

**METHODS USED BY NON-ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STUDENTS  
TO IMPROVE THEIR VOCABULARY MASTERY**

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**ABSTRACT:** This study wanted to see method do Non-English Department Students used to improve their vocabulary mastery. There were three research questions of this study “*What methods do Non-English Department Students use to improve their vocabulary?*”, “*What problems do Non-English Department Students face in improving their vocabulary mastery?*”, “*What solutions do Non-English Department Students take to solve those problems?*”. This research adopted a qualitative approach that took four student as the participants which were students from Accounting and Communication Department batch 2014. Based on data collection, this study resulted various findings about methods used by non-English department to improve vocabulary mastery; watching movie, listening to song or music, reading book, and playing role-playing game (RPG). The problems they faced to improve their vocabulary mastery; low English proficiency and personal problem. In solutions they took to solve those problems; asking other people, translating, confident to try and always practice, marking the word and making a note.

*Keywords:* non-English department students, vocabulary learning, learning methods.

## **Background of the Study**

Bahasa Indonesia is very different from English such as the pronunciation, the structure and the vocabulary. From all of those, vocabulary is the one of critical point, Wilkins (1972) stated that while without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary *nothing* can be conveyed, it means that even students do not know much about grammar at least they know vocabulary first, and then they will know what to do. So it can see if students focus only in grammar, their language did not get improve much better than students who focus in vocabulary. Every student have different methods to improve their vocabulary mastery, according to Sa'imah (2014), except learn from lecture or teacher, there are several methods used by students to improve their vocabulary mastery. There are tools, objects, and person. Tools are things that used for convey message such radio, computer, television, and so on. Then objects are things that contained message likes movie, picture, book, comic and so on. In person there are teacher, lecturer, friend, parents and so on.

Based on researcher observation, many student of Non-English department faces some problems in learning English, especially in vocabulary mastery. Non-English students may not know learning method which is fit for their self to improve their vocabulary mastery. Moreover, non-English department student feel English is difficult to understand because they do not know the meaning of some words. Some of them used dictionary or ask their friends when they face difficulties in understanding unfamiliar word. From the explanation above, the researcher interest to know "What methods do Non-English Department Students

use to improve their vocabulary mastery?”, “What problems do Non-English Department Students face in improving their vocabulary mastery?”, and “What solutions do Non-English Department Students take to solve those problems?”.

### **Research Design**

To help the researcher achieve his purpose for the study, the researcher used qualitative approach as research design. Creswell (2012) said that a qualitative research study was needed to explore this phenomenon from perspective of distance education students. Therefore, using qualitative is appropriate for this study.

### **Participant and Setting of the Study**

This study had four students as the participants. Two students were from Accounting Department batch 2014 and two students were from Communication Department batch 2014. The setting of this study was at a private university in Yogyakarta.

### **Finding and Discussion**

#### **Methods used by Non-English Department Students to Improve Their Vocabulary Mastery**

In this study, the researcher found methods used by non-English department students to improve their vocabulary mastery. The researcher also found the students were aware of those kinds of method. Based on the data, the

methods are watching movie, listening to song or music, reading book, and playing role-playing game (RPG).

**Watching Movie.** There are three participants who like watching movie to improve their vocabulary. Based on the analysis of this finding, the researcher found that students that use movie as a method to improve their vocabulary mastery is a visual learner and aural learner, and also they are verbal learner too (Ferriman, 2013), because they learn by watching movie by reading a subtitle in movie. Beside students can found a new word, they also can learn the pronunciation from the conversation in the movie.

**Listening to songs or music.** When the researcher asks about what method they used to improve their vocabulary mastery, all of participants answered listening to song or music as method to improve their vocabulary mastery. The researcher found that listening to song or music as a method to improve vocabulary have a benefit except improve their vocabulary mastery, learner also can improve their listening, reading and speaking skill through listen the song or music and sing it with look into the lyric. Moreover, the researcher found that, the learner that used this method implied in aural and verbal learner (Ferriman, 2013).

**Reading Book.** There were three participants who used reading book as method to improve their vocabulary mastery. By reading book as method to improve vocabulary mastery the researcher finds that they are visual and social learner (Ferriman, 2013). More, the researcher found that, as Brown (2012) said in

recognition and meaning method, by using word parts as one of examples, it will help learners distinguish words in reading and listening, and also learn spelling and pronunciation as well as meaning.

**Playing role-playing game (RPG).** The last method is role-playing game. One participant did this method. This method is almost same as music and movie with help from subtitle, there is cutscene dialouge conversation in that game. Participant three do playing role-playing game as his method. The researcher found that by playing game as a method to improve vocabulary mastery make learner feel excited. Moreover, the technique used in it is not different from listening music or song and watching movie, it same by using subtitle and this method implied in aural and verbal learner (Ferriman, 2013).

