



Measuring English Receptive and Productive Vocabulary of Pakistani University Students across Frequency Levels*

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ABSTRACT

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I administered the VLT receptive (Nation 1990) and VLT productive (Laufer and Nation 1999) to establish the disparity, threshold levels, and relationship between receptive and productive vocabulary of Pakistani university students across 3K, 5K, UWL, and 10K frequency levels. Participants included 200 university students majoring in Computer Science and English Literature. The results exhibited that the participants possessed good basic (receptive) knowledge of high-frequency words but struggled to actively use (production) vocabulary knowledge. Higher scores on receptive tests suggest that the ability to recognize and understand vocabulary is stronger than the ability to produce vocabulary actively. The trend remained the same across all - 3K, 5K (UWL), and 10k frequency levels. For receptive test results at the 3k frequency level, 124 participants reached the 3000-word threshold level, demonstrating a solid foundation in receptive vocabulary. At the 5k frequency level, 107 participants achieved the 5000-word threshold, 92 participants achieved the threshold of UWL, indicating a strong command of the academic vocabulary range, and the advanced 10k frequency level presented a greater challenge; only 66 participants reached the 10000-word threshold. For productive vocabulary test scores, 31 participants reached the 3000-word threshold level. At the 5k frequency level, 21 participants achieved the 5K-word threshold. Thirty-nine participants reached the UWL threshold, and lastly, at the more challenging 10K word-frequency level, only two participants reached the 10K word threshold, underlining the complexity and extensive nature of the vocabulary at this level. Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test confirmed significant differences between receptive and productive vocabulary scores at all tested frequency levels. Correlation analysis revealed a strong positive correlation between total receptive and productive scores ($\rho = .675, p < .01$). The study contributes new insights into vocabulary acquisition and production abilities among Pakistani students but faces limited funding and time limitations. Future research should focus on cognitive processes behind vocabulary acquisition, longitudinal studies, tailored language interventions, and cross-cultural comparisons.

KEYWORDS

receptive and productive vocabulary, word frequency level, threshold, L2 learners, VLT & PVLTL level tests, high frequency, low frequency, UWL

1. Introduction¹

Vocabulary knowledge is reflected as a key element of language learning. Nation and Waring (1997) stated, “Vocabulary knowledge enables language use, language use enables the increase of vocabulary knowledge and knowledge of the world enables the increase of vocabulary knowledge and language use. Schmitt (2008) claimed, “One thing that students, teachers, materials writers, and researchers can all agree upon is that learning vocabulary is essential to mastering a second language”. Additionally, Zimmerman (1997) specified vocabulary as the central constituent of language and equally essential to its learners. Wilkins emphasized the role of grammar: “Without grammar, very little can be conveyed; without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed”. Nation (2022) Receptive vocabulary knowledge is considered the conscious awareness of the form of a single word and bringing back its meaning in listening or reading, while productive knowledge is the active use of the word items in spoken or written form in any linguistic and social context. Pakistani English learners often confront significant challenges in this respect since they struggle to develop effective ways to develop the enormous vocabulary required for real-world communication. Pakistani students, unlike learners in immersive language environments, generally rely on formal language classes to improve their English language abilities, especially lexical knowledge. As a result, classroom activities become essential for Pakistani learners, who cannot encompass the target language outside of the classroom. As a result, one of the most important pedagogical issues in the Pakistani setting is determining the best strategies, activities, and tactics for enhancing vocabulary growth among English language learners. While many English language teachers in Pakistan work hard to assist students in learning new words, their efforts are hindered by a lack of clear guidelines on which techniques, activities, and behaviors are most successful in helping students grow their vocabulary size. Pakistani English teachers may make sound decisions on what activities to add to their English language teaching by researching and providing concrete evidence on effective vocabulary learning methods. English language teachers in Pakistan require theoretical insights and empirical data about the efficiency of various vocabulary learning tasks to handle this difficulty successfully.

The receptive vocabulary of native speakers is considered larger than productive vocabulary, but in communicative learning environments, this difference in non-native speakers is seen as smaller (Beglar and Nation 2013, Kremmel and Schmitt 2017). The study aims to deepen the understanding of how receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge relate—inevitably informing language learning practices and interventions to optimize vocabulary acquisition outcomes in Pakistani universities. Gaining insight into Pakistani learners' receptive and productive vocabulary sizes would yield some objective clues regarding what works in ELT in Pakistan and what does not. The rationale this research seeks to compare receptive and productive vocabulary teaching in Pakistani university students relies on the nuance of Pakistan's language context. This is because English is mainly learned in the classroom rather than in other practical ways, such as typical English foreign language immersion, which affects vocabulary skills. Thus, this investigation aims to unveil how such an environment influences the student's learning of English vocabulary and their overall understanding of it. By comparing and contrasting these cognitive facets, it is possible to pinpoint precise zones where tutor-assisted activities can improve vocabulary acquisition. This is especially so in Pakistan, where many students have hardly any opportunities to practice English outside classrooms because of the language's minimal use in the country and around the region. So, it will be beneficial

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to establish effective teaching learning strategies by understanding the connection between Receptive and Productive vocabulary necessary for teaching Pakistani learners.

2. Literature Review

Knowing a language's vocabulary is indeed highly ambitious, as even native speakers do not possess knowledge of the entire language's vocabulary. According to Nation (2013), adult native speakers usually have 20,000-word families of receptive vocabulary. It is roughly observed that native speakers, during their early years from age three to around 25, add an average of 1,000-word families to their vocabulary each year (Biemiller and Slonim 2001). For non-native speakers of English, on the whole, those learning it as a foreign language, reaching a goal of learning 1,000-word families per year is quite a strive. However, there is one aspect in which the learning burden of English words for non-native speakers is gradually becoming easier. Many English words exist as borrowed words in the learner's first language. For instance, Daulton (2008) estimated that roughly half of the first 3,000 English words have counterparts or related forms in Japanese. Japanese learners are already familiar with the meanings of these loanwords, which facilitates the learning of their English counterparts.

Mulder and Hulstijn (2011) measured the Dutch language proficiency of native speakers, encompassing individuals of various ages (ranging from 18 to 76 years old), educational backgrounds, and professions. The findings revealed that lexical fluency and memory span tend to decline with age while lexical knowledge increases. The results highlighted a significant language knowledge and skills variation among native speakers. The number of words native speakers know may not be the most appropriate short-term goal for second language learners. Native speaker's vocabulary growth studies treat all words as equal in value to the learner, but frequency-based research has demonstrated that certain words are significantly more useful than others (Schmitt 2008). Therefore, an alternative approach to setting vocabulary-learning goals involves determining the number of truly useful words learners need to know. This perspective acknowledges that learners can prioritize high-frequency words and focus on acquiring the vocabulary that will affect their ability to communicate effectively in the language. The analysis of various texts using 1,000-word family lists from the British National Corpus specifies that 95% of text coverage requires knowing roughly 3,000 to 4,000-word families. , vocabulary is learned in the order of its frequency. The first 1,000 words are learned before the second 1,000 words; the second 1,000 words are learned before the third 1,000 words, and so on.

2.1 Previous Research on Vocabulary Knowledge

Nation and Waring (1997) suggest that native speakers acquire approximately 1,000-word families per year, further emphasizing the challenge for non-native speakers to reach the same level. However, frequency counts can assist learners in their language acquisition journey. Nation and Waring (1997) stated that knowing 2,000-3,000 word families could lead to adequate productive use of the language, while 3,000-5,000 word families provide a solid foundation for comprehension. By focusing on these high-frequency words, learners can grasp a significant portion of the vocabulary encountered in written or spoken texts. These words typically include content words, which are crucial for understanding a text's meaning and overall comprehension. Ellis (2009) emphasizes the importance of learning vocabulary based on its frequency of occurrence. He stressed that special attention should be given to the first 2000 words because they comprise a significant percentage (80-90%) of the words encountered

in texts. By mastering these high-frequency words, learners can benefit greatly in their language comprehension and proficiency.

Laufer and Nation's (1999) research and the use of vocabulary measures, such as the Vocabulary Levels Test (VLT) and Productive Vocabulary Levels Test (PVLVT), have provided valuable insights into the importance of frequency-based vocabulary learning and the substantial benefits associated with mastering high-frequency words. Adolphs et al. (2004) suggest that a vocabulary of approximately 2000 words is needed for basic conversation. However, other vocabulary specialists argue that to achieve adequate text comprehension, a passive vocabulary of at least 3000-word families is required to understand 95% of a text (Laufer 1992). For even higher text coverage, estimates range from 8000 to 9000-word families, providing 98% coverage (Nation 2006). Regarding listening, Nation (2006) asserts that a lexicon of 6000 to 7000-word families is necessary to comprehend oral texts successfully.

