

**INVESTIGATING THE VOCABULARY SIZE OF THE SIXTH
SEMESTER STUDENTS OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OF
SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SCIENCE FACULTY
AT UNIVERSITY OF RIAU**

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Abstract: *This research is a descriptive-quantitative research design which is aimed at investigating the vocabulary size of International Relations students of Social and Political Science Faculty at University of Riau. The subjects of this study were the sixth-semester students majoring in International Relations of Social and Political Science Faculty at University of Riau. 96 students employed in this study were given the Vocabulary Size Test created by Nation I. S. P. and Beglar D. in 2007. The findings of this study revealed that the student knew about 7,400 word families. This result showed that the participants had good vocabulary mastery. Based on Nation (2006) the mean score of students of International Relations of Social and Political Science Faculty at University of Riau in sixth semester were able to read authentic materials which contains many vocabularies.*

Key Words: *Vocabulary, Vocabulary Size Test, International Relations.*

**MENYELIDIKI *VOCABULARY SIZE* DARI MAHASISWA
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Abstrak: Penelitian deskriptif-kuantitatif ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui vocabulary size dari mahasiswa semester enam di Jurusan Hubungan Internasional Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Politik Universitas Riau. Subjek penelitian ini adalah mahasiswa semester enam di Jurusan Hubungan Internasional Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Politik Universitas Riau. 96 mahasiswa yang dipekerjakan dalam penelitian ini menggunakan Vocabulary Size Test yang dibuat oleh Nation I. S. P. dan Beglar D. pada tahun 2007. Hasil test memperlihatkan bahwa vocabulary size yang dimiliki mahasiswa berkisar dalam 7,400 word-families. Hasil ini memperlihatkan bahwa mahasiswa yang berpartisipasi memiliki pemahaman vocabulary yang bagus. Berdasarkan pernyataan Nation (2006) nilai rerata ini menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa Hubungan Internasional Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Politik Universitas Riau pada semester enam dapat membaca materi otentik yang mengandung banyak kosakata.

Kata Kunci: *Vocabulary, Vocabulary Size Test*, Jurusan Hubungan Internasional.

INTRODUCTION

English language is an important aspect that must be possessed by students. Besides being an international language, English language will support communication with others. One of the language components that plays an important role in language learning is vocabulary. When the students start to learn a second language, the first aspect that students must learn is vocabulary. Derrah and Rowe (2015) states that it would be impossible to learn a language without vocabulary. According to Alqahtani (2015), vocabulary is one of the fields of knowledge in languages and plays a great role for learners in acquiring language. And he also mentioned that vocabulary knowledge is an important tool for second language learners because lacking vocabulary causes unsuccessful communication in second or foreign language. Another important role of vocabulary is also expressed by Kurniawan (2017), who says without grammar it would be very hard to convey, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed. It means that if the students spend most of the time in learning grammar, their English will progress, but it will be improved a lot if students start to learn a vocabulary or words (Kurniawan, 2016).

In this era, mostly reading texts in Indonesia schools use materials such as newspapers, articles, novels, and so on which contain many vocabularies. If students do not know the meaning of vocabulary, it will affect their understanding and comprehension which relates to their academic achievement at school or university (Tan & Goh, 2017).

English language and International Relations students are two things that can not be separated. In reality International Relations students should have English capability such as reading, writing, speaking, listening and especially they should have ability in vocabulary. Based on the curriculum of International Relations department, the students should have learned English subject as much as 6 credits in two semesters each 3 credits in two semesters. According to the real condition, in this major they are using many terms, literature, and supporting the course they use in their major is using English language. So, students need to understand the vocabulary and improve their vocabulary to support their course. That is why it is important to know their vocabulary size.

Vocabulary size can be defined as how many words students know or the total number of words that students knows in second language learning or foreign language learning. Knowing students vocabulary size not only helps students to improve their own self but also helps lecturers motivate and teach them using a good way to increase their vocabulary size (Kurniawan, 2017). It can be measured using vocabulary size tests. According to Nation (2007) the vocabulary size test is designed to give an estimation of vocabulary size for second and foreign language learners of general or academic English.

