

**Exploring the Effectiveness of Morphological Awareness in
Bilingual Students Learning English
Vocabulary in a Multi-Disciplinary University Environment
(Based on Low Proficiency Students in the Faculty of Science,
University of Colombo)**



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ABSTRACT

Vocabulary is one of the most essential parts of language. Without an adequate vocabulary, some students who enter the faculties that use English medium instruction struggle to achieve academic success. Consequently, this study was designed with three main purposes in mind.

The first was to examine the size of the English vocabulary of new entrants to the Faculty of Science, University of Colombo and the second was to find out whether they can manipulate the smallest units of meaning in words and the third was to find out whether the students with a low proficiency in English can gain the ability to manipulate morphemes through morphological awareness coaching. This research was a quasi-experimental research with a mixed (quantitative and qualitative) research design. The sample was ninety new entrants to the Faculty of Science, University of Colombo and the sample was divided into two groups as advanced proficiency group and low proficiency group for comparative purposes. The low proficiency group was divided again into a control group and an experimental group. Two tests were used for the study and the first was the Vocabulary Size Test and the second was the Morphological Awareness Test. The second test was in two parts containing a morpheme identification test and a morphological structure awareness test. The intervention was carried out for eight days to the experimental group. In order to determine the students' vocabulary size, Nations' Vocabulary Size Test was administered and the estimate vocabulary size of the students was 12,340 for the advanced proficiency group and for the low proficiency group, the estimate ranged from 4,000- 5,600. The results of the morphological awareness test showed that the advanced proficiency group can manipulate the morphemes at a higher level whereas

the low proficiency groups' morphological awareness was poor. After the intervention, low proficiency group had improved significantly.

Keywords: Vocabulary Size, Morphemes, Morphological Awareness, Low proficiency group, Advanced proficiency group