Huesh-Chao et al. (2000) emphasize that achieving a 98% vocabulary coverage should not be viewed as the sole requirement for reading comprehension but as a contributing factor, including L1 reading ability, grammar knowledge, L2 reading experience, and background knowledge. Much research on the vocabulary size of L2 learners (high school, university, and graduate students) worldwide has revealed that L2 learners have a vocabulary of less than 4000-word families. Laufer and Paribakht (1998), an average Israeli high school graduate, holds a receptive vocabulary size of 3500 words and a productive vocabulary size of 2550. According to Nurweni and Read (1999), Indonesian university students possess 1226 word families. Japanese university students were found to be fluent in 2000- 3000-word families (Shillaw 1995). Lee and Muncie (2006) explored the vocabulary utilized in compositions by high school English as Second Language (ESL) learners with multi-L1 backgrounds from the perspective of productive vocabulary size. Although learners consistently utilize words from 1000 to 2000, their productive use of higher-level target vocabulary increased and sustained after 14 days. Horst and Collins (2006) collected narrative texts generated by francophone English learners (11-12 years old) across four 100-hour intense language training intervals. They discovered that learner's writing following training had many terms from the 1000 and 2000 levels, but their dependence on L1 vocabulary and cognates was reduced. There is a significant difference in vocabulary knowledge between native English speakers and ESL/EFL students.

Even though ESL/EFL learners have a larger receptive vocabulary, they are significantly more dependent on the relationship between the size of their receptive vocabulary and productive vocabulary. Research persistently shows that L2 learner's receptive vocabulary is larger than their productive vocabulary. As L2 learner's receptive lexicon size increases, their productive lexicon size also increases in ESL and EFL contexts (Laufer and Goldstein 2004, Laufer and Paribakht 1998, Webb 2008, Zhong 2009). It is widely acknowledged that receptive vocabulary develops quicker than productive vocabulary size. Therefore, the gap between these two types of vocabulary sizes narrows as the study progresses (Laufer 1998). The differing results suggest that vocabulary learning may be driven mainly by needs when the learner's proficiency achieves a certain level and may be influenced by the learning tasks (Webb 2009). However, Zhong (2009) discovered a contrary developmental pattern in which the productive vocabulary size developed faster than the receptive size following four months of classroom teaching among a sample of Chinese students with intermediate English ability.

2.2 Measuring Vocabulary Sizes in an L2

2.2.1 Measuring receptive vocabulary knowledge (VLT)

The New Vocabulary Levels Test (NVLT) was initially designed by Nation (1999) and validated by Schmitt et al. (2001) and represents five-word frequency levels. In English: 2,000 words, including the most frequent words used in communication; 3,000 words, including more frequent words; 5,000 words, including less frequent words; and, finally, the lowest frequent words include academic words and 10,000 words. The target words are taken from the 2,000 words, 3,000 words, 5,000 words, University Word Level (UWL), and 10,000 words bands. The University Word List is a specialized vocabulary for second-language learners who want to pursue academic studies in English. It consists of about 570 families of words that are not among the 2,000 most common words but are quite common in various academic texts; it is often called sub-technical vocabulary and usually includes formal vocabulary (Huesh-Chao et al. 2000). There are six clusters of words at each level: three groups of nouns, two groups of verbs, and one group of adjectives. Each group has six words, among which three definitions are distracters while the other three are correct collocations. Included is a sample item from the original version of Nation's 5,000-word level test:

Alcohol	
Apron	
Lure	_____ cloth worn in front to protect your clothing
Mess	_____ stage of development
Phase	_____ musical instrument
Plank	

2.2.2 Measuring productive vocabulary (PVLT)

In the early 1980s, Paul Nation developed PVLT at Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand as a simple means to design programs for vocabulary teaching and learning. Read (2009) argued, "In the absence of any more sophisticated measure, it has been used by researchers who needed an estimate of the vocabulary size of their non-native speaking subjects." Similarly, Meara (1996) referred to it as "The nearest thing we have to a standard test in vocabulary." It was used as a frequency-based diagnostic tool to measure written receptive vocabulary knowledge at four frequency levels: 2,000, 3,000, 4,000 and 10,000. The name of the test productive vocabulary levels test (PVLT) was later revised, republished, and validated (Read 1988, Schmitt et al. 2001).

It is a fill-in-the-blank format test consisting of five sections, each representing a frequency range and considering word families as counting units: 2000 level, 2000-3000 level, 3000-5000 level, University Word List (UWL), and 10 000-word level. Each test segment consists of eighteen (18) unrelated sentences in which the words are missing, but the initial letters are given. Candidates must fill these gaps with a suitable word. The test designers set a threshold for each section that each participant must exceed to be considered fully proficient at that frequency level and able to use words of different frequencies productively in different contexts. Below is a sample of 5,000-10,000 frequencies from the original manuscript:

The baby is wet. Her dia..... needs changing (diaper)
If your lips are sore, try lip sal....., not medicine (salve)

Mastery of productive vocabulary is an important cornerstone of second language development. The number of words in our vocabulary should (ideally) increase gradually during second language acquisition (SLA). However, Laufer and Paribakht (1998) point out that despite the evidence of vocabulary growth in L2 learners, the total

number of words in second language learners is radically lower than in native speakers. It also emphasizes that word knowledge moves from shallow to deep as learners progress. I have chosen the PVLТ in this research as it seems more appropriate for the general population. The theory of productive vocabulary and the analysis of this study offer the practicality that is necessary to deal with a moderately large number of participants and a format that is familiar to the present population.

2.3 Mastery of receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge

Vocabulary knowledge has multiple aspects or dimensions (Schmitt 2010). Following this, different dimensions (also called “taxonomies”) have been proposed, namely “size” and “organization“(related to vocabulary depth) Schmitt and Meara (1997); Meara (1996); partial-precise knowledge, depth of knowledge and receptive-productive Henriksen (1999). As highlighted by Schmitt (2010) and Melka (1997), these dimensions are useful constructs of lexical competence, and there seems to be a consensus that vocabulary is investigated and tested based on these dimensions, namely size, depth and receptive-productive knowledge (Nizonkiza and Berg 2014).

When researchers need to estimate the vocabulary size of particular individuals or compare receptive and productive vocabulary size, a distinction is usually made between receptive and productive vocabulary. It is commonly assumed that the lexical resources for reception are significantly larger than those for production and that reception occurs before production (Henriksen 1999, Schmitt 2010). In Melka (1997), the receptive-productive relationship is seen as a continuum, with incremental increases in knowledge helping to move from receptive to productive mastery. What is unclear, however, is how this process takes place and the minimum amount of vocabulary required before productive acquisition or growth of knowledge becomes possible. In contrast to Meara (1990), Melka (1997) has suggested that the two may be qualitatively different, depending on the status of an item within the lexical network. He takes a perspective of lexical organization and suggests no gradual but clear distinction between these two types of vocabulary knowledge. For example, receptive vocabulary includes items responsive to external stimuli. In other words, they must be read or heard to be remembered.

Productive vocabulary requires no external stimulus but can be activated by other words (Meara 1990). This supports the idea that receptive and productive vocabularies are two distinct systems, with an intervening gap between the two. For example, Nation and Waring (1997) put the ratio between receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge at around 50 percent, while Milton (2009) claims that the ratio between the two is between 50 and 80 percent. Nizonkiza and Berg (2014) believe it is difficult to draw valid conclusions from "such large differences" in the proportion of the two types of lexical knowledge. As the studies above show, researchers either adhere to a multidimensional account of word knowledge or view receptive and productive knowledge as a continuum.

Based on the review of the literature discussed it became clear that there is rarely any comparison of receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge in non-communicative learning environments. Moreover, no such studies are known to have been conducted in Pakistan, which is unfortunate as they could be highly informative in evaluating curriculum and assessing learning needs. For this reason, the difference between Pakistani university students receptive and productive vocabulary was investigated in the present study using VLT and PVLТ control tests. More specifically, the study aims to investigate whether the participants have the necessary vocabulary threshold for English comprehension and production at the academic level, apart from the general purpose of investigating the student’s needs and indirectly assessing the effectiveness of the curriculum. The following is a list of the research questions.

