RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VOCABULARY AND READING COMPREHENSION

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Abstract : The ability to read well is impacted by several factors. Knowledge of Vocabulary, that is its size is an essential aspect influencing the skills of "reading comprehension". Trhough this research the idea is to increase the understanding how students' vocabulary sizes relate to their understanding levels. There were 200 high school students in this research who were taking a rigorous English language course in preparation for university. Using a correlation analysis, we looked at how well the findings of the Vocabulary Levels Tests matches with the "standardised English Proficiency Test (EPT)" (Nation, 1990). The study claims about a modest relationship (r=0.625) between test takers' scores on the EPT reading comprehension and Vocabulary Levels Tests. Learning a new vocabulary takes place when favourable circumstances for learning are established in the mind. The most important factors in acquiring a larger vocabulary are the frequency and intensity of exposure to new words. Significance of the present study coincides with Paul Nation's analysis on the correlation between vocab. And reading-writing skills of students.

Keywords: *Proficiency Test, English Language, Reading/writing Comprehension, Vocabulary.*

IndexTerms - **Component,formatting,style,styling,insert.**

I. INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

 What are the parameters on the basis of which one can judge the skills of a student to read a foreign language? The answer to this question lies in the idea of "reading". It is the primary parameter to analyse the level of language knowing skill especially a non-native language. As a result, it is vital for teachers to instil in pupils the lexical tools they'll need to decipher scholarly works. The connection between vocabulary size and understanding, however, is nuanced and fluid (Hu & Nation, 2000). Other factors that affect the skills of reading apart from the knowledge of words, is the knowledge of grammar. Without the understanding of grammar of English one cannot comprehend the meaning of the text even if they are able to read the words.

 Successful second language acquisition requires prior knowledge of the target language's vocabulary, content, and grammatical structure, say Laufer and Sim (1985). Even more so, students with limited vocabularies may have a harder time grasping new concepts, as shown by research by Curtis (1987). For this reason, it is crucial to understand what a student need in order to comprehend what he or she is reading, particularly when dealing with academic material. Finding out whether and how a student's vocabulary size impacts their comprehension of scholarly writings is the driving force behind this study.

Literature Review

 A great deal of considerations is there to make in the big picture. Vocabulary requirements and the density of new words that may be accepted for understanding are two additional essential elements in addition to the sorts of texts examined. One of the most important factors in being able to understand fiction is how many new terms a reader is willing to encounter. Using both cued memory questions and multiple-choice tests, Hu and Nation (2000) evaluated students' ability to understand what they read.

Sixty-six volunteers, all fluent in reading first 2000 words in English, were asked to read works of fiction that made use of these terms as important phrases. They tried out various percentages of non-word replacement in their writings, from full to 95% to 90% to 80%. Test participants were asked to complete the tests after reading one of four non-word-modified versions of the original text in a random order. In order to succeed academically, their research suggests that pupils must understand 98% or more of what they read. This amounts to an unknown word frequency of once per fifty words. Nation and Hu's (2000) research backs up the results

of West (1953), Nation (1995) and Hirsch (1992). The outcome is consistent with the results of Bonk (2000), who found that pupils who recognised less than 80% of a text's vocabulary had the lowest levels of comprehension.

661 students participated in a research conducted by Schmitt and coworkers in 2011, and the results showed a linear association between students' vocabulary growth and their ability to understand written material. Their research adds further weight to the idea that there is a crucial threshold for reading comprehension. Bonk (2000) found that students who scored below 75% on a vocabulary test seldom demonstrated a deep understanding of the text. Issue of learning new words is directly linked to improving one's reading comprehension is the outcome of the following research.

The second factor to think about is how extensive a child's vocabulary must be for them to comprehend authentic literature on their own. Schmitt (2000) and Laufer (1992) found that familiarity with the 2,000 most common words is necessity. Even though Milton and Hopkins (2006) state that "students need a vocabulary of 4,500-5,000 word families to read at the highest level (C2) on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)", it has been questioned whether students will master the talent mentioned in the description ("an equivalent of Band 7.5-Band 9 on the IELTS or a score of 590-677 on the paper-based TOEFL").

