

Investigating the Vocabulary Level in Foreign Language Learners: an Explanatory Study in High Education

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Abstract. This study, will investigate the vocabulary level of foreign language learners in 4th semester at Islamic University of Jember. This study was adopted mixed methods research, combines both qualitative and quantitative methods to collecting and analysing the data that help the research objectives. The explanatory sequential in which qualitative and quantitative data were collected sequentially in two ways was used. The researcher conducted 2 tests, the first is Vocabulary Level Test (VLT) and second is interview. Vocabulary Level Test to find out the average of students' vocabulary level at English Department. And the interview test to investigate how does the students vocabulary development exists in English Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education Islamic University of Jember.

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INTRODUCTION

Language is a tool that is used by everybody in daily life to communicate or convey arguments and information to others. In English language, the collection of words is known as term vocabulary. Vocabulary is also the basic for communication in EFL and part of mastering a foreign language. Schmitt (2013) state, English vocabulary consists of the set of words known and used by a particular person in a language. According to (Alqahtani, 2015), vocabulary is often believed as the crucial tool for foreign language learners, because a deficiency of vocabulary causes failed communication in second or foreign language. Meanwhile, Hornby (2015) has defined that the collection of words that someone knows and use is vocabulary.

According to knowing (Webb & Nation, 2017), vocabulary is a word include knowing the form, meaning, and use of the word. It related with (Nation, 2001) explained

there are three concepts of words that teachers need: (a). *Form* of a word related to pronunciation (spoken), spelling (written), and any word parts that make up this particular item (as a prefix, root, and suffix). (b). *Meaning* includes the way that forms and meaning work together. (c). *Use* is related to the grammatical functions of the word or phrase. According explanation above, it shows that vocabulary related with words, yet vocabulary is more than just single word. The explanation of the expert above shows that vocabulary is a crucial component in English, the reason vocabulary as a tool to communicate in a foreign language. Without grammar, a little bit can be conveyed, but without vocabulary nothing can conveyed (Wilkins, 1972, p. 111).

Talk about vocabulary, it's familiar with vocabulary level. Vocabulary level is arranges the English vocabulary in a series of levels according the frequency of occurrence. Foreign language learners in Indonesia should mastery vocabulary. It will be easy to communicate in a foreign language if foreign language learners master vocabulary. On another hand, foreign language learners difficult to study and talk in a second language, if they did not master the vocabulary.

This study, will investigate the vocabulary level of foreign language learners in 4th semester at Islamic University of Jember. This study was adopted mixed methods research, combines both qualitative and quantitative methods to collecting and analysing the data that help the research objectives. The explanatory sequential in which qualitative and quantitative data were collected sequentially in two ways was used. The researcher conducted 2 tests, the first is Vocabulary Level Test (VLT) and second is interview. Vocabulary Level Test to find out the average of students' vocabulary level at English Department. And the interview test to investigate how does the students vocabulary development exists in English Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education Islamic University of Jember.

The study formulated research problem as (a) What is the average of students' vocabulary level at English Department (b) How does the students vocabulary development exist in English Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education Islamic University of Jember?. The research objectives (a) The aimed of this study also to find out the average of students' vocabulary level at English Department. (b) The aimed of this study is to investigate vocabulary development exist in English Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education Islamic University of Jember.

METHODS

This study was adopted mixed methods research, combines both qualitative and quantitative methods to collecting and analysing the data that help the research objectives (Creswell, 2012). The explanatory sequential (Creswell, 2012) in which qualitative and quantitative data were collected sequentially I n two ways was used. Firstly, English Department Students in 4th semester current vocabulary level was assessed by the vocabulary level test (VLT). Secondly, the interviews about VLT after doing vocabulary level test (VLT).

This study was conducted Foreign Language Learners in 4th semester at Islamic University of Jember. The data were collected from 17 participants who were selected randomly throw 35 populations (male: 9, female: 26). First, the vocabulary level test (VLT)

was given to 17 participants. Second, the interviews were conducted with 6 participants who received the high, middle, and low point from the vocabulary level test (VLT).

In this study, random cluster sampling was adopted to collect quantitative data. Seventeen of English Department Students were randomly selected out. The data were collected from the participants in selected classes. Participants read and signed the consent form. The vocabulary level test (VLT) was developed by Nation (1983), published by Nation, (1990), which tests up from 2,000 to 10,000 words level was adopt to identify the word level of the participants. They took approximately 72 minutes to complete the test.

