MANUSCRIPT *(NASKAH PUBLIKASI)*

"THE CORRELATION BETWEEN STUDENTS' VOCABULARY DEPTH AND THEIR READING COMPREHENSION IN ACADEMIC TEXTS"

"KORELASI ANTARA PENGUASAAN KOSAKATA SISWA DAN PEMAHAMAN BACAAN MEREKA DALAM TEKS AKADEMIK"

HASSAN WURING[1], SUDARMAN[2], KHUSNUL KHATIMAH [3]

BY:

HASSAN WURING

NIM: 1911102421013

ENGLISH EDUCATION PROGRAM

FACULTY TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION

UNIVERSITAS MUHAMMADIYAH KALIMANTAN TIMUR

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"The Correlation Between Students' Vocabulary Depth and Their Reading Comprehension in Academic Texts"

"Korelasi Antara Penguasaan Kosakata Siswa dan Pemahaman Bacaan Mereka dalam Teks Akademik"

HASSAN WURING[1], SUDARMAN[2], KHUSNUL KHATIMAH [3]

BY:

HASSAN WURING

NIM: 1911102421013

ENGLISH EDUCATION PROGRAM

FACULTY TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION
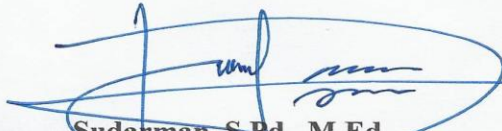
UNIVERSITAS MUHAMMADIYAH KALIMANTAN TIMUR

2023

THE CORRELATION BETWEEN STUDENTS' VOCABULARY DEPTH AND THEIR READING COMPREHENSION IN ACADEMIC TEXTS

Oleh:

Hassan Wuring
NIM. 1911102421013

Samarinda, 11 September 2023

Telah disetujui Oleh
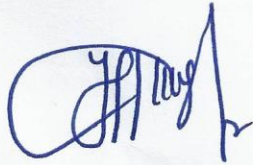**Pembimbing**

Sudarman, S.Pd., M.Ed.
NIDN. 1121088702

THE CORRELATION BETWEEN STUDENTS' VOCABULARY DEPTH AND THEIR READING COMPREHENSION IN ACADEMIC TEXTS

Yang disiapkan dan disusun Oleh

Nama   : Hassan Wuring

NIM   : 1911102421013

Program Studi : S1 Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris

   Telah dipertahankan di depan penguji pada tanggal 11 Juli 2023 dan dinyatakan telah memenuhi syarat untuk diterima sebagai kelengkapan guna mencapai derajat sarjana Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris pada Universitas Muhammadiyah Kalimantan Timur.

Susunan Penguji:

Penguji I   : Khusnul Khatimah, M.Pd.
       NIDN. 1128068901

Penguji II   : Sudarman, S.Pd., M.Ed.
       NIDN. 1121088702
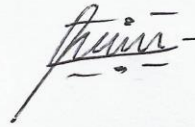
Mengetahui,

Dekan Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan	Ketua Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris
Prof. Ali Saukah, M.A., Ph.D. NIDK. 891262001	Khusnul Khatimah, M.Pd. NIDN. 1128068901

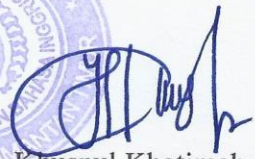# The Correlation Between Students' Vocabulary Depth and Their Reading Comprehension in Academic Texts

Hassan Wuring[1], Sudarman[2], Khusnul Khatimah [3]

Universitas Muhammadiyah Kalimantan Timur, Indonesia
Email: hasanwurinng@gmail.com; sud520@umkt.ac.id

Abstract

The primary objective of this research endeavor is to ascertain the potential association that exists between the depth of an individual's vocabulary and their level of reading comprehension. The study population comprised students enrolled in the English Education Program at Universitas Muhammadiyah Kalimantan Timur during the Academic Year 2022/2023. A sample of 42 students was picked using a simple random sampling procedure. The present study utilized a quantitative methodology, namely employing correlation analysis. The data pertaining to the depth of vocabulary was collected through the utilization of the Word Associate Test (WAT). The data pertaining to students' reading comprehension was gathered through the utilization of the TOEFL Reading Test. The data from this study underwent analysis utilizing the Pearson Product Moment Correlation method with the assistance of IBM SPSS Statistics 27. Upon analysis of the data, it was observed that the correlation coefficients for both variables were 0.537, surpassing the predetermined alpha value of 0.05. Hence, a lack of link exists between the richness of vocabulary and the level of reading comprehension.
Keywords: Academic Texts; Reading Comprehension; Vocabulary Depth

1. INTRODUCTION

Knowing words, which serve as the foundation of language, is one of the three main elements of language, along with knowledge of sounds, grammar, and vocabulary. In reality, it would be impossible to create or perceive language without understanding the meaning of the words. According to Andersonn & Freebody (1981), the reader's general language knowledge is the best indicator of how well they will understand the content. According to Nagy (1988), learning vocabulary should be a core component of language education because it is essential to understanding a variety of texts. While opinions on how to teach vocabulary

and how much of it should be taught vary, there is general agreement that vocabulary is important for reading proficiency.

