

An Analysis of Factors Influencing English Education Department Students' Vocabulary Size

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Abstract: This study aimed to assess the vocabulary size of undergraduate students and identify the factors that influenced it. The research involved 15 students from different semesters within the English Education Department at a Private University in Yogyakarta. The study applied mixed-method approach. Questionnaires and Interview were used for gathering the data. The researchers used Vocabulary Size Test that developed by Nation and Beglar (2007). The findings indicated that 13 students had a vocabulary size of 5,000–6,000 word families. Regarding the factors affecting the students' results, it was revealed that external factors had a more significant influence with a result of 60.5% and a gap of 3% with internal factors, which is 57.5%.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menilai ukuran kosakata mahasiswa dan mengidentifikasi fakto-faktor yang mempengaruhi. Penelitian ini melibatkan 15 mahasiswa dari berbagai semester mahasiswa Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris di Universitas Swasta di Yogyakarta. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan metode *mixed-method*. Untuk mengumpulkan data, peneliti menggunakan kuesioner dan wawancara. Selain itu, peneliti juga menggunakan Vocabulary Size test yang dibuat oleh Nation dan Beglar (2007). Hasil dari penelitian menunjukkan bahwa 13 mahasiswa memiliki 5,000-6,000 kosakata. Dengan hasil penelitian, faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi mahasiwa adalah faktor eksternal. Hasil analisis kuesioner eksternal menunjukkan 60,5% dan mempunyai selisih 3% dari faktor internal dengan hasil 57,5%.



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INTRODUCTION

Indonesian schools allow the students to read some paper, book, or novel which contains many vocabularies. Including the English paper, book, or novel. English has been acknowledged as the International Language that is spoken by many. Being able to speak English will allow us to access more information and knowledge, as this language is also widely used for media, and most creators or authors use the English language. Hence, learning it will be mandatory for the

younger generation. Especially on vocabulary. The vocabulary size refers to the quantity of words that constitute and construct meaningful sentences, as cited in Kumala (2021). Without grammar, only a minimal amount of information can be conveyed and without vocabulary conveying anything become impossible (Rohmatillah, 2014). Vocabulary can be described as the set of words and individual needs to komunitas effectively (Mukura, 2022).

English is a common language in many different fields including business and education (Crystal, 2003). Learning English will enhance your chance to work in an international company. Not only good salary, working with foreigners will also open our mind. From being in touch with people of different backgrounds and culture to adapting the good things coming with it. Working in a multinational company will also be a good practice to master English. In Indonesia, English has become a required subject taught from kindergarten or elementary school to the university level. It starts from beginner to advance level. This fact is a prove that English is mandatory. Experts believe that the very first step of learning English language is about vocabulary. Because it is an important component of a language. Vocabulary being one of the key knowledge areas in language holds significant importance for language learners during the process of language acquisition, as cited in Alqahtani (2015). Students should learn the vocabulary, so that they could communicate well with other people. It contains a wide range of word knowledge, including meaning form collocation, and register (Nacera, 2010). However, the vocabulary is not specially taught in school. According to Huyen and Nga (2003), a wide vocabulary acquisition is necessary for developing reading, listening, writing, and speaking skills (Wiwin, 2014).

Related to this research, there were three previous conducted studies. The first one was *English Students' Vocabulary Size and Level at A Private University In West Java, Indonesia* by Siregar (2020) . The study conducted at the university involved 40 second-semester students who enrolled in reading courses, the findings indicated 92,5% of the total participants had a vocabulary size ranging from 6,000 to 15,400 words, with an average of 8,732.5-word families. The students possessed sufficient vocabulary to engage in reading activities that required proficiency in 6,000-to-7,000-word families. However, only ten students demonstrated mastery of vocabulary levels between 1,000 and 5,000 words.

Second previous study entitled *Vocabulary Size of Students and Its Impact on English Language Performance* by Quines (2022); with the objective of understanding

how students' vocabulary size relates to their English performance. The study focused on students majoring in English at Jubail Industrial College. According to the study's findings, the size of a student's vocabulary is a reliable indicator of their English language proficiency. The research revealed that B1 plus respondents had an average vocabulary size of 70.5714-word families. This Vocabulary size is near the target of 8,000-word families, which is considered sufficient for a 98% comprehension of complex spoken and written texts. Therefore, students with this vocabulary size are capable of undertaking more advanced academic courses with their specialization.