Nation (2006) divided vocabulary into 3 categories namely high-frequency words, mid-frequency, and low frequency words. High-frequency words are vocabulary that appears in daily use of language conversation, mid-frequency words are needed to read authentic material, novels, and some academic texts, and low-frequency words are vocabulary that rarely appears in daily English language use even by native speakers.

Based on the explanation, the writer was interested in conducting the research entitled "Investigating the Vocabulary Size of the Sixth Semester Students in International Relations of Social and Political Science Faculty at University of Riau".

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted to the sixth semester students of International Relations of Social and Political Science Faculty at University of Riau. Sixth semester students were selected as the sample of this research by using total sampling technique with the same rights and opportunities in a whole as a population. In this research, the amount of the sample is 135 students. But the writer only got 126 samples and from 126 samples there were 15 samples that failed because they did not complete the Vocabulary Size Test (VST). So, the total sample in this study was only 96 samples. The specific objective of this research was to find out the vocabulary size of the sixth semester students of International Relations of Social and Political Faculty at University of Riau.

In conducting the research, the writer collected the data by giving the Vocabulary Size Test (VST) created by Nation I. S. P. and Beglar D. in 2007. The result of this research, students' correct answers are calculated by using Microsoft Excel 2007 and SPSS 23 for windows was used with Nation I. S. P. and Beglar D. VST formula.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Students Vocabulary Size

In order to find out the vocabulary size, students' correct answers are calculated using SPSS with Nation VST formula. Based on the result, the vocabulary size of sixth-semester students of International Relations of Social and Political Science Faculty the University of Riau are classified into categories as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Students Vocabulary Size Group

Level	Word Families	Number of Students
High-frequency	1000-2000	-
Mid-frequency	3000-9000	85
Low-frequency	>10,000	11

Table 1 shows 85 of students sampled in the International Relations of Social and Political Science Faculty at the University of Riau are classified into Mid-frequency level and 11 students in Low-frequency level and none of the students are in High-frequency level. The highest score is 12,700 word-families that include into Low-frequency level and the lowest score is 3,800 word-families that include into mid-frequency level.

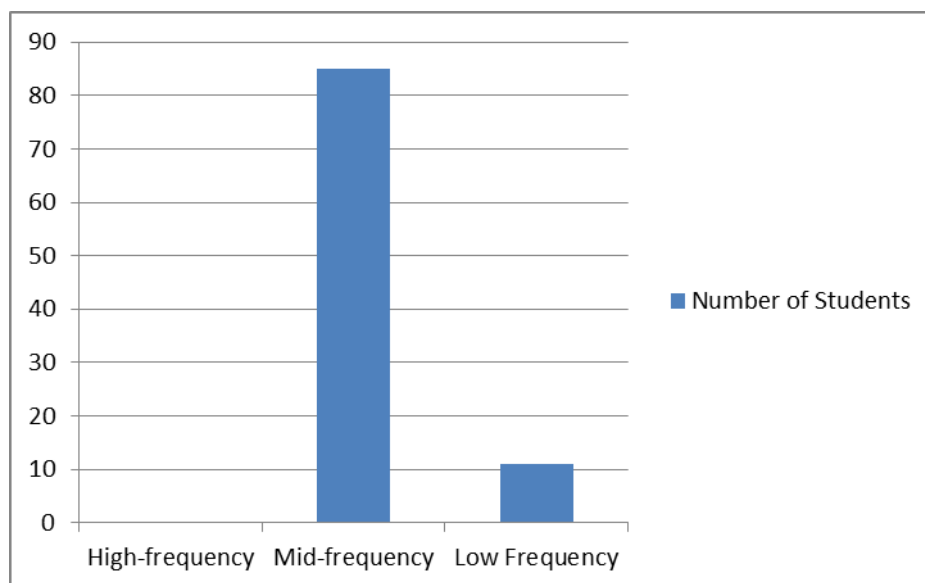


Chart 1. Students Vocabulary Size Percentage

Mean Score

Table 2 shows the means and standard deviation for the 14,000 receptive vocabulary size test scored by 96 students involved in the study. As can be seen from table 2 the mean of the vocabulary size of 96 students is 7400 word-families. The minimum score is 38 points or 3800 word-families and the maximum score is 127 points or 12700 word-families.