Qualitative data were collected through interviews with 6 participants who had the high, middle and low score from the vocabulary level test (VLT). Each interview approximately took 30 minutes. Semi-structured interview by (Barkhuizen, 2014) were used in this study, the analysed used grounded theory by (Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss (1967). Six general questions below were asked to each participant below were asked to each participant; (1) In your opinion, which level are more difficulties in VLT? Give your reason!; (2) Which word that you find for the first time between 2000, 3000, 5000, UWL and 10.000 level in VLT? Explained your reason!; (3) Explain your difficulties during conducted the test!; (4) Do you agree/disagree if the VLT applied in classroom to development vocabulary of English Departments Students?; (5) In your opinion, which level is easier in VLT? Give your reason!; (6) How you develop your vocabulary? Explained!.

Quantitative data were analysing through descriptive and inferential statistics by using SPSS Version 26. First, vocabulary level of participants was calculated through descriptive statistics such as mean, minimum, and maximum scores. Second, the researcher investigating the result of table test by SPSS. The researcher investigating how many minimum and maximum score in each level, 2000, 3000, 5000, UWL, and 10.000 level words. Qualitative data were analysed through used grounded theory by (Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss (1967). First, the interviews were transcribed. Then, the transcript of each interview was read several times and coded, memo writing, and last theoretical sampling. The researcher adopted interview by 6 participants who received the high, middle, and low point from the vocabulary level test (VLT).

FINDINGS

In the first step, the researcher asked participants that consist of 17 English Department Students in 4th semester were randomly selected out to read and signed the consent form. Then, the vocabulary level test (VLT) by Nation, 1990, which tests up from 2,000 to 10,000 words level was adopted to identify the word level of the participants. They took approximately 72 minutes to complete the test. After the participant finished the test, the participant should show the test score to the researcher. After the researcher knows the result score test of participants, the researcher will count the result of the test score by SPSS version 26. The vocabulary level of participants was calculated through descriptive statistics such as mean, minimum, and maximum scores. SPSS table will show data about how many minimum and maximum scores in each level, 2000, 3000, 5000, UWL, and 10.000 level words.

Table 1. Data statistic table

		Statistics				
		Level 2000	Level 3000	Level 5000	Level UWL	Level 10.000
N	Valid	17	17	17	17	17
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		82.9412	83.9412	65.0000	60.6471	56.1176
Minimum		44.00	39.00	33.00	6.00	6.00
Maximum		100.00	100.00	94.00	89.00	94.00

The first result data of VLT test 1 shows statistic data that consists of 3 parts; mean, minimum, and maximum of the VLT level (2000, 3000, 5000, UWL, and 10.000). The total of participants are 17 English Departments Students. The mean in level 2000 is 82.9412 (82%), mean in level 3000 is 83.9412 (83%). The mean in level 5000 is 65.0000 (65%), mean in level UWL is 60.6471 (60%). The mean in level 10.000 is 56.000 (56%). Therefore, the researcher finds out that the high mean is level 3000 total 83.9412 (83%) and the low mean is level 10.000 total 56.000 (56%). The second part of the result data above is the minimum score. The minimum in level 2000 is 44.00 (44%), minimum in level 3000 is 39.00 (39%). In level 5000 is 33.00 (33%), in level UWL is 6.00 (6%) and in level 10.000 is 6.00 (6%). It shows that the minimum in level 10.000 is equal to UWL (6.00 = 6.00). Therefore, the researcher finds out that the high minimum is level 2000 total 44.00 (44%) and the low minimum is level 10.000 and UWL total 6.00 (6%). The third part of the result data above is the maximum score. The maximum in level 2000 is 100.00 (100%), maximum in level 3000 is 100.00 (100%). The maximum in level 5000 is 94.00 (94%), maximum in level UWL is 89.00 (89%). The maximum in level 10.000 is 94.00 (94%). Therefore, the researcher finds out that the high maximum is level 2000 and 3000 total 100.00 (100%) and the low maximum is level UWL total 89.00 (89%).

Table 2. Data statistic table

		Statistics				
		Level 2000	Level 3000	Level 5000	Level UWL	Level 10.000
N	Valid	17	17	17	17	17
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		85.5294	89.1765	76.4706	62.8235	70.7059
Minimum		39.00	28.00	22.00	11.00	11.00
Maximum		100.00	100.00	100.00	89.00	94.00

The second result data of VLT test 1 shows statistic data that consists of 3 parts; mean, minimum, and maximum of the VLT level (2000, 3000, 5000, UWL, and 10.000). The total of participants are 17 English Departments Students. The mean in level 2000 is