How much vocabulary children should be taught and what vocabulary they should learn in order to improve their reading comprehension is another topic that needs to be discussed in more detail in relation to vocabulary knowledge and reading. According to Zhang & Anual (2008), reading was connected with learning 2000–3000 words in a foreign language. According to Nation (2006), This study underscores the significance of language learners possessing an adequate vocabulary repertoire to effectively engage in second or foreign language acquisition. Understanding for short-answer questions. Similar findings were made by Laufer (1992), who proposed that the best number of words to predict a student's reading performance was 3000. According to Saragi et al. (1978), a learner of English needs to know at least 3600 words in order to comprehend texts that are not simplified, but they also caution that the actual number of meanings that learners need to be familiar with must be far greater. This statement demonstrates that the depth to which learners must understand word meanings is just as important as how many words they know. According to Hu & Nation (2000), a reader must be familiar with at least 98% of the words in a text in order to grasp it on their own.

Some studies in Indonesia have been conducted to assess the amount of vocabulary possessed by Indonesian students, specifically students majoring in English education. The first study was conducted by Kweldju (1997), the researcher conducted a study to assess the extent of vocabulary knowledge among students enrolled in English departments at 15 teachers' colleges. According to the statistics, the individuals exhibited a limited vocabulary size, with only 4,664-word forms or 2,800-word families. The second study was conducted by Kurniawan (2017). The researcher evaluated the extent of pupils' lexical repertoire inside the English education department. The findings of the study revealed that, on average, the students possessed a vocabulary of 1400 words. In the latest study, Sudarman & Chinokul (2018) the vocabulary size of pre-service instructors at a private university was evaluated, revealing that the students possessed knowledge of approximately 1,273 word families. The findings yielded a poorer outcome compared to prior research endeavors, and it remained much below the benchmark established by academic experts. The aforementioned data suggest that vocabulary acquisition remains a prominent challenge in the context of English language acquisition throughout Indonesia.

Several studies related to vocabulary depth between reading comprehension have been conducted previously. First, Hasan & Shabdin (2017) in their thesis entitled Engineering EFL learners' Vocabulary Depth Knowledge and Its Relationship and Prediction to Academic Reading Comprehension. The findings indicated that the depth of vocabulary knowledge test, encompassing both syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations, exhibited a highly significant positive correlation with academic reading comprehension. Furthermore, it was observed that vocabulary depth emerged as the most influential and distinct predictor of academic reading performance. Last, Davoud Abedi (2017) in his thesis entitled The Relationship between Depth of Vocabulary Knowledge and Reading Comprehension of Iranian EFL Learners. The findings of this study indicate a significant and positive correlation between the extent of vocabulary knowledge and the level of reading comprehension ability. The findings of this study suggest that educators and students should consider the significance of vocabulary knowledge depth in their instructional practices and learning endeavors, respectively.

Previous studies discussed the relationship and impact of vocabulary depth on reading comprehension among EFL Learners, whether it is part of reading comprehension in academic contexts. However, no one of the study focused on reading comprehension in academic texts at the university level. Thus, it serves as inspiration for reserachers to conduct research in that field. Therefore, the research aims to investigate the potential association between students' vocabulary depth and their reading comprehension in academic texts, in response to the study issues. Based on the issues, the researcher chooses to restrict and concentrate on examining the association between the depth of vocabulary and reading comprehension specifically inside academic writings. Based on the reasoning stated in the preceding context, the researcher desires to know:

1. Is there any correlation between students' vocabulary depth and their reading comprehension in academic texts?

Researchers hope that this research can be useful both in the academic field and in education. Theoretically, the findings of this study are anticipated to function as a valuable resource for educators and scholars seeking to conduct similar investigations on the relationship between students' vocabulary proficiency and their comprehension of academic literature. This research also aims to offer valuable insights for educators, students, and future researchers. This research also provides insights into the assessment of students' vocabulary

knowledge, particularly in terms of vocabulary depth. The outcomes of this study may provide valuable insights for vocabulary development programs and other skill acquisition initiatives.