The last study called *The role of Vocabulary Size in Predicting Performance on TOEFL Reading Item Types* by Alavi (2012). The purpose of the study was to investigate the potential correlation between vocabulary knowledge, as measured by the Vocabulary level Test and the performance of reading comprehension questions in TOEFL exam. The study involved 213 participants and their scores subjected to analysis through stepwise multiple regression tests.

According to Nation (2006), research has indicated that learners require approximately 5.000-word families to comprehend novels intended for teenagers, engage in everyday conversations, and watch movies. However, to read authentic materials, novels, and certain academic texts, learners need a larger vocabulary, ranging from 9.000 to 10.000 words. In essence, high school students are expected to possess a vocabulary of about 5.000 words, while university-level students should aim for a vocabulary of around 10.000 words (Tsuraya, 2018).

Comparing the vocabulary size of students, it is important to consider several factors and it divided into two parts of factors. First, internal factors refer to the elements that a language learner brings into a specific learning context. These factors encompass various aspects, such as age, experiences, and learning styles (Andari, 2023). External factors are connected to both the environment

in which the language is acquired and the approach used to introduce second language, as cited in Andari (2023). This investigation focuses on the vocabulary size of university students at various levels. Vocabulary plays a crucial role in academic achievement. Students with a larger vocabulary tend to comprehend and express ideas more effectively. Measure the vocabulary size can help educators design appropriate strategies to enhance students' language abilities, which can lead to improved academic performance. Moreover, this research was conducted to find out the vocabulary size of students and factors influencing English education department students' vocabulary size.

METHODS

This research used mixed-methods design. As cited in Dawadi (2021), mixed-methods research refers to a research approach that integrates various methods in a suitable and principled way to address research inquiries. The participants of this study comprised students from the English Education Department at Private University in Yogyakarta. These students were in their second, fourth, sixth, eighth, and tenth semesters, totaling 15 participants. To gather data, the researcher uses various instruments. The primary method utilized was a vocabulary size test.

The researcher used the first instrument, which involved a vocabulary test. Initially, the participants were required to take an online Vocabulary Size Test (VST) using either the 14.000 or 20.00 versions by Nation and Beglar (2007). This research used 14.000 version which consisted 140 question with five multiple choice items, as cited in Siregar (2020). When learners can answer 60 questions correctly, their vocabulary size measured as 6,000 words. The researcher used another instrument which was an interview. This interview, five students from different semesters participated, aimed to obtain valuable insights and more understanding of how vocabulary impacted their lives, as cited in Afzal (2019).

According to Kvale in Alamri (2019), by using the interview techniques, the

researcher frequently seeks to grasp the interviewee's perspective by interpreting the significance of the described phenomena, as cited in Alamri (2019). The third was a questionnaire; consisting of 22 questions. The questionnaire was divided into two parts: Part 1 focused on internal factors related to vocabulary size, whereas Part 2 delved into external factors vocabulary size. The questionnaire used online google form and using the Likert scale with five numbers of scale, there are strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree. According to Sugiyono (2011), this scale is utilized to measure an individual's attitudes, opinions, and perceptions towards a social phenomenon (Lestariningsih, 2016). For scoring the questionnaire, the researcher applied Sugiyono's theory, as cited in Sari (2019):

$$\frac{\text{Number of Positive Perception}}{\text{The highest range} \times \text{total participants} \times \text{total of statement}} \times 100\%$$

Table 1. Questionnaire Percentage Qualification

Percent%	Qualification
75 - 100%	High
50 - 75%	Medium
25 - 50%	Low
0 - 25%	Very Low

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2. Results of Vocabulary Size Test

Name	Results
AM	6.900
BA	5.100
BP	6.200
WP	17.900
M	8.300
S	4.600
R	5.300
F	4.900

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Table 2 continued.