85.5294 (85%), mean in level 3000 is 89.1765 (89%). The mean in level 5000 is 76.4706 (76%), mean in level UWL is 62.8235 (62%). The mean in level 10.000 is 70.7059 (70%). Therefore, the researcher finds out that the high mean is level 3000 total 89.1765 (89%) and the low mean is UWL level total 62.8235 (62%). The second part of the result data above is the minimum score. The minimum in level 2000 is 39.00 (39%), minimum in level 3000 is 28.00 (28%). The minimum in level 5000 is 22.00 (22%), minimum in level UWL is 11.00 (11%). The minimum in level 10.000 is 11.00 (11%). Therefore, the researcher finds out that the high minimum is level 2000 total 39.00 (39%) and the low minimum is level 10.000 and UWL total 11.00 (11%). The third part of the result data above is the maximum score. The maximum in level 2000 is 100.00 (100%), the maximum in level 3000 is 100.00 (100%), and the maximum in level 5000 is 100.00 (100%). The maximum in level UWL is 89.00 (89%) and the maximum in level 10.000 is 94.00 (94%). Therefore, the researcher finds out that the high maximum is level 2000, 3000, and 5000 total 100.00 (100%) and the low maximum is level UWL total 89.00 (89%).

Table3. Data statistic table

		Statistics				
		Level 2000	Level 3000	Level 5000	Level UWL	Level 10.000
N	Valid	17	17	17	17	17
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		78.1176	82.5294	74.9412	60.4118	63.4706
Minimum		7.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	6.00
Maximum		100.00	100.00	100.00	89.00	94.00

The third result data of VLT test 3 shows statistic data that consists of 3 parts; mean, minimum, and maximum of the VLT level (2000, 3000, 5000, UWL, and 10.000). The total of participants are 17 English Departments Students. The mean in level 2000 is 78.1176 (78%), mean in level 3000 is 82.5294 (82%). The mean in level 5000 is 74.9412 (74%), mean in level UWL is 60.4118 (60%). The mean in level 10.000 is 63.4706 (63%). Therefore, the researcher finds out that the high mean is level 3000 total 82.5294 (82%) and the low mean is UWL level total 60.4118 (60%). The second part of the result data above is the minimum score. The minimum in level 2000 is 7.00 (7%). The minimum in level 3000 is 10.00 (10%), the minimum in level 5000 is 10.00 (10%), and the minimum in UWL level is 10.00 (10%). The minimum in level 10.000 is 6.00 (6%). Therefore, the researcher finds out that the high minimum levels are 3000, 5000, and UWL total 10.00 (10%) and the low minimum is level 10.000 total 6.00 (6%). The third part of the result data above is the maximum score. The maximum in level 2000 is 100.00 (100%), the maximum in level 3000 is 100.00 (100%) and the minimum in level 5000 is 100.00 (100%). The maximum in level UWL is 89.00 (89%) and the maximum in level 10.000 is 94.00 (94%). Therefore, the researcher finds out that the high maximum is level 2000,

3000, and 5000 total 100.00 (100%) and the low maximum is level UWL total 89.00 (89%).

The second part is the researcher interviews with the 6 participants who received high, middle, and low points from the vocabulary level test (VLT). The participants give 5 questions about the vocabulary level test (VLT). The interviews were transcribed. Then, the transcript of each interview was read several times and coded. The result of coded with showed below. Answering the first question, the researcher find out almost all participants give answer that the level are more difficult is level 10.000 and UWL level. 3 participants answering the level are more difficult in VLT is level 10.000, 2 participants answering the level are more difficult in VLT is level UWL, and 1 participant answering the level are more difficult in VLT is level UWL and level 10.000. The code/keyword in first question is 'more difficult'.

Answering the second questions, the research find out 6 participants give the difference answer of the question which word that participant find for the first time between 2000, 3000, 5000, UWL and 10.000 level in VLT. 2 participants answer level 5000, 10.000, and UWL. 1 participant answered level 3000, 5000, 10.000. 1 participant answer all level, 2000, 3000, 5000, UWL and 10.000. 1 participant answered UWL and level 10.000. And 1 participant answered level 2000. The code/keyword in second question is 'find for the first'. 6 participants also give difference reason about the word that they see for the first time. 3 from them answer that they never find the words in previous, 1 of them answer maybe the reason why they never see the new words causes they rarely to read the book or improve they vocabulary. 1 of them answer the word is very high, and 1 answer that they attracted the test although didn't know the meaning.

Answering the third question, the researcher find out almost all participants give answer that they difficulties are when they find new word, the word that they see in first time and when they look for the synonym of the word. The code/keyword in third question is 'during conducted'. The fourth question, the researcher ask about agree/disagree if the VLT applied in classroom to development vocabulary of English Departments Students. All participants give same answer that they agree if the VLT applied in classroom, many of they think that this is the best way to improve vocabulary in English Department Students, any of them also give suggestion the VLT test can be quiz in classroom, therefore English Departments Students not feel bored in classroom. The code/keyword in fourth question is 'applied in classroom'. The five questions are about which level is easier in VLT. All participants give same answer that the easier level in VLT is level 2000. They think that in level 2000, the word is basic and many word that they understand the meaning. The code/keyword in fifth question is 'easier'. The researcher finding, all participants give same answer that the easier level in VLT is level 2000. They think that in level 2000, the word is basic and many word that they understand the meaning.