The researcher anticipated that this study would address the challenges faced by students in the domain of reading comprehension. The findings of this study have the potential to provide valuable insights that can bolster existing theories regarding the relationship between vocabulary depth and reading comprehension. It is anticipated that there would be a notable enhancement in reading skills through an increase in vocabulary proficiency. For educators who may utilize this research finding as a resource for English language instruction, upon gaining awareness of the association between vocabulary depth and reading comprehension.

2. METHODOLOGY

The researcher utilized quantitative methodology in this investigation, including correlation analysis. The study centered on examining the relationship between the extent of students' vocabulary knowledge and their ability to comprehend academic texts. The participants of the study were English Education Students enrolled at Universitas Muhammadiyah Kalimantan Timur. The vocabulary depth and reading comprehension of both pupils were statistically assessed and analyzed in order to derive a conclusion on their relationship.

The study sample consisted of students enrolled in the English Education Program at Universitas Muhammadiyah Kalimantan Timur during the Academic Year 2022/2023. The students participated in a four-year English teacher training program. The study encompasses a total of 204 students, distributed throughout different semesters. Specifically, there are 52 students from the second semester, 58 students from the fourth semester, 48 students from the sixth semester, 41 students from the eighth semester, and 5 students from the tenth semester.

The samples of this research were selected by using a simple random sampling technique. Students from one out of four available classes from four different semesters were randomly assigned to participate in this study. The selection of sample class was based on a simple drawing. First, researchers make four paper lots in which each paper lot represented one available class. Then, researchers conducted a draw by randomly taking one paper lot. The class stated on the paper lot was then selected as samples of this study.

In the present investigation, the investigator employed the Word Associate Test (WAT) and the TOEFL Reading Comprehension Test. The Word Associate Test (WAT) is employed

as a means of assessing the extent of an individual's vocabulary depth. Conversely, the TOEFL Reading Comprehension Test is utilized to gauge the level of reading comprehension exhibited by students.

1. Word Associate Test (WAT)

The purpose of the depth vocabulary knowledge measure was to provide insights into the test takers' depth of receptive English vocabulary knowledge, as described by and quoted by (Teng, 2014). The examination comprised a total of 40 items, designed to assess the learners' ability to recognise and discern the collocation, synonymous, part-whole, and whole-part relationships between the given stimulus word and a set of eight options. These elements demonstrate the exam takers' profound comprehension of vocabulary. Individuals who participated in the test were deemed to possess a deeper understanding of words when they demonstrated knowledge about various features and applications of the word, rather than solely focusing on its definition. Participants are required to choose four words from the given set of options that they deem to be pertinent to the stimulus word.

2. Reading Comprehension Test

One of the English tests to measure students' English proficiency is the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language). This test had been developed by Educational Testing Services (ETS) since 1962. This test assessed English language proficiency in terms of communication competence, namely four skills areas: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. This test had been accepted at universities in many other countries. However, the TOEFL test is a university entry requirement, especially for international students.

There are 3 sections in the TOEFL test, the reading section is in section 3. TOEFL Reading Comprehension Test has 50 questions. In this study, the TOEFL test that used is the official English proficiency test of Universitas Muhammadiyah Kalimantan Timur which is equivalent to TOEFL in terms of format and scoring rubrics. The content validity or specifications of the instrument was discovered within the appendix. Essentially, this test has also been utilized in research, so the validity and reliability index are assured. Furthermore, the equivalence of TOEFL Reading Comprehension Test used in this study adopted from the campus Test of English Proficiency, Universitas Muhammadiyah Kalimantan Timur. This test had been widely used and recognized in the campus environment for TOEFL-like tests. Thus, the researcher does not need to check the validity and reliability of the two instruments to be used in this study.

In order to assess the relationship between vocabulary depth and reading comprehension in academic texts, the researcher administered a vocabulary test to measure the students' level of vocabulary depth. Subsequently, the students completed a reading comprehension test. Subsequently, the researchers conducted an analysis of the students' scores utilizing inferential statistics to ascertain the presence of a statistically significant association between the variables. The technique of data analysis in the present study includes the analysis of scores from Word Associate Test and TOEFL Reading Comprehension.

The researcher measured the average of the student's vocabulary by quantifying three lexical components: synonymy, polysemy, and collocation. In grading the objective test, the correct answers are counted as one point using the formula:

$$\textbf{Vocabulary scores} = \frac{\textit{Total correct items}}{\textit{Total number of item}} = x\ \textbf{100}$$

To score the reading comprehension test, researchers divided the number of correct items with 50 because the test consists of 50 items in total. Then, the researcher multiplied the results with 100 to get 100% scores. For instance, a student got 25 items correct out of 50 items, which means the student got half of the items correct, then the number is multiplied by 100, so the final score of the students is 50.