N	5.200
V	4.600
MN	5.000
Z	11.400
T	7.100
S	5.900
H	6.600

The results of 15 students from the English education department who participated in the Vocabulary Size Test were presented in Table 1. The data shows that overall, the students' vocabulary knowledge fell within the range of 5,000-to-6,000-word families. Notably, there was a substantial disparity between the highest score recorded (17.900 word families) and the lowest score attained (4.600 word families). This was the actual result of the vocabulary size the students measured; that number represented how the students measured the vocabulary they had mastered. Measuring vocabulary size held significance for planning, diagnosing, and conducting research. Without knowing the current status of a learner's vocabulary growth, it become a challenge to design a meaningful vocabulary development program (Tsuraya, 2018).

Table 3. Internal Factors Influencing Vocabulary Size

No	Statement/ Question	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
1	I am able to understand the vocabulary of English language when I was in the first semester.	60%	20%	20%
2	There is a positive side knowing the variety of vocabulary.	86,6%	6,7%	6,7%
3	I have desire to have many vocabularies.	73,3%	13,3%	13,3%

4	Since I was in elementary school, I learn English language.	60%	20%	20%
5	I have enough equipment vocabulary when I read more book or novel.	53,3%	40%	6,7%
6	I am able to make a paragraph with many vocabularies.	53,3%	33,3%	13,3%
7	I am consistent memorize more vocabulary.	53,5%	46,7%	0%
8	I use English language on my phone language settings because I believe I understand all the meaning vocab in my phone.	80%	13,3%	6,7%
9	I am able to use English in a good way.	53,3%	40%	6,7%
10	I am more easily learning new vocabulary from watching movie.	73,4%	20%	6,7%
11	I do listen to the music that using English language.	73,3%	13,3%	13,4%

Table 3 presented the results of questionnaires about internal factors influencing students' vocabulary size. Internal factors referred to the aspects that a language learner brings to a specific learning situation, as cited in Andari (2023). The table presented in the study was utilized to gauge the influence of internal factors on the students language learning experiences. The questionnaire itself consisted of 11 questions, with the primary objective of identifying the specific internal factors that contributed to the students language learning process.

Table 4. External Factors Influencing Vocabulary Size

NO	Statement/ Question	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
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12	My lecture reminds me to read more vocabulary	80%	6,7%	13,3%
13	Playing games makes me learn new vocabulary	80%	6,7%	13,3%
14	When studying in class, you are required to use English language which greatly affects your vocabulary	73,3%	20%	6,7%
15	My teacher reminds me to read more vocabulary	73,3%	13,3%	13,4%
16	Teacher managed me to succeeded in motivating me to increase my vocabulary	73,4%	13,3%	13,4%
17	Along with the development of times, made me realize that a large vocabulary can make it easier for me to enter the world of work later.	86,6%	0%	13,3%
18	My cicle of friendship affects how many vocabularies I can get	53,3%	26,7%	20%
19	My parents using English language when having a conversation	13,3%	6,7%	80%
20	I have a native speakers' friend	60%	13,3%	26,7%

21	My family remind me to learn more vocabulary	33,3%	13,3%	53,4%
22	The materials in class makes me desire to get more vocabulary	80%	6,7%	13,4%

Table 4 showed the results of the questionnaires on external factors influencing English education department students' vocabulary size. The first statement was about the impact of *The lecturer reminding the students to read more vocabulary*. It was shown that 80% of students agreed that the lecturer affected their vocabulary. External factors, which encompassed the learning environment, length of exposure, and learning styles, were circumstances that affected the learner rather than being a result of the learner's actions or choices (Ruslan, 2019). External factors encompassed various elements, such as individual practice, discipline, interaction, and even one's personality. These external factors play a role in influencing the language learning process (Mukura, 2022).

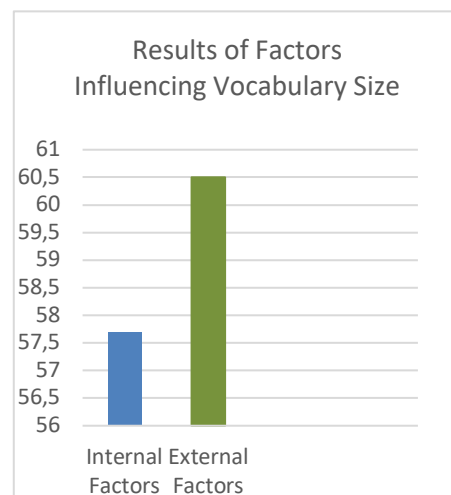


Chart 1. Result of Factors Influencing Vocabulary Size

Chart 1 presented the results of the factors influencing students' vocabulary size. Based