### **Problems faced by Non-English Department Students in Improving Their Vocabulary Mastery**

In this study, the researcher found problems that non-English department students faced in improving their vocabulary mastery. The researcher also found the students are aware of those problems. Based on the data, the problems are low English proficiency and personal problem.

**Low English proficiency.** This problem faced by all participants. All of them said that the main problem in improving their vocabulary mastery was do not know the meaning of word. It can also be seen from several participants' statement. Participant two said "the first problem is I do not know the meaning of the word" (RQ2.P2.3. Then, the participant also faced problem in listening when

used music and movie as method in improving vocabulary mastery. Participant two said that “Second, from movie or music I got a problem, I am not good in listening” (RQ2.P2.4). More statement from participant two and four, they had a problem in English and vocabulary. Participant two said that “many vocabularies that I have not mastery yet” (RQ2.P2.2). Moreover, participant three faces a problem when he read a book and participant four face this problem when he read subtitle in movie. They found an ambiguous words, it is mean that they intended meaning in some way unclear.

**Personal problems.** This problems faced by each individuals. First is problem in learning practice because there is no mentor. This problem faced by participant one, he said that “usually I have a problem in practice” (RQ2.P1.3) “because now, I have not meet people that can help me again in improving vocabulary mastery” (RQ2.P1.2). More personal problem faced by participant three, he said that “I am not everyday learning English, so that was my problem in improving vocabulary mastery” (RQ2.P3.2).

Moreover, when participant four used music or song method to improve his vocabulary mastery, he had a problem that came from sound quality. The next personal problem is in reading book as their method to improve their vocabulary mastery, this problem faced by participant four and two in different way.

Participant four problem’ is in uninteresting in some English comic, he state that “for reading comic book, there is some English comic that I have no interest on it” (RQ2.P4.6). Beside participant two problems is in hard to concentration when

read a book. He said when reading book, "I got a little problem in the concentration" (RQ2.P2.1).

As statement by Meara (1995), she said that the biggest problem that students face in learning vocabulary is cannot recognize any of words because all the words are unfamiliar and do not know the meaning. From all the finding about the problem above, the researcher found that the most problem that non-English department students face in improving their vocabulary mastery is do not know the meaning of the word. Many of students do not know the meaning, because it is unfamiliar for students.

### **Solutions that Non-English Department Students Take to Solve Those Problems**

In this study, the researcher found solutions that non-English department students take to solve those problems. The researcher also found the students are aware of those kinds of method. Based on the data, the solutions are asking other people, translating, being confident to try and always practice, marking the word and making a note

**Asking other people.** Those participant did asking other people to solve the problems in improving vocabulary mastery include in social learner (Ferriman, 2013), they asking with social or other people who master in it like their friends. So, they needs other people to learn and solve their problems in improving vocabulary mastery.

**Translating.** All of participant take this solution to solve their problem. They use dictionary, translate application or online translation to know the meaning of word, which is do not know before. More research result by Schimitt (1997), he found that one of several solution in improving vocabulary mastery is using a bilingual dictionary. So translating can be one of solutions to solve the problem in improng vocabulary mastery

**Being confident to try and always practice.** More answer from participant two for solution to solve the problem in improving vocabulary mastery. His solution is confident to try and always practice. According to Sa'imah (2013), she said that to solve the problems in improving vocabulary mastery, student need more practice and action in every aspects like writing, reading, listening, and reading. So, In participant two statement', he said that "the solution is become confident, I mean that we should be confident to try" (RQ3.P2.7) and "always paractice." (RQ3.P2.8)

**Marking the word and making a note.** This kind of solution does by participant two and four. From participant two, he mark the unfamiliar word as his solution, he said that "usually I underline the unfamiliar word or mark a text with a highlighting pen" (RQ3.P2.2). More solution did by participant two and four, they make a note in every moment that they get new word with the translation. This have a benefit for them, it will help them to remember the word that they have. According to Sa'imah (2013), she said making note, diary is the one of solutions to solve the problems in improving vocabulary mastery. Marking the



word and making a note can be choose to solve the problems in improving vocabulary mastery.

## **Conclusion**

The conclusion of this study is to see whether or not the research question of this study has been answered from the finding. For the conclusion, this study has summarized all the finding to know method used by non-English department students to improve their vocabulary mastery. The methods used by non-English department students are watching movie, listening to song or music, reading book, and playing video game. Beside the methods used by non-English department students to improve vocabulary mastery, the researcher found problems faced by non-English department students. The problems were low English proficiency and personal problem. To solve the problem, students had solutions. They are asking other people, translating, being confident to try and always practice, marking the word and making a note.

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