In this study, the researchers examined the scores obtained from the Word Associate Test (WAT) and the TOEFL Reading Comprehension Test. The purpose was to investigate whether a correlation exists between the two variables, specifically vocabulary depth and reading comprehension. Inferential statistics were employed to analyze the data. The correlation analysis technique employed in this study was the Pearson Product-moment Correlation, conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics 27. The researcher used the categories in classifying the correlation which is submitted by Sugiyono (2016) The level of correlation strength is measured based on the correlation coefficient interpretation table, as follows:

Table 2 1. Coefficient Correlation Interpretation

Interval	Category
0.00 – 0.199	Very Low
0.20 – 0.399	Low
0.40 – 0.599	Moderate
0.60 – 0.7999	Strong
0.80 – 1.000	Very Strong

3. FINDINGS

In order to address the research inquiry, the investigator assessed two factors, specifically vocabulary depth and reading comprehension. The assessment of vocabulary depth was conducted by the administration of a Word Associate Test (WAT), while the measurement of reading comprehension was accomplished by employing the TOEFL Reading Test. The correlation coefficient was displayed in the provided table:

Table 3.1 Correlation Vocabulary Depth and Reading Comprehension

		Vocabulary Depth	Reading Comprehension
Vocabulary Depth	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)		.098 .537
Reading Comprehension	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.098 .537	

4. DISCUSSION

The objective of this study was to investigate the potential relationship between the depth of vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension abilities. This section provides an analysis of the findings in reference to prior research.

According to the data description, the statistical significance of the relationship between vocabulary depth and reading comprehension is 0.537. This number exceeds the predetermined alpha level of 0.05, suggesting that there is no statistically significant link between vocabulary depth and reading comprehension in academic literature. This implies that there is insufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis. Put simply, there is a lack of substantial correlation between the richness of vocabulary and the level of reading comprehension when it comes to academic publications.

Furthermore, the findings of this investigation were inconsistent with the prior research conducted by Hasan and Shabdin (2017) as well as Abedi (2017). According to a study conducted by Hasan and Shabdi (2017), the findings indicated a distinct and substantial impact of vocabulary depth on the understanding of academic reading. Furthermore, the findings of Abedi's (2017) study revealed a statistically significant positive correlation between depth of vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension. Specifically, the Pearson correlation coefficient obtained was greater than 0.07 (p<0.05), indicating a strong association between word knowledge and performance in reading comprehension.

The results of the current study show that reading comprehension is not correlated with vocabulary depth. This result is not in line with the theories in which vocabulary depth is a

strong predictor of reading comprehension as shown by the two previous related studies before. There could be some aspects that may affect this phenomenon, and one of them is the sampling error. The number of samples of this study may be considered too low, so the sampling error may occur. Therefore, it is essential for researchers to consider the number of samples for future research. On the other hand, the result of the current study could also reflect the real situation which means that there is no correlation between students' vocabulary depth and reading comprehension in academic texts.

5. CONCLUSION

The primary objective of this study is to examine the potential association between the depth of an individual's vocabulary and their level of reading comprehension. To address the research inquiry, the investigator utilized a quantitative methodology employing a correlational design. The participants of this research consisted of students enrolled in the English Education Programmed at Universitas Muhammadiyah Kalimantan Timur. A total of 42 students were selected for participation in this study using the basic random selection procedure.

According to the results of a statistical analysis, the association between vocabulary depth and reading comprehension yielded a significant value of 0.098, above the predetermined alpha value of 0.05. The findings suggest that there is no statistically significant relationship between the depth of vocabulary and reading comprehension in academic writings. Put simply, the level of vocabulary proficiency does not bear any influence on the individual's reading comprehension skills. Consequently, one cannot rely on vocabulary depth as a reliable indicator for predicting the reading comprehension abilities of pupils when it comes to academic writing.

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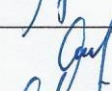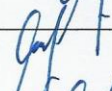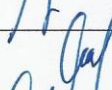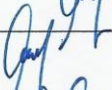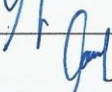
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JADWAL BIMBINGAN NASKAH PUBLIKASI

Nama Mahasiswa   : Hassan Wuring

NIM   : 1911102421013

Program Studi   : S1 Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris

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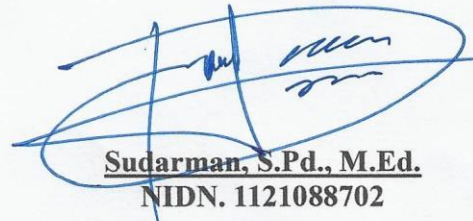
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Khusnul Khatimah, M.Pd.   **Sudarman, S.Pd., M.Ed.**

NIDN. 1128068901   NIDN. 1121088702

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by Hassan Wuring Np 0809

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