- 1) Do Pakistani university students show any discrepancy between receptive and productive vocabulary scores across frequency levels?
- 2) Is there a discernible difference between vocabulary thresholds among Pakistani University students that influences comprehension and production?
- 3) Is there any relationship between receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge of Pakistani university students?

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Participants

The 1 table provides an overview of the demographic and academic characteristics of the participants used in the data collected. A total of 349 students from two universities, Lahore Garrison University (LGU) and Gift University (GU) in Pakistan voluntarily participated in this research. They signed the consent forms (see appendix A) and completed an online survey questionnaire (see appendix B) that collected information regarding personal, educational background, English learning background, and learning motivation. Two hundred senior undergraduate students from the computer science and English departments were selected to attempt the Receptive and productive vocabulary level tests.

Table 1. Demographic Information on Participants

Total (200 Participants)		Mean	Standard Deviation
Age	-	20.78	0.01
Female	108	72.00	33.77
Male	92	61.33	29.56
Computer Science	114	76	48.04
English	86	57.33	42.91
Undergraduates	200	-	-

3.2 Data Collection

3.2.1 Receptive vocabulary test

The receptive test assessed the participant's ability to understand and recognize vocabulary items. The receptive test utilized a multiple-choice question format, where participants were presented with a word and provided several options to choose from as the correct definition or synonym. The word items were selected randomly from previous tests Laufer and Nation (1999). (www.Lextutor.ca.com) The word items in the receptive test ranged from word frequency levels of 2,000 to 10,000, as well as the University Word Level (UWL). The first frequency level (1k-2k) was excluded from the test, considering it too easy for the targeted population. Within each frequency level (2k-3k, 3k-5k, 5k-10k, and UWL), 15-word items were selected, consisting of an equal distribution of five nouns, five verbs, and five adjectives for each level. The receptive test is provided in (appendix C).

3.2.2 Productive vocabulary test

The productive test utilized a fill-in-the-gap format, where participants were presented with sentences containing a missing word. The initial letters of that word were given, and they had to fill in the correct word. The same word list of 60 words used in the receptive test was used for the productive test to maintain consistency. The same sentences used in Laufer and Nation (1999) are used in this study. The decision to generate receptive and productive vocabulary tests from the established versions created by Laufer and Nation (1999), as seen on Lextutor.ca, is anchored in the desire to build upon these instrument's proven reliability and academic validity within vocabulary acquisition research. Version C of the productive test by Laufer and Nation (1999) contains common items from versions A and B. However, recognizing the omission of University Word List (UWL) items in version C, this adaptation included items from both versions A and B to encompass a broader lexical range, featuring 15 words each from the 3k, 5k, UWL, and 10k frequency levels. The test by Laufer and Nation (1999) has 18 gap-filling questions. I reduced it to 15 gap-filling questions to reduce participant fatigue without compromising the integrity of the assessment. The test is provided in (appendix D).

Contrasting with previous studies that utilized different versions of the receptive Vocabulary Levels Test (VLT), such as those by Laufer (1990), Nation (2001), and Schmitt et al. (2001), this research adopts a novel approach by using the same word list for both receptive and productive tests. This method allows a direct comparison of receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge by ensuring the consistency of the lexical items tested in both modalities, which has not been done before.

3.2.3 Pilot studies

Ten graduate students from the Department of English Language and Literature at Kwangwoon University in Seoul, Korea, were selected to participate voluntarily in the pilot studies. Participants were encouraged to provide feedback on any confusing or ambiguous items, unclear instructions, or any other issues they encountered when taking the receptive and productive vocabulary tests. In order to identify common patterns or inconsistencies, the collected data and participant's feedback were analyzed. Based on their feedback, necessary changes and improvements were made to the tests.

3.2.4 Procedures

After obtaining university approval, the consent form—detailing the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits and emphasizing voluntary participation and confidentiality—was distributed to students through classroom sessions. Participants voluntarily submitted their consent forms through various methods such as drop-boxes, email, or online submission. The process aimed to guarantee that informed consent forms strictly adhere to ethical and legal standards for confidentiality. The students were given all the necessary information and guidelines in Urdu to avoid any ambiguity.

3.3 Data Collection

The data for both receptive and productive tests were collected using an online Google form as it would facilitate and maintain consistency and efficient data handling and administration. The students were provided with the links during the classroom sessions. Using any external resource, such as (an online dictionary, internet, etc.) was

prohibited. The main aim of the tests was to check the receptive and productive lexical skills and not the lexical fluency; therefore, both tests were untimed, and students were given enough time to analyze all the questions and provide well-thought-out responses. Both the tests were administered with a gap of one week. The data for the productive vocabulary test was collected first. The decision to administer the productive vocabulary test first was to avoid any transfer of the information regarding the vocabulary items included in the tests since both receptive and productive VLT tests had the same target vocabulary items.

3.3.1 Test scoring

The tests were scored using a binary system. For each correct answer, the participant will receive a score of (1), which indicates a good understanding of the vocabulary item. Conversely, answering incorrectly resulted in a score of (0), indicating a poor understanding of the item. This scoring method objectively assessed the participant's vocabulary skills by distinguishing between correct and incorrect answers.

3.4 Data Analysis

In the Analysis section, different statistical techniques were used in order to obtain valid and reliable results for different key points. To check the reliability of the test scores, Cronbach's Alpha was performed. The Descriptive statistics were also analyzed to check the frequencies of the test scores. The Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test was employed to ascertain whether there is a statistically significant difference between the receptive and productive vocabulary subtests. This test is particularly useful for this study as it does not require the assumption of normality and is used appropriately for comparing non-parametric data. Further, an independent samples t-test was applied to analyze the differences between the participant's receptive and productive vocabulary scores, and Spearman's Rho correlation analysis was conducted to analyze the correlation between scores. Spearman's Rho is a nonparametric test that tests for correlation between two ordinal variables, and so it was used to check the strength and direction of the relationship between the two types of vocabulary knowledge. These statistical methods fit the data perfectly, giving us the necessary information to make conclusions about the connection between receptive and productive vocabulary.

3.4.1 Reliability statistics Cronbach's Alpha

Table 2 presents the internal consistency reliability coefficients (Cronbach's Alpha) for the receptive and productive tests comprising 60 items. High Cronbach's Alpha values for the receptive (.942) and productive (.931) tests indicate excellent internal consistency. This suggests that the items within each test are well correlated, consistently measuring the same underlying construct across the 60 items in each test.

Table 2. Reliability Statistics for Receptive and Productive Tests

Test Type	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
Receptive Test	.942	60
Productive Test	.931	60

3.4.2 Descriptive statistics of total receptive and productive vocabulary scores

In Table 3 the analysis of the descriptive statistics for the overall results of the receptivity and production tests over the different frequency levels shows a clear performance pattern among the 200 participants. In general, participants performed better on the receptive tests, with a mean score of ($M = 41.37$) and ($SD = 13.06$), compared to the productive tests, which had a lower mean score of ($M = 28.78$) and ($SD = 11.87$). This suggests that the ability to recognize and understand vocabulary is stronger than the ability to produce vocabulary actively. The trend remained consistent across all - 3K, 5K (UWL), and 10k frequency levels. The descriptive statistics show a consistent gap between receptive and productive vocabulary ability, which widens as vocabulary complexity increases. This suggests that while it is relatively easy for participants to recognize and understand words, production is more challenging, especially at higher levels of complexity.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics for Receptive and Productive Vocabulary Test Scores

	N	M	SD	Min.	Max.	Variance	Sum
Total Receptive Scores	200	41.37	13.06	12	59	170.59	8274
Total Productive Scores	200	28.78	11.87	4	47	141.07	5756
R 3K	200	11.59	3.33	3	15	11.11	2317
P 3K	200	8.45	3.02	1	14	9.16	1689
R 5K	200	11.12	3.85	0	15	14.83	2223
P 5K	200	7.77	3.41	0	13	11.62	1554
R UWL	200	10.13	3.44	1	15	11.84	2026
P UWL	200	7.42	3.97	1	14	15.80	1483
R 10K	200	8.52	4.21	1	15	17.82	1703
P 10K	200	5.15	3.16	0	12	10.02	1030

4. Results

4.1 Discrepancy between Receptive and Productive Vocabulary

The Figure 1 shows that the participant had receptive mean score ($M = 6975$) with ($SD = 2152$) whereas the productive mean score was ($M = 4920$) with $SD = (2016)$. The difference in mean receptive and productive score was ($M = 2055$) with difference in ($SD = 2948$). The mean of ($M = 2055$) shows that productive vocabulary is 2055 units smaller than receptive vocabulary on an average. This implies that there is a marked discrepancy between individuals of this sample who can comprehend a larger number of words than they can produce in speech or writing. Such high SD difference of about ($SD = 2948.79$), a result of utilizing the formula for combining the variances of two uncorrelated sets, signifies a considerable variability in individual's receptive and the productive vocabulary sizes. One of the observations is that individuals show a larger diversity in their vocabulary sizes. For some individuals the difference between their receptive and productive vocabularies is just very small, for others it might be very high.