Table 2. Mean Score

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Vocabulary Size	96	3800	12700	7400	2349.96081
Valid N (listwise)	96				

Discussion

Based on the results of the vocabulary size test on students of the sixth semester students of International Relations of Social and Political Science Faculty at University of Riau shows that 85 out of 96 students sample are categorized in mid-frequency level. Mid-frequency level means their vocabulary size is between 3000 to 9000 word families. The Mid-frequency level of vocabulary size defined by Nation (2007) as the average amount of vocabulary size that is mastered by English as Second Language (ESL) or English as Foreign Language (EFL) learners. The highest vocabulary size of the students sample in Mid-frequency level is 9800 word-families and the lowest is 3800 word-families.

The mean score of the sixth semester students of International Relations of Social and Political Science Faculty at University of Riau is 7400 word families. The minimum score is 3800 word families and the maximum score is 12700 word families. The result reveal that the sixth semester students of International Relations of Social and Political Science Faculty at University of Riau have the vocabulary size of 7400 word families which is higher than the basic requirement in English as second language learning or English as foreign language learning at university level. This means that the sixth semester students of International Relations of Social and Political Science Faculty at University of Riau pass the first threshold of 3000 word families recommended by many researchers.

Then, this mean score is categorized as Mid-frequency level with range 3000 to 9000 word-families. Nation (2006) describes 8,000 to 10,000 words are needed to read the newspaper, novels, and some academic text. Meanwhile, the results show that the mean vocabulary size of International Relations of Social and Political Science Faculty at University of Riau students are lower than 10,000. The students had just been able to read children's novels, watch movies, and to participate in daily conversation.

On the whole, with the vocabulary size 7400 word families found in this study, the students should be able to cope with reading simple texts well and should be able to guess the meaning unknown words. Based on the Nation (2006) they should able to know 95%-98% of the vocabulary coverage in the text. Moreover, they should be able to understand children's movies and radio talk shows between family members and friends. In terms of speaking and writing, the students should be able to communicate and handle learning tasks encountered at a university.

The result of vocabulary size depended on how well they actually mastering vocabulary. There are factors affecting learner vocabulary mastering such as learner individual difference, social and situational factor, and the learner outcomes. Individual difference based on factors such as believe, attitude, motivation, and language learner experience. Social and situational factor depend on field of study, course study, class level, gender and language learner environment. Learners learning outcomes also affect the vocabulary mastery such as language achievement, language proficiency, and vocabulary knowledge. Vocabulary size increase as how students believe vocabulary mastering is important in learning language.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussions, the researcher has drawn some conclusions as follows to answer the research objective in the introduction. The result of the vocabulary size test for the sixth semester students' in International Relations of Social and Political Science Faculty at University of Riau, out Of 96 students sample 85 of students were placed in Mid-frequency level and 11 students in Low-frequency level. This result shows most students that are taken as samples have vocabulary mastery around 3000 until 9000 word-families. This size of vocabulary means that they were already mastering 2000 of general word families based on British National Corpus (BNC), known as the academic word families and technical word families.

11 students categorized in Low-frequency level considered had mastered vocabulary as close as native speakers. Vocabulary in Low-frequency levels is a type of word-families that is used very rarely in most text. It was categorized as Low-frequency level of word because it is not used in many occasions or it had a very hard word family.

Recommendation

Concerning the conclusion above, the researcher suggests the students to increase their vocabulary mastery even though the mean score of students are 7,400 word-families but there were few students' scores below 6000 word-families because Nation (2006) stated that a language learner need to at least master 6000 word-families to understand a children's movies. And also for other researchers, the writer suggests continuing this research to find out how to increase students' vocabulary size. Another suggestion is to continue this research to find out the difference of vocabulary size in University of Riau and other universities in Riau and the reasons for its differences. Hopefully, this study can give a new inspiration to the next researcher.

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