expert in qualitative research and English language education to evaluate the clarity, relevance, and alignment of the questions with the research objectives and theoretical framework. Minor revisions were made based on the feedback before the interviews were conducted.

All interviews were conducted individually in a quiet setting within the school environment to encourage participants to express their opinions comfortably. With participants' and parents' consent, the interviews were audio-recorded to ensure the completeness and accuracy of the data. The recordings were subsequently transcribed verbatim and served as the primary source for the thematic analysis.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, following the six-phase procedures proposed by (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This analytical approach was selected because it enables researchers to identify, organize, and interpret recurring patterns of meaning across qualitative data while remaining flexible enough to capture participants' subjective experiences. First, the researchers familiarized themselves with the data by repeatedly reading the observation notes and interview transcripts. Second, initial codes were generated to identify meaningful units of data related to students' interpretations of the term "insecure" and their classroom engagement. The coding process combined deductive and inductive approaches. Deductive coding was guided by Student Engagement Theory (Fredricks et al., 2004), particularly the dimensions of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement, while inductive coding allowed additional patterns to emerge directly from participants' responses. The codes were then grouped into broader themes corresponding to the three dimensions of learner engagement: behavioral engagement, emotional engagement, and cognitive engagement. Conceptually related codes were clustered into categories before being refined into themes through repeated comparison with the original data. The themes were reviewed and refined to ensure internal coherence and relevance to the research questions.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, several strategies were employed. Data triangulation was achieved by combining classroom observations with semi-structured interviews, allowing findings from one data source to corroborate those from another (Fusch et al., 2018). Prolonged engagement through observations conducted over the two-week data collection period enabled the researchers to identify recurring patterns rather than isolated instances. In addition, the coding process and the development of themes underwent expert review to evaluate their consistency, coherence, and alignment with the research objectives and

the theoretical framework. Minor refinements were subsequently made to strengthen the credibility and dependability of the analysis.

The final themes were interpreted using Student Engagement Theory (Fredricks et al., 2004). Specifically, the theory provided an analytical framework for explaining how students' interpretations of the borrowed word *insecure* influenced their behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement in English learning. The integration of thematic findings with the theoretical framework enabled the researchers to answer the research questions while providing a comprehensive understanding of the psychological role of lexical borrowing in the classroom.

Participant (Subject) Characteristics

The study focused on students in Grade Four to Six because these learners have already received formal English instruction and sufficient exposure to English loanwords through classroom learning and everyday communication (Setyarini et al., 2020). In addition, students at these grades were considered capable of expressing their perception and reflecting on the psychological meanings attached to the borrowed word *insecure* during semi-structured interviews, whereas younger learners might have had more limited linguistic and cognitive abilities to articulate such experiences. The participants consisted of 21 students from Grades Four, Five, and Six, with seven students purposively selected from each grade. All participants were learning English as a foreign language at MI Khadijah Malang, an Islamic elementary school in Malang, Indonesia. Data were collected over a two-week period through classroom observation and semi-structured interviews. Data collection continued until sufficient depth and repetition of ideas were achieved across the three grade levels, allowing the researchers to identify recurring themes relevant to the research questions.

Purposive sampling was employed to select participants who met the objectives of the study. The selection criteria included (1) enrollment in Grades Four to Six English classes, (2) prior exposure to the borrowed word *insecure*, (3) willingness to participate voluntarily, and (4) parental consent. To ensure variation in students' experiences, the English teacher assisted in identifying participants representing different levels of classroom engagement, ranging from highly engaged to less engaged learners. Teacher recommendations were used to achieve maximum variation in participant characteristics rather than to evaluate academic ability.

Ethical considerations were carefully addressed, as the study involved minor participants (British Educational Research Association (BERA), 2024). Informed consent was obtained from students and their parents or legal guardians, and permission was secured from the school authorities prior to data collection. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, their voluntary participation, and their right to withdraw at any time without any academic consequences. To ensure confidentiality, pseudonyms were used and all data were securely stored (Alfina Damayanti et al., 2026).