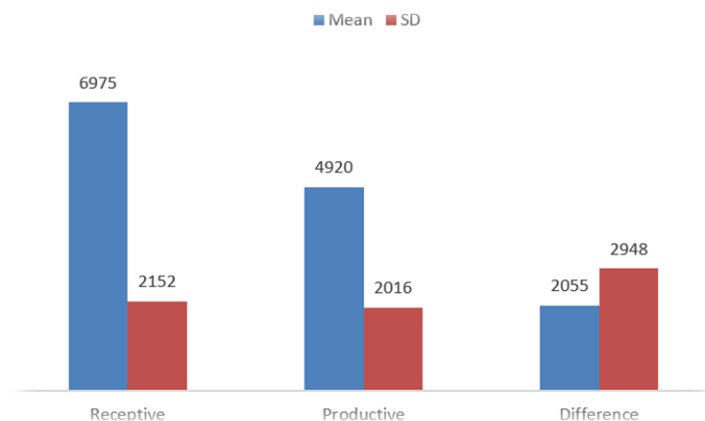


Figure 1. Receptive and Productive Mean Difference

The table 4 and Figure 2 represents that, on the receptive test at the 3k-frequency level, participants responded correctly to 2,317 questions, giving an accuracy rate of 77.6%, with an incorrect response rate of 22.4%. This high percentage of correct responses suggests that the words at the 3k level were familiar to the participants. At the 5k-frequency level, the total number of correct answers fell slightly to 2,223, giving an accuracy rate of 74.46%, and the number of incorrect answers rose to 25.53%. The words at the 5k level were still quite familiar to most participants despite the slight drop in performance. In contrast, at the UWL frequency level, the participants answered 2,026 questions correctly, giving an accuracy rate of 67.53%, with an incorrect response rate of 32.46%. Interestingly, although the UWL words are considered presumably less frequent and lie between 5K -10K frequency level, the participants performed better at the UWL level. Expectedly, level 10k proved to be more challenging, with 1703 correct responses and an accuracy rate of 56.76%, while the incorrect answer rate was 43.23%, suggesting a lower familiarity with low-frequency word.

In productive vocabulary, test participants showed variations; at the 3k level, there were 1,689 correct answers with a correct response rate of 56.3% and an incorrect response rate of 43.70%, indicating comfort with frequent words but room for improvement. At the 5k level, there were 1,554 correct answers with an accuracy rate of 51.8%, while the incorrect response rate was 48.20%, indicating a moderate level of proficiency but challenging use of active vocabulary knowledge. At the UWL level, participants gave 1,483 correct answers with an accuracy of 49.43%, while the incorrect response rate was 50.56%. , demonstrating almost equal proficiency with these words as with 5 K-level words. However, the 10k level was more challenging, with only 1,030 correct answers, with an accurate rate of 34.33% and a rate of incorrect answers of 65.66%, suggesting a significant degree of difficulty in using low-frequency words. These results suggest that while participants have a good basic knowledge of most frequent or high-frequency words, like at the 3k level, there is a noticeable decline in active use of vocabulary, and it becomes more challenging for the students.

Table 4. Total Correct Answers of Receptive and Productive Vocabulary Tests at Different Frequency Levels

Level	Correct Answers to Receptive Test		Correct Answers to Productive Test	
	Correct Answer %	Incorrect Answer %	Correct Answer %	Incorrect Answer %
3k	77.6	22.4	56.3	43.7
5k	74.46	25.53	51.8	48.2
UWL	67.53	32.46	49.43	50.56
10k	56.76	43.23	34.33	65.66

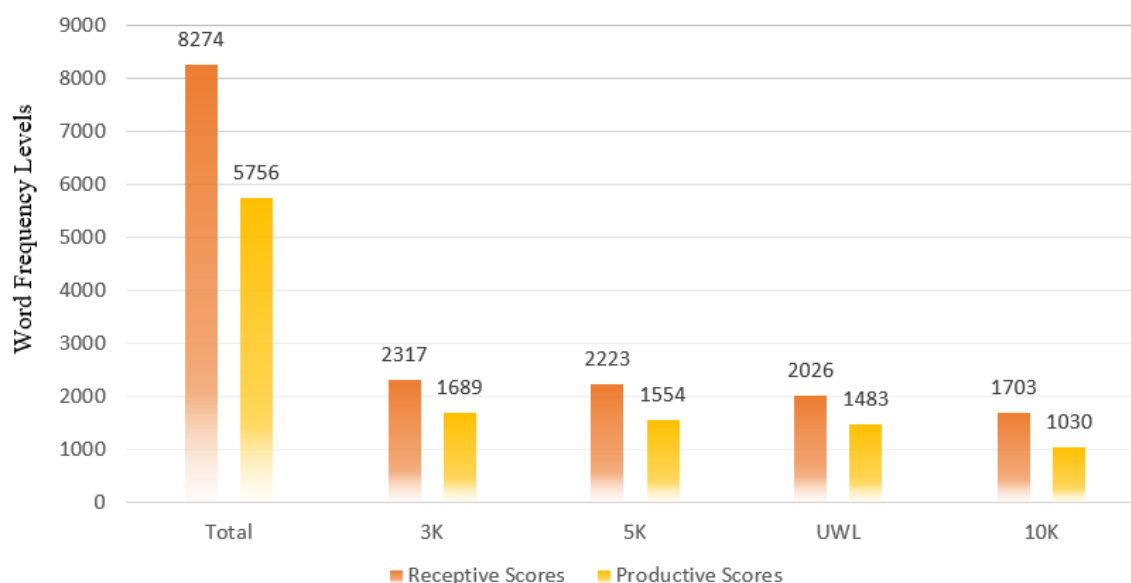


Figure 2. Comparison of Receptive and Productive Scores

4.2 Vocabulary Threshold of Pakistani University Students

The vocabulary threshold level is the minimum level of proficiency in words required for practical comprehension of a given percentage of words in a text or speech for learners (Ehsanzadeh 2020). This concept is crucial in language learning and linguistics. According to Nation (2001), there are two ways to define the vocabulary threshold level. Nation argues that the threshold level is an either-or (all or nothing) level, meaning that the learners can comprehend the text if they possess the threshold level; otherwise, learners can have a vague comprehension of the text. The second definition is “probabilistic boundary” in this manner if a learner passes the threshold level, they stand a good chance for successful comprehension (Nation 2013). The threshold varies depending on the language’s complexity, context, and specific content. In English language learning, a common vocabulary threshold is around 2,000 to 3,000 word families, which enables learners to understand about 95% of words in general texts. Learners can easily infer the meaning of unfamiliar words from context beyond this threshold, significantly enhancing reading fluency and comprehension. The concept of a vocabulary threshold is crucial in language pedagogy as it guides curriculum design, indicating the level of vocabulary knowledge necessary before learners can effectively engage with authentic texts or conversations in the target language.

The table 5 highlights the participants who met the [Laufer (1992), Van Zeeland and Schmitt (2013) - 5000 lexical items; Nation (1990) - 7000 lexical items; Nation (2006) - 8000 word-families] criteria. One hundred sixty-one participants possess lexical knowledge of at least 5000 lexical items, associated with recalling a wide range of texts and interacting daily. With a take at more advanced levels, 110 participants have managed to reach the vocabulary receptivity needed by Nation (1990) for a typical EFL high school student or a productive vocabulary of 7000 words, which is needed to read authentic texts. Nurture means that they have overtaken the foundations and are among the development of linguistic skills, which means a more challenging experience in terms of their

academic tasks and real-world language processing. Seventy-seven exceed the receptive vocabulary size of 8,000 words that can be read and understood in authentic prose (Nation 2006). This shows that apprehending more involved and discerning materials is quite possible. In productive vocabulary, 178 participants met the (Laufer 1992, Nation 2006, Schmitt 2000, Webb 2008) suggested 2000 words for conversational speaking criteria, 156 participants 3000 words for reading authentic text, and 106 participants 5000 word families for writing criteria.