However, the research conducted by Nation and Hu specified that kids need a far larger vocabulary—around 8,000–9,000 words—to read the complex written work in novels and newspapers. Kids can do it even if they don't take help from any dictionary or any other external resources. To make sense of graded texts written at various skill levels, pupils need to acquire a relatively small vocabulary. Consequently, it may be concluded that although some children may be able to get by with a little vocabulary, but in general they need to acquire atleast a size of words raging between "8000 to 9000" to achieve extensive reading capacity. (Schmitt, 2008).

Relation Between Knowledge of Vocabulary and Reading Comprehension

Researchers increasingly recognize the complexity of language development and the challenge of lexical knowledge (Kalajahi & Pourshahian, 2012; Schmitt, 2010; Lip, 2009; Shen, 2008; Pigada & Schmitt, 2006). To fully understand a word, one must possess a variety of vocabulary skills, including summarizing, understanding, spelling, antonyms, synonyms, and word construction (Moghadam, & et al., 2012; Alfaki, 2015; Mehrpour, & et al. 2011; Rashidi & Khosravi, 2010). The examples above highlight how important a broad vocabulary is to language proficiency. This study analysed the significance of vocabulary and highlight the multidimensional nature of vocabulary knowledge as a core component of language.

Information on lexical knowledge, as outlined by Chapelle (1998), has to take into account four factors: vocabulary size, word knowledge, lexicon structure, and lexical access mechanisms. Henriksen (1999) advocates for three distinct but interconnected vocabularies: intensity of comprehensive knowledge, intensity of partial knowledge which is yet precise, the knowledge of lexicon, the diversity of all the knowledge, a partial-precise knowledge dimension, vocabulary breadth (size) and vocabulary depth, in both of the aforementioned quality formulations, were found to be universally agreed upon by the present researchers.

Lexical proficiency is a requirement for reading comprehension (Qin, 2015; Nation, 2012). As a result, assessing vocabulary has also become an essential method for determining reading comprehension (Qin, 2015). To understand the intended texts, learners of English language do not require to be familiar with approximate word families, according to studies on vocabulary knowledge (Schmitt and Schmitt, 2014). Using the findings of his research, Nation (2006) stated that 8000 - 9000 group of words are required to be read and comprehend the document's 98 percent content without any help.

According to Nation, educators stressed the value of knowing how much verbal knowledge pupils already have. Because it is simpler to increase measures of breadth than of familiarity with grammatical structures, early research on second languages has concentrated mostly on finding out how to evaluate learners' vocabulary breadth (Qin, 2015).

Setting

Before enrolling in credit-bearing faculty courses, all new students must demonstrate English proficiency at the level of at least EPT Band 6 (equal to "TOEFL 550 or IELTS Band 6"). The "Centre for Languages and Pre-University Academic Program" provides a six-level intensive English language programme for those who could not satisfy the minimal requirements of knowing the foreign language.

Participants

Two hundred adults are enrolled in ESL classes following high school graduation. A large group of students from the Center's four-year intensive English language curriculum were there. Table 1 displays the student population broken down by grade. There were a combined 28 students from EDE0101 (Level 1), 78 students from EDE0231 (Level 2), 68 students from EDE0321 (Level 3), and 26 students from EDE0434 (Level 4).

Table 1

Student's Profile based on proficiency level

Course Code	No. of Students	Percentage
EDE0101	28	14
EDE0231	78	39
EDE0321	68	34
EDE0434	26	13
TOTAL	200	100.0

Total number of students were 200. Out of the total students a number of 90 students represented males and 110 represented females. This amounts to 45% and 55% respectively. This result is given in the form of ratio between male and female students.