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative case study approach to investigate how the borrowed word *insecure* was interpreted and internalized by elementary school students and how it shaped their classroom engagement within a bounded educational context. The case was bounded by one Islamic elementary school, MI Khadijah Malang, where the frequent use of the borrowed word *insecure* had become a noticeable phenomenon among students. The study was guided by Student Engagement Theory proposed by (Fredricks et al., 2004), which conceptualizes engagement as comprising behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions. This theoretical framework informed the design of the classroom observations, the development of the semi-structured interview protocol, and the organization of the thematic analysis (Garvey & Jones, 2021). A qualitative case study was considered appropriate because it enabled an in-depth

exploration of students' experiences, perceptions, and meanings attached to the borrowed word *insecure* within its natural classroom setting (Ultavia et al., 2023). Data were collected through classroom observations and semi-structured interviews to capture both students' reported experiences and their observable engagement during English lessons. The integration of these two data sources provided a comprehensive understanding of the psychological role of the borrowed word *insecure* in shaping students' behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement during English learning.

Result (نتائج)

The findings presented in this section are derived from classroom observations and semi-structured interviews conducted with students in Grades Four, Five, and Six at MI Khadijah Malang. The analysis identified three interrelated themes that address the research questions. First, it examines students' awareness and interpretation of the borrowed word *insecure*, including the sources through which they encountered and learned the term. Second, it explores how the borrowed word influenced students' behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement during English learning. Finally, the findings reveal three patterns of internalization, in which students perceived the borrowed word as a source of motivation, a form of self-doubt, or a term with limited psychological influence. Together, these findings demonstrate that the psychological influence of the borrowed word depended on how learners interpreted and related its meaning to their own academic experiences and social interactions.

Students' awareness of the borrowed word "insecure"

Students demonstrated varying levels of awareness and understanding of the borrowed word *insecure*. In this study, awareness refers to students' ability to recognize, interpret, and appropriately use the borrowed word in everyday communication and classroom contexts. Interview data showed that while most participants associated the term with a lack of self-confidence, others expressed more complex interpretations involving anxiety, fear of speaking, academic comparison, and self-evaluation.

For example, several participants defined *insecure* as "*kurang percaya diri pada diri sendiri*" (lacking self-confidence). Others associated the term with distrust ("*Tidak percaya diri atau tidak percaya sama orang lain*"), fear of speaking in front of others ("*Contohnya, semisal ada orang presentasi, terus dia takut mau berbicara. Takut berbicara padahal itu gapapa kita belajar dari kesalahan*"), feelings of anxiety ("*Gelisah gak percaya diri*"), and comparisons with classmates who performed better in English ("*Saat teman pintar bahasa Inggris, sedangkan aku tidak paham*").

Classroom observations supported these interview findings. Students who demonstrated a more comprehensive understanding of the borrowed word generally participated more confidently in classroom interactions and were able to use the term appropriately when discussing their learning experiences with peers. In contrast, students with a more limited understanding tended to use the word only in informal conversations without elaborating on its meaning.

Overall, the findings suggest that students' awareness of the borrowed word developed progressively through repeated exposure and personal experience. As learners became increasingly familiar with the term, their interpretations expanded beyond its literal meaning to encompass emotional, academic, and interpersonal dimensions.

Sources of Students' Awareness of the Borrowed Word Insecure

Students' awareness of the borrowed word *insecure* developed through multiple sources of linguistic exposure rather than through classroom instruction alone. Interview data revealed that

participants encountered the term through social media, internet content, language-learning applications such as Duolingo, classroom learning, English competitions, family members, and peer interaction. For instance, one participant explained, "*Aku tahu kata insecure itu dari internet sama Duolingo*," while another stated, "*Dari kakakku*." Several students also reported learning the term from their classmates, as reflected in responses such as "*Dengar aja dari teman-teman*" and "*Dengerin teman-teman ngomongin tentang insecure*." These responses suggest that repeated exposure across various social and educational contexts played an important role in familiarizing students with the borrowed word.

Classroom observations further supported these interview findings. During informal interactions before and after English lessons, students were occasionally observed using the borrowed word *insecure* when discussing academic performance or comparing themselves with classmates. This indicates that the word had become part of students' everyday vocabulary rather than being restricted to formal English instruction.

Although participants generally recognized the negative connotation of the borrowed word, several students also interpreted *insecure* as a positive reminder to improve their English proficiency and expand their vocabulary. These findings indicate that students did not simply adopt the lexical form of the borrowed word; they also negotiated its psychological meaning based on their own learning experiences and social interactions.

The role of the borrowed word "insecure" in shaping behavioral, emotional, and cognitive aspects in English learning context.