Table 5. Receptive and Productive Vocabulary Thresholds According to Prior Research

Criterion	Receptive	Criterion	Productive
Laufer (1992) and Van Zeeland and Schmitt (2013) - 5000 lexical items	161	(Laufer 1992, Nation 2006, Schmitt 2000, Webb 2008) suggests 2000 words for conversational speaking,	178
Nation (1990) - 7000 lexical items for EFL high school	110	3000 words for reading authentic text	156
Nation (2006) - 8000 word-families for comprehension of authentic prose	77	5000 word families for writing	106

4.2.1 Receptive Vocabulary threshold at different Frequency levels

The table 6 demonstrates that the results were impressive at the foundational 3k frequency level, with 124 participants successfully reaching the 3000-word threshold level, demonstrating a solid foundation in receptive vocabulary. While 45 participants were nearing mastery, 31 were below the threshold, indicating areas where their vocabulary could be strengthened. Moving to the 5k frequency level, 107 participants achieved the 5000-word threshold, showing a good overall grasp of receptive vocabulary in this range. Additionally, 57 participants were likely closer to achieving vocabulary mastery, and 36 were seen below the 5K word frequency level threshold, suggesting that most participants fully understand the 5k-level vocabulary. In the case of the UWL level, 92 participants achieved the threshold of UWL, indicating a strong command of the academic vocabulary range. However, 58 participants were seen as closer to mastering the threshold of UWL level, and 50 were below the threshold, illustrating the intricate and challenging nature of this particular set of vocabulary.

The advanced 10k frequency level presented a greater challenge, as evidenced by only 66 participants reaching the 10000-word threshold. Here, 33 participants were nearing mastery, but a significant number, 101 participants, were below the threshold. This larger number below the threshold reflects the challenging nature of vocabulary at this level. These results from various frequency levels of the receptive vocabulary test provide a nuanced view of the participant's linguistic capabilities. While there is clear proficiency in the foundational and intermediate receptive vocabulary levels, the advanced levels pose significant challenges to many participants. The data also reflects the participant's diverse vocabulary mastery levels, suggesting the need for tailored language teaching and learning approaches to address the varying proficiency levels.

Table 6. Receptive Vocabulary Threshold at Different Frequency Levels

Mastery of Receptive Vocabulary at different Frequency levels according (Lextutor.Ca.Com)			
Frequency Level	Reached the Threshold	Closer to Mastery	Below the Threshold
3k	124	45	31
5k	107	57	36
UWL	92	58	50
10k	66	33	101

4.2.2 Productive vocabulary threshold at different frequency levels

The results in table 7 show that at the 3k frequency level, the results showed that 31 participants had successfully reached the 3000-word threshold level, demonstrating a strong grasp of the productive vocabulary knowledge within this range. Meanwhile, 95 participants were nearing the mastery of the 3K threshold, suggesting the potential for full proficiency with additional study. In comparison, 74 participants remained below the threshold, indicating a need for more focused learning at the 3K vocabulary range. When progressing to the 5k frequency level, proficiency was evident among 21 participants who achieved the 5K-word threshold. A larger group of 106 participants was nearing mastery of the 5K threshold, displaying a commendable understanding but still requiring some reinforcement. However, 73 participants did not meet the 5000-word threshold, pointing to areas for improvement. At the UWL level, which falls between the 5k and 10k levels, the distribution of participant performance provided interesting insights. Here, 39 participants reached the productive vocabulary threshold, and 66 were on the cusp of mastery. Almost half (95) participants scored below the required threshold level, indicating the nuanced and advanced nature of the vocabulary within the UWL range, but it is also worth noting the clear strengths in basic vocabulary demonstrated by the participants.

Lastly, the more challenging 10K word-frequency level highlighted the breadth of the linguistic challenge; only two participants reached the impressive 10000-word threshold. While 56 participants were close to achieving mastery, a significant number, 141 participants, were below this threshold, underlining the complexity and extensive nature of the vocabulary at this level. These results provide a detailed view of the participant's linguistic abilities, highlighting significant challenges and areas for improvement, particularly at the higher frequency levels. Differentiated language instruction strategies are necessary to cater to the varying proficiency levels among participants and effectively advance their vocabulary skills.

Table 7. Productive Vocabulary Threshold at Different Frequency Levels

Mastery of Productive Vocabulary at Different Frequency Levels (Lextutor.Ca.Com)			
Frequency Level	Reached Mastery	Closer to Mastery	Below the Threshold
3k	31	95	74
5k	21	106	73
UWL	39	66	95
10k	2	56	141

4.3 Paired Sample Test

Table 8 summarizes the results obtained from the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test, a non-parametric statistical test suitable for comparing paired samples, which indicates significant differences between receptive and productive vocabulary scores at all tested frequency levels. The dependent variables were the receptive and productive vocabulary scores across different frequency levels (3k, 5k, UWL, 10k). Thus, the frequency levels were the independent variable. The results showed that receptive scores were higher, suggesting enhanced receptive vocabulary knowledge compared to productive vocabulary knowledge. The Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test revealed significant differences in receptive vs. productive vocabulary at each frequency level, showing a problem with using receptive knowledge for productive purposes. This implies that although participants can easily comprehend

or even identify large numbers of words, their fluency, or ability to produce these words orally or in writing, is much lower, particularly at the higher word frequency levels.

The mean ranks for the differences between Productive and Receptive scores were 97.34 at the 3K level, 98.42 at the 5K level, 102.04 at the UWL level, and 103.51 at the 10K level. The sum of ranks representing the total mean ranks were 16060.50, 16240.00, 15713.50, and 16147.50 for the respective scores at each frequency level. The results also report the number of ties, which are cases where participants had matching scores in both Productive and Receptive scores. There were 15 ties at both the 3K and 5K levels, 11 at the UWL level, and 12 at the 10K frequency level, suggesting a level of consistency in performance across receptive and productive tests. The Z values indicate the magnitude and direction of the difference between the two sets of scores, which were -10.25, -10.50, -8.97, and -9.74. The negative Z values indicate that receptive scores were consistently higher than productive scores across all frequency levels. The results show significant differences ($p < .001$) between Productive and Receptive scores at all frequency levels, as evidenced by the Z and p-values.

The results exhibit important implications for second language learners and teachers. The difference between receptive and productive vocabulary is consistent across all frequency levels and bids a potential gap in teaching and learning approaches, suggesting greater emphasis on enhancing productive vocabulary skills. The results advocate for a balanced language education approach that equally fosters receptive and productive language competencies. Furthermore, the significant disparity at higher frequency levels and the UWL points to the need for targeted interventions to support learners in acquiring and using more complex and academic vocabulary effectively. This could involve integrating more production-focused activities into language learning curricula and exploring teaching methodologies that specifically address learner's challenges in producing vocabulary as their language skills advance.

Table 8. Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Results for Productive and Receptive Vocabulary Scores at each Frequency Level

Test Comparison	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Ties	Z	Sig. (2-tailed)
Productive / Receptive Scores at 3K frequency level	200	97.34	16060.50	15	-10.25	.000
Productive / Receptive Scores at 5K frequency level	200	98.42	16240.00	15	-10.50	.000
Productive / Receptive Scores at UWL frequency level	200	102.04	15713.50	11	-8.97	.000
Productive / Receptive Scores at 10K frequency level	200	103.51	16147.50	12	-9.74	.000

4.4 Correlation between Total Receptive and Productive Scores

The correlation analysis, as presented in the Table 9 reveals a significant positive Spearman's rho correlation coefficient ($\rho = .675$, $p < .01$) between total receptive and productive scores among 200 participants. The significant positive correlation indicates a strong association between receptive (listening and reading) and productive (speaking and writing) language skills, indicating the interconnectedness of language skills. This suggests that individuals who excel in understanding and processing language (receptive skills) are also likely to perform well in generating and producing language (productive skills) and vice versa. The findings support that language development and proficiency should be approached holistically. Enhancements in receptive skills could potentially contribute to improvements in productive skills, highlighting the importance of integrated language teaching and learning strategies.

