ABSTRACT

The attention to vocabulary acquisition has been dwindling in English language support teaching and learning in Malaysia. In addition, considering that the difference in ecological background can have a significant impact on vocabulary size and English language achievement (ELA), this study seeks to assess and explore the vocabulary and ELA of ESL learners with a comparison between urban and rural students. To achieve this purpose, this study examined the receptive and productive vocabulary sizes of urban and rural secondary school students at three different levels of word frequency (high, mid and low). It also explored the relationship between students' receptive and productive vocabulary to determine whether the size of one influences the other. As ELA is said to be related to vocabulary size, the extent of its relationship was correlated to examine whether the students with larger vocabulary size would have higher ELA, depending on their ecological background.

Fifty urban and fifty rural Form Five school students from four schools in the district of Kuantan were selected as participants, based on their L1, socioeconomic status and ELA. Data was obtained by means of firstly, the receptive and productive translation tests, where students had to translate L2 words (English) into L1 words (Malay) and vice versa according to different levels of word frequency, based on the word list provided in the Form Four school syllabus. Secondly, a word association test (Lex30) was used to gauge students' low-frequency productive vocabulary which was beyond the constraints of the word list. The data gathered were analysed using SPSS descriptive statistics and correlative analysis that comprised of One-way repeated measures ANOVA and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Test.

The results showed that urban students' receptive and productive vocabulary sizes are larger than rural students', although there was no significant difference in low-frequency vocabulary production (Lex30). When comparing the sizes between receptive and productive vocabulary, no significant difference was found among urban and rural students. However, there exists a strong element of influence between receptive and productive vocabulary, where the size of one influences the other. This means that an increase in the students' receptive vocabulary at every word frequency level was followed by a similar increase in their productive vocabulary at every word frequency level. This relationship was found to be stronger among urban students compared to rural students. Low frequency productive vocabulary (Lex30) only influences rural students' receptive vocabulary weakly. A significant relationship between ELA and the overall vocabulary size was also established, albeit only moderately. The correlation was stronger among urban students compared to rural students. Urban students showed stronger correlation between their ELA and their receptive vocabulary whereas rural students showed a weak correlation between their ELA and their productive vocabulary. This indicates that urban students' ELA can be predicted and is influenced by their overall vocabulary size, especially receptive vocabulary. In contrast, rural students' ELA can be predicted and is influenced by only their productive vocabulary to some extent.

With this, vocabulary acquisition could be further explored as it seems to have significant effect on the teaching and learning of English in Malaysia.

ABSTRAK

Kini, proses pengajaran dan pembelajaran perbendaharaan kata (PK) dalam subjek Bahasa Inggeris di Malaysia semakin mendapat perhatian yang kurang dan kian dilupakan. Namun, kepentingan perbendaharaan kata telah dibuktikan dalam kajian-kajian pakar. Perbezaan dalam latar belakang ekologi juga telah dibuktikan boleh membawa pengaruh yang penting terhadap saiz perbendaharaan kata dan pencapaian Bahasa Inggeris. Dengan demikian, kajian ini bertujuan meneliti PK dan penguasaan Bahasa Inggeris (ELA) pelajar-pelajar Bahasa Inggeris sebagai Bahasa Kedua dengan membandingkan latar belakang ekologi mereka, iaitu bandar dan luar bandar. Untuk mencapai tujuan ini, kajian ini akan menyelidik saiz PK reseptif dan produktif pelajar-pelajar bandar dan luar bandar pada tiga peringkat frekuensi (tinggi, sederhana, rendah). Pertalian antara saiz PK reseptif dan produktif juga dianalisi untuk menentukan sama ada mereka mempengaruhi satu sama lain. Selain itu, kajian ini juga mengkaji sejauh mana pertalian antara ELA dan saiz PK reseptif dan produktif antara pelajar bandar dan luar bandar.

50 pelajar bandar dan 50 orang pelajar luar bandar tingkatan lima telah dipilih dari empat buah sekolah menengah di daerah Kuantan untuk menyertai kajian ini. Pertama sekali, bahasa ibunda (Bahasa Malaysia), status sosioekonomi dan keputusan ujian Bahasa Inggeris sekolah ditentukan melalui Profil Peserta. Setelah itu, ujian penterjemahan reseptif dan produktif diadministrasikan, di mana kata-kata dalam Bahasa Inggeris diterjemahkan kepada kata-kata Bahasa Malaysia (bahasa ibunda) dan sebaliknya pada tiga peringkat frekuensi, berdasarkan senarai perbendaharaan kata yang disediakan dalam sukatan pelajaran Tingkatan Empat. Ujian asosiasi perkataan (Lex30) juga digunakan untuk menilai PK produktif berfrekuensi rendah selain daripada senarai yang disediakan.

Data yang dikumpul dianalisis menggunakan SPSS dari segi statistic deskriptif dan korelatif, termasuk "One-way repeated measures ANOVA" dan "Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Test".

Dapatan menunjukkan bahawa saiz PK reseptif dan produktif pelajar bandar lebih besar daripada pelajar luar bandar. Namun, daripada analisis Lex30, saiz PK produktif berfrekuensi rendah adalah sama antara pelajar bandar dan luar bandar. Saiz PK reseptif dan produktif antara pelajar juga tidak menunjukkan perbezaan. Walaubagaimanapun, terdapat pertalian yang kukuh antara PK reseptif dan produktif pada setiap peringkat frekuensi. Apabila saiz reseptif semakin besar, saiz produktif turut meningkat. Pertalian data pelajar bandar didapati lebih kuat berbanding luar bandar. PK produktif berfrekuensi rendah (Lex30) pula hanya mempengaruhi PK reseptif pelajar luar bandar secara lemah. Selain itu, pertalian yang sederhana juga dicatat antara ELA dan saiz PK keseluruhan. Pertalian ini juga lebih ketara melalui pelajar bandar berbanding luar bandar. Analisis lanjut menunjukkan pertalian pelajar bandar yang lebih kuat antara ELA dan PK reseptif, berbanding dengan pertalian pelajar luar bandar yang menunjukkan pertalian yang lebih lemah antara ELA dan PK produktif. Boleh disimpulkan bahawa ELA pelajar bandar dipengaruhi dan boleh diramalkan melalui saiz PK keseluruhan, khususnya PK reseptif. Sebaliknya, ELA pelajar luar bandar dipengaruhi dan boleh diramalkan melalui saiz PK produktif secara lemah.

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