Table No. 2
Student's Profile based on sex.

Sex	Number	Percent
Male	90	45
Female	110	55
TOTAL	200	100

Instrument

In this investigation, we use a pair of instruments to probe the connection between reading proficiency and word-sense. The "Vocabulary Levels Tests (VLT) Version 2" is employed to evaluate the "pre-sessional students'" level of knowledge (Schmitt, & Clapham, 2001). This research uses the aforementioned exam since it is widely accepted as an accurate indicator of a student's vocabulary in their L2. The tests have been shown reliable across 2 to 3 thousand words, and almost five thousand words (Cronbach Alpha = 0.922, 0.927, and 0.927 correspondingly) (Schmitt, Schmitt, & Clapham, 2001). Nation (2001:8) has done an extensive research on the relationship between the knowledge of words and the ability of reading comprehension. He defines "word families" as "a headword, its conjugated forms, and its strongly linked derivative forms," are being used as the unit of measure for "vocabulary size" in this analysis. Suffixes like -ly, en-, and -ness fall within this category.

The "IIUM's English Proficiency Test's (EPT)" Reading Comprehension Test is the second tool employed. The EPT is a formalised English language assessment tool created to gauge how well ESL students are doing in four language areas: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. 40 multiple-choice answers focusing on 4 reading section make up the reading paper. The scores are divided into bands, with "Band 1" is the bottom most and "Band 9" is the top most.

Practice

The pupils were given a rundown of the testing methods and told that the exams were designed to assess both their general and specialised vocabulary. The 200 pre-sessional students were given reading comprehension and vocabulary tests after receiving permission to do so. Those involved were instructed to leave no gaps unanswered. All 200 students were observed while taking the VLT exams. Same 200 students took the "EPT reading comprehension test" a week later. Students were handed over presents once both "VLT" and the comprehension exam got over. The next stage was finding a strong association. Examining the correlation between 200 pre-sessional students' performance scores in the "EPT reading comprehension" and "vocabulary levels" was a major objective (Nation, 1990).

Results and Discussion

The research and its findings are dependent on three questions.

Question 1: Understanding reading comprehension test and pre-sessional students' performance.

Of the 200 test takers, 59 (29.5%) scored in the band of 5.1, while 10 (5.0%) scored in the band of 9.5 (the highest Band). All 200 test takers were able to achieve the minimal 5.1 band reading comprehension requirement for admission. The kids' levels of English proficiency vary from those of beginning elementary school (Level One) to those of early intermediate school (Levels 2-4). (Level Four). The findings demonstrate that students possess commendable reading skills and great knowledge of large vocabulary.

Table 3

Pre-sessional students' results (reading comprehension)

Band	Number of Students	Percent
5.1	59	29.5
6.2	33	16.5
7.3	58	29
8.4	40	20
9.5	10	5
TOTAL	200	100

Question 2: Determining the scores of vocabulary levels test of pre-sessional students.
Table 4 displays certain outcomes of the above mentioned tests. The students who knew almost three thousand words were most in numbers leading to highest average in this category in the test scores, whereas the 9,000 word level had the lowest mean score that is, 6.97; and 23.0.

Table 4.
Vocabulary test conducted on pre-sessional students and their scores.

Word Level	No. of Students	Mean (%)	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
3000	200	26.82(89.17%)	38.25	.345
5000	200	24.03(79.87%)	44.50	.390
7000	200	16.46 (54.30%)	65.50	.575
9000	200	6.97 (23.0%)	56.25	.490

For lengths of 7,000 and 9,000 words, the mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) were M = 16.46 and SD = 65.50, respectively. Laufer and Nation (1999) determined that in order to get a 75% proficiency level, you need to get 22.5 out of the 30 questions right. On a scale from 0 to 100%, students in this study scored an average of 54.30 percent at the 7000-word level. Student performance was below the 80% competence criteria in both the level 3,000 and level 5,000 assessments.

