

## MY E-VOCABULARY PROFILE (MEVP): TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE ON ITS USABILITY

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**Highlights:** My E-Vocabulary Profile (MeVP) is a compilation of students' learning progress of new English vocabulary benefitting the usage of Vocabulary.com. Each student would have a different MeVP wordlist depending on their language proficiency. This paper intends to present preliminary findings on the usability of MeVP for intermediate students. The teacher used Vocabulary.com for a pre-reading activity and claimed that the students were reluctant to initiate their list. However, they were motivated to achieve 100% mastery of the words although it requires several attempts. Therefore, there is a need for further study on the usability of MeVP for advanced students.

**Keywords:** *Vocabulary, electronic vocabulary profile, higher education, ELT, autonomous learning*

### Introduction

Previously, the planning and development of English subjects in Malaysia focused on four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing based on what students need in their everyday lives without a clear description of proficiency level. As a result, there is no continuity from one stage of learning to another, ambiguous definitions of learners' capability, and difficulty in comparing students' performance from one learning institution to another. The introduction of the English language Education Roadmap 2015-2025 (The Roadmap) enforced the Common European Framework of Reference as a performance standard for all levels of education in Malaysia and, most importantly, internationally recognised.

### Background of MeVP

MeVP is proposed to be introduced for undergraduates who are enrolled in English courses as university compulsory courses. MeVP is a continuous process of collecting information on vocabulary that students' have learned throughout the semester from the courses they have taken depending on their field of studies. MeVP can be conducted outside of the English class time. University students should know that they need to acquire at least 3250 words for them to achieve CEFR B2 (Milton, 2013). Although vocabulary is not a part of assessment, vocabulary knowledge is highly correlated with performance in reading, speaking, listening, and writing (Milton & Alexiou, 2009).

In Malaysia, it is targeted in The Roadmap that university students should reach B2 level once they graduate to meet the workforce requirement. However, this target is difficult to achieve if students have a limited vocabulary, which will affect their English proficiency. Nur Fatima, Nur Ashikin, and Noraziah (2017) reported that proficient learners tend to have a wider vocabulary range than the less proficient. Therefore, vocabulary mastery is essential to help students become independent and confident users of English.

Previous research on how ICT or blended learning approach affects students' vocabulary mastery has reported various positive effects. Vasbieva et al. (2016) investigated the effects of a blended learning approach on students' vocabulary achievement. Based on the pre-and post-tests conducted, it was reported that students' vocabulary achievements had improved significantly. Similar findings were also observed in Krishnan and Yunus (2019) where they found that blended learning helped low proficient learners enhance their vocabulary knowledge. These studies employed online resources and materials such as videos, games, and images.

#### Relevance of MeVP to education

MeVP encourages autonomy in learning where students can decide reading materials that are relevant to them. Students also need to practice self-evaluation in making decisions to choose the new words found in the text. Mastering a vast range of vocabularies in a second language helps learners read, listen, write and speak well. One of the advantages of MeVP is learners can use the words to create their profile, consequently exposing them to the use of the words in different contexts. This will challenge them to use the words creatively to make their profile interesting. Educators also benefit from MeVP in which they can gain access to the learners' profile which also contains their academic background. Based on that information, educators can plan the lessons accordingly to suit their level. MeVP is created online so both learners and educators can easily access all the necessary information for future reference.

## Preliminary findings and recommendations

The teacher used Vocabulary.com for a pre-reading activity instead of a language enhancement activity because the students were reluctant to find their own text and initiate their list. It indicates that students failed to relate the usability of MeVP outside of English classroom. Discussing the response from the students, the teacher mentioned that the students were motivated to achieve 100% mastery of the words although it requires several attempts. The students were also interested in exploring more features offered by Vocabulary.com such as Vocabulary Jam where they can create their own group. However, this opportunity was not able to be explored due to limited knowledge of the application and time constraint.

In sum, Vocabulary.com has a huge potential to be utilized in ESL classrooms. Considering that there are different levels of English acquisition among the students, teachers are suggested to provide different levels of guidance. For instance, lower level students should be guided closely including providing suitable articles or texts and also doing frequent checking on their work. While for intermediate and advanced students, they can be encouraged to find their own reading materials and the teacher can facilitate so that the aim to promote independent learning is achieved. E-certificate can also encourage them to give their full commitment and consequently succeed in building vocabulary that will be useful for them in the future.

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