Table 9. Spearman's Rho Correlation between Total Receptive and Productive Scores

Spearman's Rho		Total Receptive Score	Total Productive Score
Total Receptive Scores	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.675**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	200	200
Total Productive Scores	Correlation Coefficient	.675**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	200	200

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

5. Discussion

Two prominent examples of English vocabulary tests, known for their frequency-based assessment, are the vocabulary levels test developed by Nation (1990) and later revised by Schmitt et al. (2001). These tests typically reveal a hierarchical scale in their sections, each corresponding to different 1,000-word frequency bands. It is common for test-takers to score lower on sections that assess less frequently used words compared to those that focus on more frequently used words. This pattern, as evidenced in studies like Batista and Horst's (2016) work on a French frequency-based test and Schmitt et al. (2001) research on an English frequency, is often viewed as supporting the frequency-based model of vocabulary acquisition. However, deviations from this model can occur, particularly in learning environments with limited exposure to authentic foreign language (FL) input and where the primary sources of language input are teachers and textbooks. Milton and Hopkins (2006) reveals that English textbooks often contain many low-frequency words. This could account for why some learners may have a better knowledge of less frequently used words.

The results of this study provide insightful data regarding the receptive and productive vocabulary sizes of participants contextualized within the broader academic discourse on language acquisition. Pakistani university students demonstrate mean receptive vocabulary ($M = 6,975$) word families and an ($SD = 2,152$), while the mean productive vocabulary ($M = 4,920$) word families and an ($SD = 2016$). These numbers imply that, on average, language learners have a broader receptive vocabulary size than their active vocabulary size. This is a typical finding in language acquisition studies: comprehended vocabulary is learned faster than active vocabulary. This could correspond with the possibility that the participants have been exposed to a wide variety of vocabulary in a receptive context, e.g. through reading and listening activities, but have not had as many opportunities to use the vocabulary in speaking or writing. The SD values for vocabulary knowledge show that there is a big diversity in this knowledge among the participants, which may be caused by various reasons: differences in learning environments, different educational backgrounds, the individual characteristics of learners, or the time they spend engaged in activities that support vocabulary growth. This average score positions the participant's receptive vocabulary above the 5000-word threshold Laufer (1992) and Van Zeeland and Schmitt (2013) recommended for effective language comprehension. However, it falls short of the 8000-9000 word families suggested by Nation (2006) for the comprehension of authentic prose and the production of written and spoken language, as well as the 7000 lexical items expected by Nation (1990) for EFL high school graduates. These findings highlight a discrepancy between the participant's vocabulary sizes and the ideal benchmarks that leading scholars in the field set.

In contrast, the mean productive vocabulary size was approximately ($M = 4920$)-word families, with a standard deviation of ($SD = 2016$), revealing a similar variance among participants. Although this mean score allows for basic conversational engagement, it is markedly below the standards for more advanced language use, including academic writing. This discrepancy underscores the gap between receptive and productive vocabulary sizes, a phenomenon widely observed in the literature (Fan 2000, Hajiyeva 2015, Harji et al. 2015, Pignot-Shahov 2012, Waring 1997, Webb 2008, Wise et al. 2007, Yamamoto 2011, Zhou 2010). This study corroborates these findings, revealing a larger receptive vocabulary than productive vocabulary among participants.

The substantial difference between our sample's receptive and productive vocabulary sizes could be attributed to a lack of enriched vocabulary learning contexts. Sternberg (1987) posited that most vocabulary is acquired through context, suggesting the need for a rich linguistic environment for optimal vocabulary development. However, the qualitative data from our study indicate that despite various classroom activities aimed at enhancing vocabulary learning, the actual effectiveness of these initiatives may be limited. This observation aligns with the broader concerns raised by Nation (2013) and Thornbury (2006) regarding the adequacy of exposure to vocabulary in both classroom and extracurricular settings. Furthermore, Gu (2003) emphasized the role of instructors, peers, classroom climate, syllabi, and available learning opportunities in creating a conducive learning context. Our findings suggest that these elements may not have been optimally aligned to support vocabulary acquisition, potentially limiting participant's exposure to necessary linguistic input and hindering their vocabulary development.

Moving to the results of frequency levels, participants demonstrated varying proficiency levels across different frequency levels of English vocabulary. At the foundational 3k frequency level, a majority (124 participants) showcased a solid foundation in receptive vocabulary, achieving the 3000-word threshold level. At the 5k frequency level, representing intermediate proficiency, was attained by 107 participants. At the UWL level, which is considered between the intermediate and advanced levels, 92 participants reached the threshold. At the advanced 10k-frequency level, only 66 participants reached the 10000-word threshold, while 101 participants remained below it, suggesting that the vocabulary at that higher level was quite complicated.

On the other hand for the productive 3k frequency level, 31 participants had successfully reached the 3000-word threshold level, demonstrating a strong grasp of the productive vocabulary knowledge within this range. Meanwhile, 95 participants were nearing the mastery of the 3K threshold, suggesting the potential for full proficiency with additional study. When progressing to the 5k frequency level, 21 participants achieved the 5K-word threshold. At the UWL level, 39 participants reached the productive vocabulary threshold. Lastly, the more challenging 10K word-frequency level highlighted the breadth of the linguistic challenge; only two participants reached the impressive 10000-word threshold.

The results show that participants are proficient in basic (high frequency) and intermediate (UWL) vocabulary. However, they struggle with advanced levels (low frequency), particularly viewed from the 10k frequency level perspective. The customized approach to language teaching and learning is underlined by the fact that various stages of mastery are present in these frequency ranges. Vocabulary development is only possible if teachers develop methods that address various language proficiency levels. It is especially important in those areas where the participants show more uncertainty and deficiency. This knowledge is necessary for the development of a curriculum and teaching methods that are tailored to the specific needs of learners at different stages of the vocabulary acquisition process.

Laufer and Sim (1985) considered that the threshold level is only limited to the first view and had the threshold level investigated through interview and comprehension questions. Results obtained from their research imply that the corpus level is around 65% to 70% of its size. Laufer (1989), on the other hand, went ahead and sorted the

smallest portion of vocabulary that can be comprehended and be termed as a success. By employing the method developed in her study, we can state that a 95%-above score for vocabulary size will more likely lead to full comprehension of the text. Huesh-Chao et al. (2000) suggested that the 80° and 98° confidence levels of the all-or-nothing view (the ELL will lose the meaning of the text) and the probabilistic threshold level are the ceiling level for attention allocation. They assert that if this threshold is not reached, language proficiency will not be adequate to the extent that the learner will fail to understand the basic points in the article.

The investigation into vocabulary thresholds at the 3K, 5K, UWL, and 10K levels reveals significant insights into the lexical progression necessary for language proficiency. This study's findings align with the established benchmarks, suggesting that a foundation of 3,000 to 5,000-word families facilitates basic comprehension and communication (Laufer 1992, Van Zeeland and Schmitt 2013). However, our results illuminate a nuanced landscape of vocabulary acquisition, with a notable proportion of participants not reaching the 5,000-word family threshold, thus underscoring potential challenges in achieving functional language use.

Moreover, the leap to understanding authentic prose and engaging in sophisticated language production, as Nation (2006) recommended with an 8,000 to 9,000 word-family threshold, seems ambitious for most of our participants. This discrepancy highlights a critical gap in the vocabulary knowledge necessary for advanced language proficiency and suggests the need for targeted instructional strategies to elevate learner's vocabulary to these higher thresholds. Additionally, the anticipation of EFL high school graduates possessing around 7,000 lexical items (Nation 1990) provides a target that, while partially met by our sample, indicates variability in achievement. This variability suggests that educational outcomes may not uniformly ensure the attainment of such vocabulary levels, pointing to the importance of individualized and context-sensitive approaches to vocabulary instruction.

The correlation between receptive and productive vocabulary scores in our study underscores these linguistic domain's interconnected nature while highlighting a consistent pattern observed in previous research (Schmitt 2000, Webb 2008). Notably, our findings affirm the existence of a larger receptive than productive vocabulary, a phenomenon that reflects the generally broader passive knowledge compared to active use (Waring 1997, Webb 2008). The statistical analysis revealed a significant difference between the receptive and productive vocabulary sizes, echoing findings from past studies that suggest a disparity between language comprehension and production capabilities (Fan 2000, Hajiyeva 2015). While expected, this difference underscores the challenges in translating passive vocabulary knowledge into active use and highlights the necessity for pedagogical interventions to reduce this gap. In contrast to previous research that reported more closely aligned receptive and productive vocabularies, our study found a larger gap, suggesting that the context of language learning and the specificities of instructional design may play pivotal roles in shaping these outcomes. This divergence invites further exploration into the factors contributing to such differences and emphasizes the importance of comprehensive language instruction that equally prioritizes receptive and productive skills development.