The six questions are about how the department students develop the vocabulary. Answering the six questions, the research find out 6 participants give the difference answer of the question how they develop the vocabulary. 3 participants answer watching English video. 2 participants answered watching English movie. 3 participants answer listen a English song. 2 participants answered reading English book. The code/keyword in second question is 'Develop the vocabulary'.

DISCUSSION

Based on the results data above, the data 1, data 2 and data 3 shows the high mean in VLT is level 3000. The mean data in level 3000 of data 1 is 83.9412 (83%), data 2 is 89.1765 (89%) and data 3 is 82.5294 (82%). The low mean in VLT is level 10.000 and UWL. In data 1 the low mean is level 10.000 total 56.000 (56%), in data 2 the low mean is UWL level total 62.8235 (62%) and in data 3 the low mean also UWL level total 60.4118 (60%). Meanwhile, the high minimum from data 1, data 2 and data 3 are difference. On data 1 and data 2 the high minimum is level 2000. Data 1 in level 2000 is 44.00 (44%), data 2 in level 2000 is 39.00 (39%). On data 3, the high minimum is level 3000, 5000 and UWL total 10.00 (10%). The low minimum from data 1, data 2 and data also difference. On data 1 and data 2 the low minimum is level UWL and 10.000. UWL and 10.000 level on data 1 is 6.00 (6%), on data 2 is 11.00 (11%). The last is maximum, the high maximum from data 1, data 2 and data 3 are difference. On data 2 and data 3 the high maximum is level 2000, 3000, and 5000 total 100.00 (100%). On data 1 the high maximum is level 2000 and 3000 total 100.00 (100%). The low maximum on data 1, data 2 and data 3 is same, in level UWL total 89.00 (89%).

Here it can see that English Department Students didn't master the UWL level and level 10.000. The study by (Sudarman, 2018) found that the similar finding the result of VLT test by (Schmitt et al. 2001), 33 students who given the VLT test didn't master the high frequency word level and the academic vocabulary level. Furthermore (Reza Kafipour et al., 2011) the finding showed EFL student has enough vocabulary knowledge in level 2000 and 3000-words level. This finding same with the result above that English Departments Students has enough knowledge in level 2000 and level 3000. In addition, the finding by (Reza Kafipour et al., 2011) showed that EFL students didn't has enough vocabulary knowledge at 5000, 10.000, and Academic Vocabulary Level (AWL). The finding by Reza Kafipour et al., 2011) and (Sudarman, 2018) it same with the result above that Foreign Language Learners didn't has enough to master the vocabulary in level 5000, 10.000 and UWL. Therefore, the answer of question, "The average of students' vocabulary level at English Department?". The answer, the average of students' vocabulary level at English Department is in level 2000 and in level 3000. It can be see that the vocabulary level of English Department Students is Advanced / High-frequency level.

The next discussion is interview test about the vocabulary level test (VLT). The interview consisting 6 questions; which level are more difficult in VLT, which word that first they find in VLT, the difficulties during conducted the test, agree/ not agree if the VLT applied in classroom, which level is easier in VLT and how they develop the vocabulary. The interview test was given to 6 participants who received high, middle, and low score. The finding of the question, "How does the Students vocabulary development exist in English Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education Islamic University of Jember?". The answer is, they develop the vocabulary by watching English video, watching English movie, listening the English song, and reading the English book. They also interested to used VLT test to develop the vocabulary, although in level 10.000 and UWL level, they have difficulty to understand the test, many words in level 5000, 10.000 and

UWL that they find for the first time, but in level 2000 they easy to answer the test, they said that the words in level 2000 is easy and basic.

CONCLUSIONS

This study was adopted mixed methods research, combines both qualitative and quantitative methods to collecting and analysing the data that help the research objectives. The researcher concluded that the average of students' vocabulary level at English Department is in level 2000 and in level 3000. It can be see that the vocabulary level of English Department Students is Advanced / High-frequency level.

The finding of the question, "How does the students vocabulary development exist in English Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education Islamic University of Jember?". The answer is, they develop the vocabulary by watching English video, watching English movie, listening the English song, and reading the English book. They also interested to used VLT test to develop the vocabulary, although in level 10.000 and UWL level, they have difficulty to understand the test, many words in level 5000, 10.000 and UWL that they find for the first time, but in level 2000 they easy to answer the test, they said that the words in level 2000 is easy and basic.

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