Behavioral Engagement

Classroom observations and interview data consistently showed that the borrowed word *insecure* influenced students' behavioral engagement in different ways. Rather than producing a single behavioral response, students' interpretations of the borrowed word shaped their classroom participation in contrasting ways. While some students became more actively involved in English learning as a means of overcoming feelings of insecurity, others demonstrated reduced participation because the term reinforced feelings of inadequacy and fear of making mistakes. Several participants described feelings of insecurity as a source of motivation that encouraged them to improve their English proficiency. One participant explained:

"*Jadi kayak misalnya iri sama temen gitu ya gara-gara dia tuh kayak lebih bagus, kok dia lebih bagus sih gitu. Terus jadinya kan pengen kayak dia, jadi kita lebih termotivasi gitu. Lebih rajin belajar, tapi caranya tetap sama. Belajarnya di les, habis itu pulangnya nyatet, sama baca-baca rangkuman.*"

This response illustrates that the participant interpreted insecurity as motivation for self-improvement rather than discouragement. Feelings of comparison encouraged the student to participate more actively in learning activities, increase study efforts, and adopt more disciplined learning habits in order to improve English performance.

In contrast, other participants reported that the borrowed word *insecure* reduced their willingness to participate during English lessons. Feelings of insecurity made them reluctant to answer teachers' questions, hesitant to speak English, and less willing to contribute during classroom discussions. As one participant simply stated, "*Iya, bikin makin malas*," indicating that the psychological meaning attached to the borrowed word discouraged active classroom participation rather than encouraging improvement.

A third group of students reported that the borrowed word had little influence on their classroom behavior. Responses such as "*Biasa aja sih*" and "*Tidak mempengaruhi apa-apa sih bagi saya, Kak*" suggest that familiarity with the borrowed word did not necessarily translate into changes in classroom participation or learning behavior. Although these students understood the meaning of the term, they did not perceive it as personally relevant to their English learning

experiences.

These three patterns were also reflected during classroom observations. Students who interpreted *insecure* as a motivation for self-improvement generally volunteered answers more frequently, participated actively in classroom tasks, and interacted confidently with teachers and peers. Conversely, students who associated the borrowed word with self-doubt were more likely to hesitate before answering questions, remain passive during classroom discussions, or avoid participating in English activities. Students who reported limited psychological influence displayed relatively stable participation throughout the observation period regardless of their familiarity with the borrowed word.

Overall, the findings indicate that the borrowed word itself did not directly determine students' behavioral engagement. Instead, behavioral responses depended on how learners interpreted and internalized the psychological meaning of the borrowed word in relation to their own academic experiences and social comparisons.

Emotional Engagement

Interview and classroom observation data revealed that the borrowed word *insecure* influenced students' emotional engagement in three distinct ways. For some students, the term served as a source of motivation that encouraged greater enthusiasm for learning English. For others, it evoked feelings of self-doubt and anxiety that reduced their confidence during classroom activities. A third group of students reported that the borrowed word had little or no emotional influence on their English learning experiences.

Several participants perceived feelings of insecurity as a positive emotional trigger that motivated them to improve their English proficiency. One student stated, "*Semakin termotivasi giat belajar bahasa Inggris,*" while another explained, "*Makin termotivasi karena kalau dia bisa kenapa aku engga.*" These responses suggest that students transformed feelings of insecurity into encouragement for self-improvement rather than allowing them to become barriers to learning. Some participants also reported feeling confident because they believed they already possessed sufficient English ability, as reflected in the statement, "*Enggak ada karena sudah dari kecil bisa Bahasa Inggris.*" These students viewed insecurity as a challenge to overcome rather than as a weakness that diminished their confidence.

In contrast, other participants associated the borrowed word with negative emotional experiences. Comparing themselves with classmates who achieved better academic performance often generated feelings of self-doubt, anxiety, and reduced confidence. As one participant explained, "*Gara-gara dia dapat nilai bagus terus, terus aku insecure soalnya aku kayak gak pernah dapat nilai bagus.*" This response illustrates that the psychological meaning attached to the borrowed word reinforced negative self-evaluation, which occasionally reduced students' enthusiasm and confidence during English learning.

A third group of participants reported that the borrowed word had minimal emotional impact on their learning experiences. Responses such as "*Gak begitu ngaruh sih*" indicate that, although these students understood the meaning of the borrowed word, they did not perceive it as influencing their motivation, confidence, or emotional responses in the English classroom. Familiarity with the borrowed word therefore did not necessarily lead to emotional changes among all learners.

These emotional patterns were also reflected during classroom observations. Students who interpreted *insecure* as motivation generally appeared more enthusiastic, responded positively to classroom activities, and demonstrated greater confidence when participating in English lessons. Conversely, students who associated the borrowed word with self-doubt tended to hesitate before participating, appeared less confident when responding to teachers' questions, and

occasionally withdrew from classroom interaction. Students who reported limited psychological influence displayed relatively stable emotional responses throughout the observation period regardless of their familiarity with the borrowed word.