The research on Corpora has consistently looked into the pattern of the learner's use of word frequency. Results show that writers with higher proficiency levels usually have a lower percentage of first 1,000 words in English than less proficient writers (Laufer and Nation 1995). Besides, using low-frequency words in written texts is often used to measure language proficiency (Ullah 2023). Foreign language (FL) learner's essays that include a higher proportion of low-frequency words get rated higher (Crossley et al. 2011). investigation results than essays that include high-frequency words. Nevertheless, it is crucial to approach this with a small quantity of caution. The presence of a word in a learner's writing or speech does not necessarily mean they encountered or used it in the past. Laufer and Paribakht (1998) have claimed that using the knowledge of vocabulary actively develops more slowly than the capability to memorize the vocabulary knowledge.

Pakistani university students possess higher receptive vocabulary knowledge of English than productive. Notably, the gap between these two forms of knowledge appears to widen as learners progress to higher proficiency levels. This may indicate the challenge of mastering a word at a productive level, even among advanced learners. The growth rate of productive knowledge could be much slower than expected. Regarding word frequency, Pakistani students showed a greater discrepancy between receptive and productive knowledge for less frequent words. Just by looking at the descriptive statistics shown in the research, it is evident that the gap and discrepancies between receptive and productive knowledge are quite smaller when the frequency levels increase, meaning that the high-frequency words are easier to learn and as the frequency level declines, the gap between the receptive and productive knowledge increases.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study delves into the intricate dynamics of L2 vocabulary acquisition among Pakistani university students, yielding valuable insights into the relationship between receptive and productive skills and the impact of lexical features. For this purpose, two research questions were developed. First, the research question examining the relationship between receptive and productive L2 vocabulary knowledge at different frequency levels revealed unexpected patterns. Contrary to conventional wisdom, higher frequency levels were associated with lower mean total scores on receptive and productive tests. The learning curve becomes noticeably steeper as learners progress from high-frequency to low-frequency words. This is evident from the decline in performance as one moves from the 3k to the UWL level. The wider the vocabulary in the frequency range, the more effort and exposure one has to make to achieve fluency. It indicates that mastering an extensive range of vocabulary becomes challenging. The cognitive efficiency of learning words at higher frequency levels like UWL or 10K level can be enhanced by teaching such words in context. Coming across such words in evocative situations, such as academic readings or specific discussions, can significantly benefit in developing receptive (passive knowledge) and productive (active use) skills. Learning in context helps learners to understand the words meaning and use them practically so that they are embedded more firmly in their memory. In essence, while high-frequency words provide the foundational language proficiency layer, vocabulary mastery encompasses comprehension and active use of a wider and more nuanced range of vocabulary. The pragmatic discrepancies between receptive and productive proficiency at different frequency levels highlight the need for diverse and contextually rich learning experiences. These experiences can be vital in bridging the gaps between passive vocabulary knowledge and its active usage. Thus, it will enhance the depth and breadth of L2 proficiency.

7. Future Research

The study provides stepping-stones for further research, and several approaches within it can be explored further to improve our knowledge for L2 vocabulary acquisition among Pakistani university students and beyond. Further research should investigate more adequately the discrete aspects of receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge, bearing in mind the linguistic and lexical features which play an important role in the acquisition of vocabulary. We might undertake a more granular investigation of the lexical factors that affect the process of receptive to productive vocabulary development. It can further delve into the distinctive effects of word class,

word frequency, word length, orthographic factors, and contextual cues on receptive and productive vocabulary learning, offering more insights into the relative prominence of lexical factors in L2 vocabulary development.

Further, evaluating the role of both classroom-based input (teacher talk, text books, etc.) and out of classroom intake (demonstrated by media, peers, and others) will give a complete view regarding operation of vocabulary. Peters and Webb (2020), has argued that it might be useful to look for additional factors such as word salience, prototypicality, and redundancy in a given wordlist, noting that a usage-based approach may provide a more nuanced view past and beyond purely frequency-based effects. Hence, there is a need to examine learner related variables, unique to the Pakistani context, namely socio-economic status, English language exposure other than classroom learning, and learning styles. Cross-cultural comparative research could also help to extend the understanding of vocabulary learning as the function of culture and context to improve language education across countries and cultures. These directions will not only help in improving our knowledge of vocabulary acquisition and growth but also provide better suggestions for language teaching to the Pakistani students.

8. Implication

The implications of this kind of research are profound for language teaching and curriculum development. This indicates that teachers should not stick to a one-size-fits-all instructional approach, but rather, given the uneven effects of proficiency on passive vs. active language skills, they should adopt differentiated learning strategies and assessment methods. The marked difference between scores in the higher levels of proficiency, especially in lower levels, implies that greater attention should be paid to spotting the factors contributing to the diversity of results to improve language-teaching outcomes.

Such findings call above the line for the elaboration of curricula and interventions that align with the student's specific level of proficiency and focus on the particular level of grammar, punctuation, or comprehension being assessed, respectively. By acknowledging and thoughtfully addressing intricate, complex features of an interaction effect, educators can assist language learners better, which may have a subsequent good influence on language learning outcomes and assessment correctness. In conclusion, this research provides the framework for L2 vocabulary acquisition due to its detailed investigation of the complexities in the process. This observation implies the necessity of tailoring specially customized language training programs regarding the specific conditions Pakistani university students face and their preferences. The findings prompt further exploration of factors contributing to L2 vocabulary learning in Pakistani cultural and linguistic contexts.

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Examples in: English

Applicable Languages: English

Applicable Level: All

Appendices

Appendix A: Survey Questionnaire

Survey Questionnaire	
1.	Personal Information
i.	What is your Age?
ii.	Gender?
iii.	What is Nationality?
iv.	What is your Email?
v.	What is your Current City of residence?
2.	Educational background.
i.	What is your highest level of education?
ii.	What is your Major?"
iii.	Where did you get your early education? (English medium, Urdu medium, combined)"
iv.	Where did you get your high school/college education (urban, rural, private or government institutes).
3.	English Learning background
i.	How many years have you studied English?
ii.	Have you taken any standardized English test? If yes please mention your scores.
iii.	Please self-assess your English ability?
iv.	How many hours do you practice English per week? (e.g., watching movies, reading English texts, listening songs in English, taking conversation classes...etc)
v.	How do you learn English Vocabulary? (Dictionary, books, blogs)
vi.	Which vocabulary words are easy to acquire? (Concrete nouns, abstract nouns, adjectives, adverbs, etc.)
vii.	Have you traveled any English speaking country?"
4.	English Learning Motivation
i.	What motivates you to learn English? (Passing examination, Job, foreign travel, communication, studying abroad, etc.)
ii.	Indicate your motivation level for learning English?
iii.	What do you find most difficult in L2 learning? (Listening, Reading, Speaking, writing, grammar, vocabulary)
iv.	Do you think first language help in acquiring vocabulary or comprehension?
v.	Which learning settings/environment can affect the learning outcomes the most? (Urban life, private English medium schools, self-motivation, First language impact)

Appendix B: Vocabulary Level Test Receptive

Receptive VLT					
2k-3k					
i.	Making changes in country's economic policy*	a. Ox	b. Veins	c. Structure	d. Reforms
ii.	An animal to pull loads *	a. Veins	b. Supreme	c. Normal	d. Sealed
iii.	Part of the body responsible for carrying blood *	a. Marble	b. Assisted	c. Structure	d. Snap
iv.	A person who provides support*	a. Sealed	b. Whirling	c. Aware	d. Normal
v.	Something spinning or revolving quickly *	a. Snap	b. Drafts	c. Veins	d. Chill