The majority of youngsters (80%) have learned vocabulary between the ranges of 7,000 and 9,000 words, according to the study's findings. Students who have shown proficiency in 5 to 3 thousand words category test are not considered to have a sufficiently large vocabulary to enrol in faculty-taught courses. More over half of the participants in the research had reached the 5k mastery level, indicating they have a sufficient vocabulary for academic credit. The research found that pupils' vocabulary at the 3k and 5k levels needed to be strengthened.

Question 3: Understanding the relationship between students' knowledge of vocabulary or "vocabulary size" and them understanding what they read in pre-sessional classes?

To determine the above mentioned relation between words and skills of students the analysis was carried out (Table 5). Reading and vocabulary test scores have a positive and upper moderate connection (r=.640). At a p0.01 level, the association is statistically significant. This shows that the scores of reading test and vocabulary test are directly proportional to each other. "R Square and adjusted R Square" have respective numbers of.401 and.389. Vocabulary levels of 3000, 5000, 7000, and 9,000 as a weighted combination of predictor variables explained around 40% of the difference in the performance of reading tests. Finally, it

is deduced that the variables other than vocabulary size are responsible for the remaining variance (50 percent) in the reading test scores.

Table 5: "Pre-sessional students' reading comprehension and vocabulary size"

		Reading score	3000 word level	5000 word level	7000 word level	9000 word Level
Reading score	Pearson Correlation	1	.637(**)	.496(**)	.414(**)	.291(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.001
	No of students	200	200	200	200	200
3000 word level	Pearson Correlation	.637(**)	1	.744(**)	.571(**)	.367(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	No of students	200	200	200	200	200
5000 word level	Pearson Correlation	.496(**)	.744(**)	1	.678(**)	.486(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	No of students	200	200	200	200	200
7000 word level	Pearson Correlation	.414(**)	.571(**)	.678(**)	1	.641(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	No of students	200	200	200	200	200
9000 word level	Pearson Correlation	.291(**)	.367(**)	.486(**)	.641(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.000	.000	.000	
	No of students	200	200	200	200	200

Word Level	No. of Students	Mean (%)	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
2000	200	26.82(89.17%)	3.886	.342
3000	200	24.03(79.87%)	4.484	.395
5000	200		6.512	.573
10000	200	16.46 (54.30%)	5.615	.494
		6.97 (23.0%)		

Discussion

There is a link between pre-sessional ESL students' ability of reading comprehension in association with their vocabulary knowledge in an intense English language programme. This paper aims to analyse this relationship. According to Nation 1990, important outcomes of the tests were as follows: "reading comprehension scores and vocabulary size of a positive and upper moderate nature ($r = 0.641$). At a $p0.01$ level", the association is significant on the basis of the stats. The correlational study demonstrates that the consequences of the vocabulary level test correlate positively with the results of the reading comprehension test. Given that both tests measure a similar concept of English language competency, specifically reading skills, this is to be expected. The relationship between vocabulary excellancy at the "3,000-word level" and reading comprehension has the best correlation ($r = .0637$; $p0.01$).

The second important discovery concerns students' performance on the "reading comprehension portion of the EPT". 100% of students were able to meet the minimal reading band 5.5 criteria for faculty admittance. Additionally, among total the half of the pupils are successful in achieving "Band 8". The results are significant because, students' levels of general English language competency (from elementary to intermediate) vary, they have all virtually met the entrance requirements for the EPT's reading section. According to previous research on Malaysian students, reading is their strongest language skill, while speaking, listening, and writing are their weakest skills. (Sarudin and colleagues 2008; Engku &et al, 2013) This may be clarified that reading is taught to kids more frequently than other linguistic exercises such as, listening skills, writing, speaking.