on the questionnaires, the result of the factors divided by internal and external factors. The internal factors affected students lesser than the external factors in terms of their vocabulary size. The difference between internal factors and external factors was just 3%; with the internal factors at 57.5% and the external factors at 60.5%. The previous findings on vocabulary learning problems indicated that mastering the appropriate learning techniques and maintaining discipline in learning English were essential factors to consider. Based on the results of interviewing some students, the participants said that external factors that influenced them was ability to motivate themselves to know vocabulary more.

In addition, the participants elaborated on their opinions of their lecturer use English language when teaching learning process to motivate the students read more vocabulary to easily understand the explanation, as could be seen in the following statement about *the lecturer remind to read vocabulary more*:

Excerpt 1.

WP: For the course material that lecturer used there are often words that usually comes it means knowing the new vocabulary. I become interested to look up the meaning of words in dictionary or translate it with some platforms.

Excerpt 2.

MN: When learning teaching process students and lecturer using English language, and as a student must understand the meaning of words that came out from the lecturer. The lecturer gave a big impact to students in class, because we have to use English language.

Excerpt 3.

BP: In the class, lecturer ask the student to speak English during teaching learning process. It will help students to read more vocabulary.

While 80% of the students acknowledged that using games was a more effective way to

enhance their vocabulary, those who expressed agreement believed that games provided an easier path to mastering a greater number of word families. The subsequent statement highlights how playing games facilitates the acquisition of new vocabulary by students.

Excerpt 4.

F: The lecturer reminds me to read more vocabulary to improve my knowledge especially in Vocabulary.

Excerpt 5.

T: The language that used in game easily to understand, so I am enjoying to learn a new vocabulary in game.

Although some students agreed that they are realized that a large vocabulary can make it easier for them to enter the world of work later with 86,6% percentage. Here their opinions the following statements:

Excerpt 6.

F: I would realize that vocabulary one of elements that I need to learn, and it helps me to easily connect with other people who use English

Excerpt 7.

BP: Mostly natives speaker uses rarely words, if we have a wide vocabulary, it can help us to easily understand what the native speaker says.

Some students have a difference interest to get more vocabulary, some of students using any platform or social media for their knowledge especially in vocabulary. Their opinions strengthen their agreed to the result of questionnaire:

Excerpt 8.

WP: I play games and I join the room chat that mostly from other country and they used

English language, and I have to know more vocabulary to help me understand the meaning.

Excerpt 9.

F: I learned a lot vocabulary from watch movie, listen the podcast or songs with English language, because with these strategies I got new vocabulary with easily way.

After conducting interviews with several students, it was found that they all expressed agreement regarding the efficacy of their vocabulary. The questionnaires and interview results as the students agreed based on their self. Learning vocabulary was an essential and crucial aspect of language acquisition. Having a wide vocabulary enabled better comprehension of written and spoken texts, fostering effective communication, and enhancing one's ability to connect with others. There was a reciprocal and complementary relationship between vocabulary knowledge and language use. In other words, knowing a wide range of vocabulary enhances language proficiency, while at the same time, actively using language leads to an expansion of vocabulary knowledge (Alqahtani, 2015).

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research on the vocabulary size of 15 English Education Department Students', which was conducted using the vocabulary size test as a tool to measure their vocabulary, it was found that they possessed approximately 6.000-7.000-word families. Furthermore, in second research question, concerning the factors influencing vocabulary, data from a questionnaire distributed for 15 students and strengthened by interviews with 5 students revealed the external factors had a greater impact on students' vocabulary; with only a 3% difference compared to internal factors, which accounted for 57,5%.

SUGGESTION

According to the result of the research, the researcher provides recommendations to the following:

1. Students can assess the extent of their vocabulary knowledge, enabling them to comprehend the areas where they need to improve. As an English Education Department students', they should be proficient in mastering a wide range of vocabulary.
2. Having a wide vocabulary is highly essential both during learning teaching process and in future life. Therefore, educators should employ engaging teaching methods to motivate students to expand their vocabulary.

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