vi.	Breaking something with a sharp noise *	a. Supreme	b. Assisted	c. Whirling	d. Trim
vii.	The highest quality or degree *	a. Aware	b. Pleading	c. Lieutenant	d. Snap
viii.	To be afraid of something *	a. Skirt	b. Blouse	c. Gown	d. T-shirt
ix.	A formal dress for special occasions*	a. Change	b. Revolution	c. Reform	d. Evolution
x.	Improving a system *	a. Muscles	b. Nerves	c. Bones	d. Organs
xi.	A part of the body that transmits signals between different parts of the body *	a. Whispered	b. Proclaimed	c. Hidden	d. Denied
xii.	publically declared or announced*	a. Pull	b. Drag	c. Thrust	d. Slide
xiii.	Becoming aware through your senses *	a. Sensed	b. Perceived	c. Imagined	d. Dreamed
xiv.	Slim or delicate*	a. Slender	b. Bulky	c. Massive	d. Robust
xv.	Not wearing anything *	a. Dressed	b. Clothed	c. Covered	d. Naked
3k-5k					
i.	Act of swearing *	a. Oath	b. Ballot	c. Vault	d. Ledge
ii.	A piece of paper used for voting*	a. Oath	b. Ballot	c. Vault	d. Ledge
iii.	A secure room for storing valuables *	a. Oath	b. Ballot	c. Vault	d. Ledge
iv.	A group of soldiers *	a. Oath	b. Ballot	c. Cavalry	d. Ledge
v.	To understand something fully*	a. Comprehend	b. Ignore	c. Disclosed	d. Bellowing
vi.	Sufficient or satisfactory in quality *	a. Sooth	b. Bellowing	c. Adequate	d. Mature
vii.	Musical instrument*	a. Comprehend	b. Ignore	c. Disclosed	d. Bellowing
viii.	To reveal something *	a. Trumpet	b. Stools	c. Apparatus	d. Ledge
ix.	The act of thinking deeply	a. Fragrant	b. Mess	c. Apron	d. Phase
x.	A pleasant or sweet smell *	a. Gloomy	b. Compliments	c. Trim	d. Lieutenant
xi.	Sad, depressing, or dismal *	a. Contemplating	b. Sealed	c. Pleading	d. Snap
xii.	A loan for buying property*	a. Devise	b. Trim	c. Lieutenant	d. Marble
xiii.	To plan or invent *	a. Blend	b. Snap	c. Aware	d. Supreme
xiv.	A mixture of different substances *	a. Mortgage	b. Apron	c. Phase	d. Sermon
xv.	To make calm and relax *	a. Oath	b. Ballot	c. Vault	d. Ledge
5k-10k					
i.	A temporary release from prison *	a. Parole	b. Secretions	c. Sophomores	d. Whirled
ii.	A rank below an earl and above a baron *	a. happy	b. Sooth	c. Viscount	d. Irritate
iii.	Injured or cut apart *	a. Banter	b. Mammoth	c. Viscount	d. Octaves
iv.	A type of flowering plant *	a. Deacon	b. Secretions	c. Predicament	d. Orchids
v.	A kind or generous act *	a. Benevolence	b. Viscount	c. Squirmed	d. Stampeded
vi.	A feeling of happiness or joy *	a. Orchids	b. Felicity	c. Evacuation	d. Wily
vii.	To enter inside something *	a. Deacon	b. Felicity	c. Indolent	d. Obsolete
viii.	To scatter or spread widely *	a. Illicit	b. Octaves	c. Mammoth	d. Vindictive
ix.	A strong desire for revenge *	a. Dispersed	b. Vindictive	c. Mammoth	d. Illicit
x.	Burning slowly without flames *	a. Vindictive	b. Octaves	c. Throttle	d. Benevolence
xi.	To shrink back in fear or embarrassment *	a. Wily	b. Mutilated	c. Felicity	d. Cringed
xii.	Relaxing in a warm or pleasant place *	a. Cringed	b. Stampeded	c. basking	d. Mosaic
xiii.	Very large or colossal *	a. Basking	b. Whirled	c. Impeded	d. Mammoth
xiv.	Illegal or unlawful *	a. Smoldering	b. Impeded	c. Obsolete	d. Deacon

University words list (UWL)					
i.	A general policy for change *	a. Trend	b. Area	c. Doctrine	d. Intimacy
ii.	Something of brilliance *	a. Ensure	b. Rational	c. Indicated	d. Final
iii.	Same group *	a. Rational	b. Dynamic	c. Crisis	d. Anomaly
iv.	A form of government *	a. Trend	b. Area	c. Philosophy	d. Doctrine
v.	A situation of intense difficulty *	a. Democracy	b. Crisis	c. Dynamic	d. Research
vi.	Following something *	a. Crisis	b. Subsided	c. Restore	d. Ensure
vii.	The ability to learn and understand things quickly *	a. Vision	b. Anomaly	c. Sequence	d. Crisis
viii.	To confirm something in advance *	a. Dynamic	b. Assess	c. Intelligence	d. Final
ix.	To become less intense or severe *	a. Section	b. Clinic	c. Motive	d. Inspect
x.	Gathered or collected together *	a. Subsided	b. Indicated	c. Participate	d. Project
xi.	Soaked with a substance *	a. Inspect	b. Accumulated	c. Saturated	d. Rely
xii.	To depend on or trust *	a. Inspect	b. Accumulated	c. Saturated	d. Rely
xiii.	Constantly changing or progressing *	a. Inspect	b. Accumulated	c. Saturated	d. Rely
xiv.	Achieving something *	a. Dynamic	b. Research	c. Sequence	d. Ensure

Appendix C: Vocabulary Level Test Productive

Productive VLT	
2k-3k	
i.	To improve the country's economy, the government decided on economic ref_____.
ii.	She wore a beautiful green go___ to the ball.
iii.	The children's games were amusing at first, but finally got on the parents' ner___.
iv.	Sudden noises at night sca___ me a lot.
v.	France was proc_____ a republic in the 18th century.
vi.	Suddenly he was thru___ into the dark room.
vii.	He perc_____ a light at the end of the tunnel.
viii.	She showed off her sl___ figure in a long narrow dress.
ix.	You must wear a bathing suit on a public beach. You are not allowed to bath na_____.
x.	The cart is pulled by an o___.
xi.	Some aristocrats believed that blue blood flowed through their ve_____.
xii.	The secretary assi___ the boss in organizing the course.
xiii.	People were whir_____ around on the dance floor.
xiv.	The Emperor of China was the supr___ ruler of his country.
xv.	You must be awa_____ that very few jobs are available.
3k-5k	
i.	Soldiers usually swear an oa_____ of loyalty to their country.
ii.	The voter placed the ball_____ in the box.
iii.	They keep their valuables in a vau_____ at the bank.
iv.	The soldier was asked to choose between infantry and cav_____.
v.	This is a complex problem that is difficult to compr_____.
vi.	The management held a secret meeting. The issues discussed were not disc___ to the workers.
vii.	The boss got angry with the secretary and it took a lot of tact to soo___ him.
viii.	We do not have adeq_____ information to make a decision.
ix.	His favourite musical instrument was a tru_____.

x.	People manage to buy houses by raising a mor_____ from a bank.
xi.	We will have to be inventive and de_____ a scheme for earning more money.
xii.	The picture looks nice; the colours bl_____ well.
xiii.	Many gardens are full of fra_____ flowers.
xiv.	Many people feel depressed and gl_____ about the future of humankind.
xv.	He is so depressed that he is cont_____ suicide.
University words list (UWL)	
i.	There has been a recent tr___ among prosperous families toward a smaller number of children.
ii.	According to the communist doc_____, workers should rule the world.
iii.	A considerable amount of evidence was accum_____ during the investigation.
iv.	The victim's shirt was satu_____ with blood.
v.	He is irresponsible. You cannot re_____ on him for help.
vi.	He finally att_____ a position of power in the company.
vii.	The story tells about a crime and subs_____ punishment.
viii.	The urge to survive is inh_____ in all creatures.
ix.	A true dem_____ should ensure equal rights and opportunities for all citizens.
x.	Despite his physical condition, his int_____ was unaffected.
xi.	Governments often cut budgets in times of financial cri_____.
xii.	The job sounded interesting at first, but when he realized what it involved, his excitement sub_____.
xiii.	The challenging job required a strong, successful, and dyn_____ candidate.
xiv.	The airport is far, if you want to en_____ that you catch your plane, you will have to leave early.
xv.	In a hom_____ class, all students are of a similar proficiency.
5k-10k	
i.	The prisoner was released on par_____.
ii.	For many people, wealth is a prospect of unimaginable felic_____.
iii.	Some coal was still smol_____ among the ashes.
iv.	The dead bodies were mutil_____ beyond recognition.
v.	She was sitting on a balcony and ba_____ in the sun.
vi.	I wouldn't hire him. He is unmotivated and indo_____.
vii.	Watch out for his wil___ tricks.
viii.	She wanted to marry nobility: a duke, a baron, or at least a vis_____.
ix.	She has contributed a lot of money to various charities. She is known for her generosity and bene_____.
x.	The crowd soon disp_____ when the police arrived.
xi.	The dog crin_____ when it saw the snake.
xii.	He imm_____ himself in a hot bubbly bath forgetting all his troubles for a moment.
xiii.	The problem is beginning to assume mam_____ proportions.
xiv.	His vind_____ behavior toward the thief was understandable.
xv.	He was arrested for illi_____ trading in drugs.