The ability to read is essential for every learner of "English as a second or foreign language", specifically for ESL (Anderson, 1982). In India, you may take classes to learn a foreign language such as English. Having the capacity to read texts written in English provides students with the foundational skill that is essential for mastering the language and becoming competent speakers (Fatimah & Vishalache, 2006). Further, it is concluded that "reading is a necessary language ability for success in many areas of life, not just academic ones" (Kirsch and Guthrie's 1984) research shows that reading has a crucial influence in both professional achievement and resilience in the face of adversity. The third main conclusion of this research is the students' performance on a vocabulary level exam. Most students (90%) were able to master the vocabulary at the level of 2,000, whereas 54.3% were able to do so at the level of 5,000, and just 23% were able to do so at the level of 10,000. Vocabulary at the 10,000 level is assumed to be large enough for college-level work, while vocabulary at the 5,000 level is indicative of the amount anticipated for partial college-level work.

Contrarily, all of the research subjects who took the test met the minimal admission criteria of "Band 5.5" and were therefore qualified for enrollment in faculty courses. Why may different pupils have such varying levels of success? It stands to reason that these kids may begin their first work of college-level once they achieve the level of 3,000 vocabularies as opposed to the 5 to 9 thousand words excellency. The students' $r=0.637$ ($p0.01$) knowledge of vocabulary leading to good comprehension scores on the EPT and their overall competency in the test further supports this result.

There may be a correlation between the "level of reading comprehension and vocabulary level tests" and the observed performance gaps. During the vocabulary levels exam, students are given a list of terms and their meanings and directed to choose the correct one. The concept of a vocabulary exam provided by the interactionalist method (Read & Chapelle, 2001) states that test-takers should be able to utilise context to their advantage when interpreting the vocabulary. This may explain why our pupils' performance varied so much between the "Vocabulary Levels Test and the EPT's reading comprehension section". During a reading comprehension exam, students are asked to reply to questions about what they've read by analysing the text as a whole, focusing on a specific passage. Students may avoid guessing and start utilising additional comprehension skills or rather "subskills" such as, "skimming, scanning, inferring, predicting, and contextual cues" to solve reading comprehension problems. The reading comprehension exam is reflective of the activities and conditions that students will face in a classroom context. The EPT's reading comprehension exam also seems to make more sense as a predictor of students' reading ability in this population than the VLT's vocabulary questions do (Nation, 1990).

Conclusion

Commonality in outcomes in terms of cause and effect analysis is restricted by the type of research samples and the analysis and assessment associated, but broad educational impacts may be deduced that for institutions with comparable demographic features. Teachers must be reminded of their need to provide students with access to words at the 3,000-level in the context of their everyday reading and writing. Due to their extensive vocabulary, these students should focus on expanding their knowledge of less common terms by learning more about their meanings. To help students acquire a wider vocabulary, teachers should emphasise the importance of language-based activities.

Teachers and educators must be accommodating and supportive of their students to engage in extended reading activities outside of school, since there is growing evidence that doing so may assist students increase their vocabulary and reading comprehension. The literature supports this view.

(Hunt and Beglar, 2005) provide a paradigm for the development of vocabulary and language to be employed to rapidly and expand a learner's vocabulary. This is because the students have less time for studying English before moving on to their respective degree programmes. When placed in the context of this investigation, this is of paramount importance. Students need to be taught reading skills such as guessing and predicting from context to make up for the vocabulary gap.

This article meant to understand the connection and relation between the knowledge of vocabulary of pre-sessional ESL students and their skills to read written text in a foreign language. The "Reading Comprehension Test from the IIUM's English Proficiency Test" (EPT) is the next instrument of evaluation. It was developed as a formalised assessment instrument to evaluate the proficiency levels of English as a Second Language (ESL) students in four different areas: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The format of the test is such that it had forty objective questions from 4 distinct passages. In this test "Band 1" is the lowest band while "Band 9" is the highest. In the end it can be said that the students also need to understand the importance of vocabulary acquisition as a lifelong ability and the requirement to be able to expand their vocabulary on their own. This will improve their thinking and reading radically.

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