Overall, the findings indicate that the emotional influence of the borrowed word *insecure* depended not on the word itself but on how learners interpreted its psychological meaning. Students who viewed insecurity as an opportunity for self-improvement experienced increased motivation and confidence, whereas those who interpreted it as evidence of personal inadequacy experienced greater anxiety and reduced emotional engagement during English learning.

Cognitive Engagement

Interview and classroom observation data revealed that the borrowed word *insecure* also influenced students' cognitive engagement by shaping the learning strategies they employed during English learning. Students demonstrated three different patterns of cognitive engagement. Some interpreted feelings of insecurity as a challenge that encouraged them to develop more effective learning strategies, whereas others associated the borrowed word with negative self-perceptions that limited their learning efforts. Meanwhile, another group reported that the borrowed word had little influence on their study habits or learning process.

Several participants explained that feelings of insecurity motivated them to adopt various strategies to improve their English proficiency. These strategies included listening to English songs, expanding their vocabulary, using dictionaries, enrolling in English courses, utilizing language-learning applications such as Duolingo, creating songs from classroom materials, paying closer attention to teachers' explanations, communicating with English speakers, and learning English through games. One participant stated, "*Belajar sama orang-orang yang ngomong bahasa Inggris dan dengerin lagu pake Bahasa Inggris*," while another explained, "*Menghafal kata-kata atau vocabulary, main game pakai bahasa Inggris, lalu pake aplikasi Duolingo dan mencatat materi*." These responses indicate that students interpreted feelings of insecurity as motivation to invest greater cognitive effort by adopting more diverse and self-directed learning strategies. Some participants also reported reducing leisure activities in order to allocate more time to studying English.

In contrast, participants who associated the borrowed word with negative self-perceptions reported making fewer efforts to improve their learning strategies. Meanwhile, several students maintained their usual study habits because they believed that the borrowed word had little influence on their learning process. Classroom observations supported these findings, showing that students who interpreted *insecure* positively tended to pay closer attention during lessons, ask questions, and persist when encountering learning difficulties, whereas those with negative interpretations appeared less willing to seek additional learning opportunities.

Overall, the findings suggest that the borrowed word *insecure* influenced students' cognitive engagement by affecting the extent to which they invested effort in improving their English learning strategies. However, these responses varied according to how students interpreted the psychological meaning of the borrowed word.

Patterns of Internalizing the Borrowed Word Insecure

The findings from the behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement analyses indicate that students did not internalize the borrowed word *insecure* in the same way. Although participants generally understood the meaning of the borrowed word, they attached different psychological meanings to it based on their personal experiences, academic performance, and social interactions. By comparing interview and classroom observation data, three patterns of internalization emerged: positive internalization, negative internalization, and neutral internalization. These patterns explain why the same borrowed word generated different

responses among students despite their shared learning environment.

1. Positive Internalization

The first pattern, positive internalization, was demonstrated by students who interpreted feelings of insecurity as motivation for self-improvement. Rather than viewing insecurity as a weakness, these students regarded it as encouragement to improve their English proficiency. This interpretation was reflected across all three dimensions of engagement. Behaviorally, they participated more actively in classroom activities and demonstrated greater persistence in completing learning tasks. Emotionally, they reported increased motivation and confidence to improve their English abilities. Cognitively, they adopted various learning strategies, including expanding their vocabulary, using language-learning applications, listening to English songs, practicing with English speakers, and allocating more time for independent study. These findings suggest that the borrowed word functioned as a psychological catalyst that encouraged greater engagement with English learning.

2. Negative Internalization

The second pattern, negative internalization, was observed among students who associated the borrowed word with feelings of inadequacy and negative self-comparison. These students tended to interpret insecurity as evidence of their own academic limitations, particularly when comparing themselves with classmates who performed better in English. As a result, they demonstrated lower levels of classroom participation, reduced confidence, and greater hesitation when responding to teachers' questions or participating in English activities. They also reported fewer efforts to develop new learning strategies, indicating that negative interpretations of the borrowed word reduced both their emotional and cognitive investment in learning.

3. Neutral Internalization

The third pattern, neutral internalization, was found among students who understood the lexical meaning of the borrowed word but did not perceive it as personally relevant to their English learning. Although these participants were familiar with the term *insecure*, they reported that it neither increased nor decreased their motivation, classroom participation, or learning strategies. Classroom observations likewise showed relatively consistent learning behaviors among these students. This finding suggests that lexical awareness alone was insufficient to produce psychological or behavioral changes; rather, the borrowed word influenced engagement only when students personally internalized its meaning.

Taken together, these findings demonstrate that the psychological influence of the borrowed word *insecure* depended not on the lexical item itself but on how students interpreted and internalized its meaning. The same borrowed word could function as motivation for self-improvement, reinforce self-doubt, or remain psychologically neutral depending on learners' individual experiences and perceptions. These patterns provide a comprehensive explanation of how borrowed words may extend beyond their linguistic function to shape learners' engagement with English learning through different processes of psychological internalization.

Figure 1 synthesizes the analytical process that emerged from the findings. Students first demonstrated varying levels of awareness of the borrowed word *insecure*, influenced by different sources of exposure and individual interpretations of its meaning. These interpretations shaped students' behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement during English learning, which collectively resulted in three patterns of internalization: positive (motivation), negative (self-doubt), and neutral (limited influence). The figure illustrates the central finding of this study: the borrowed word *insecure* evolved beyond its linguistic function to become a psychological construct that shaped students' classroom engagement.

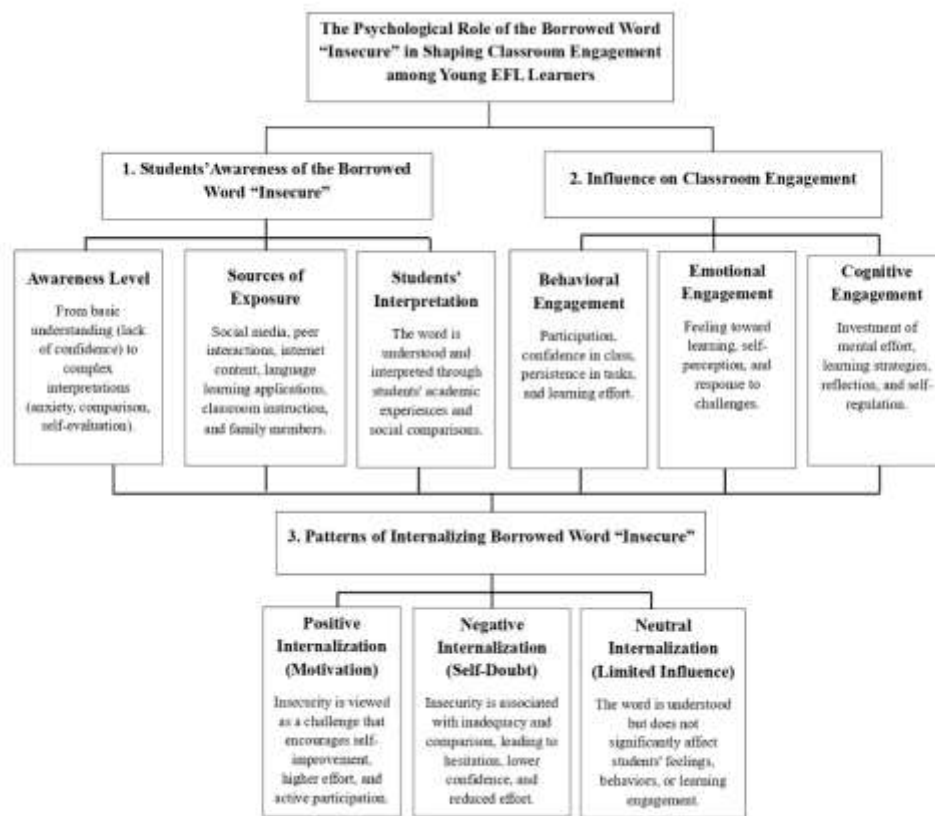


Figure 1. Thematic Model Emerging from the Study Findings



Discussion (مناقشة)

The findings demonstrate that students possessed different levels of awareness toward the borrowed word "insecure", starting from a basic understanding of the term as a lack of confidence to more complex interpretations involving anxiety, academic comparison, and self-evaluation. Students with greater awareness were generally those who had experienced more frequent exposure to English through formal learning and everyday social interactions. These findings support (Rugaiyah & Ariyanto, 2025) study which argue that the adoption of English borrowed words extends beyond linguistic practice and reflects learners' identity construction and emotional expression. Similar to the university students in their study, the elementary school students in the present study used the borrowed word "insecure" to describe their feelings, academic experiences, and perceptions of themselves in relation to others. However, this study extends this finding by demonstrating that the psychological meaning associated with borrowed words emerge even among young learners in an Islamic elementary school context. This suggests that lexical borrowing contributes not only to vocabulary development but also to identity

construction and emotional expression from an early stage of language learning.

Another important finding concerns the sources through which students became familiar with the borrowed word "insecure". Students encountered the term through multiple channels, including social media, peer interactions, internet content, language-learning applications, classroom instruction, and family members. These findings suggest that students' awareness developed through continuous exposure in both educational and social environments rather than from classroom instruction alone. This pattern is consistent with Monaghan & Roberts (2019), who argue that the acquisition of borrowed words is strongly influenced by familiarity, frequency of exposure, and cognitive processing. Frequent encounters with the borrowed word enabled students to move beyond its literal meaning and construct richer interpretations associated with emotional experiences, academic performance, and social comparison. Consequently, students' awareness was shaped not only by linguistic exposure but also by their cognitive and social experiences, allowing them to assign personal meanings to the borrowed word.

The findings further revealed that students internalized the borrowed word "insecure" in three distinct ways such as a source of motivation, as a form of self-doubt, or as a term with limited psychological influence. The interview data and classroom observations consistently demonstrated that many students interpreted feelings of insecurity as opportunities for self-improvement, leading them to participate more actively in class, increase their learning effort, and adopt new learning strategies. Conversely, other students associated the borrowed word with inadequacy and social comparison, resulting in hesitation, lower confidence, and reduced classroom participation. Several students, however, understood the meaning of *insecure* without allowing it to influence their engagement or learning behavior. These findings support (Ferries, 2022) who argues that loanwords become integrated into learners' linguistic and cognitive systems and influence more than language production alone. The present study extends this perspective by showing that the borrowed word "insecure" also functions as a psychological reference through which learners evaluate themselves, interpret their academic experiences, and regulate their responses to learning challenges. Therefore, the influence of lexical borrowing depends not merely on knowing the borrowed word but on how learners internalize its psychological meaning.

The triangulation of interview and classroom observation data further demonstrated that students' interpretations of the borrowed word were reflected in their behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement. Students who interpreted insecure as motivation were generally observed to participate more actively, respond more confidently during classroom interactions, and demonstrate greater persistence in completing learning tasks. Emotionally, they viewed insecurity as a challenge that encouraged self-improvement rather than discouragement. Cognitively, they invested more effort by developing various learning strategies, including increasing vocabulary exposure, practicing English through songs and digital applications, enrolling in additional English courses, and studying more frequently. These strategies reflect a higher level of cognitive engagement, as students actively regulated and adapted their learning in response to feelings of insecurity. In contrast, students who negatively internalized the borrowed word associated it with inadequacy and social comparison, resulting in hesitation, lower confidence, and reduced effort during English learning. Meanwhile, students with neutral internalization displayed relatively stable engagement despite their familiarity with the borrowed word. These findings align with Student Engagement Theory proposed by (Fredricks et al., 2004) which conceptualizes engagement as comprising behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions. However, the present study further suggests that the influence of lexical borrowing on engagement is mediated by learners' psychological interpretations of borrowed words. Rather than producing a single psychological outcome, the borrowed word "insecure" shaped students' engagement differently according to how they interpreted and internalized its meaning within

their own academic experiences and social comparisons. This finding highlights that lexical borrowing can function not only as a linguistic phenomenon but also as a psychological resource that may either facilitate or constrain learner engagement in English classrooms.



Conclusion (خاتمة)

This study concludes that the borrowed word *insecure* was familiar to students at MI Khadijah Malang through English learning, social interaction, and everyday communication. The findings show that students interpreted and internalized the term in three ways: as a source of motivation, as a form of self-doubt, and as having limited psychological influence. These patterns were associated with different forms of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement. Students who interpreted *insecure* as motivation tended to show greater learning effort and develop learning strategies, while those who related the term to self-doubt and academic comparison showed hesitation and reduced participation. Other students understood the term but reported little influence on their learning behavior.

Overall, the findings suggest that the psychological influence of *insecure* was context-dependent and varied according to students' personal experiences, interpretations, and social comparisons. Thus, the borrowed word should not be understood as producing one uniform effect on classroom engagement. Instead, its psychological meaning emerged through how individual learners related the term to their own learning experiences. This study contributes to research on lexical borrowing by showing that a borrowed word may carry meanings beyond its linguistic function and may be experienced differently by young EFL learners within a specific educational context.

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