

## CAN WE DEVELOP OUR DAILY VOCABULARIES BY FOLLOWING NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKERS ON TWITTER?

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### Abstract

*Twitter as a microblogging site is used by many people in the world for many functions. One of them, we can see people making conversation in their own language and "following" native English speakers (L1). The problem is: can follow L1 help us improve our English skill? The aim of this research is to know whether following L1 on Twitter can improve English daily vocabularies or not. We use qualitative research method to collect data. By dividing people into three groups: (1) people who are following mostly L1, (2) people who are following few L1 and (3) people who are not following L1 at all. We ask some questions related to English daily vocabularies which are some of the most often used in conversation. To conduct this research, we also use Tweepi.com to prove that the participants are truly following L1. In this end of research, we are going to know whether following L1 give Twitter users improvement in English daily vocabularies or not.*

**Keywords:** *Twitter, following, English native speakers, daily vocabularies*

### INTRODUCTION

Twitter is an online social networking and micro-blogging service that enables its users to send and read text-based messages of up to 140 characters, known as "tweets". It was created in March 2006 by Jack Dorsey and launched that July. According to Twitter Search Team, the service rapidly gained worldwide popularity, with over 500 million active users as of 2012, generating over 340 million tweets daily and handling over 1.6 billion search queries per day. Since its launch, Twitter has become one of the top 10 most visited websites on the Internet, and has been described as "the SMS of the Internet (Leslie, 2009)." Unregistered users can read tweets, while registered users can

post tweets through the website interface, SMS, or a range of apps for mobile devices.

According to Kazeniak, Twitter moved up to the third-highest-ranking social networking site in January 2009 from its previous rank of twenty-second. Twitter's usage spikes during prominent events. The first record was set during the 2010 FIFA World Cup when fans wrote 2,940 tweets per second in the thirty-second period after Japan scored against Cameroon on June 14, 2010 (Miller, 2010).

There are some basic vocabularies of Twitter; some of them are Following, Follower, Timeline, and Tweet. Following is the list of people we follow and their tweets will appear in our Timeline automatically. Tweet itself is a

post on Twitter, while Timeline is the list of new tweets that you get from the people you follow. It is updated every few seconds, maximum 20 tweets. The last is follower; someone who is following another person. People follow and unfollow other people freely and no need to ask permission.

Some of the purposes of using Twitter are microblogging, finding a job, keeping up with the news, arranging a lunch with friends, becoming involved with politics, and finding new friends. Finding new friends is the main goal of registering on Twitter. Some will follow people they know or they do not, even famous people. They are either native or non-native speakers.

Since Twitter is a microblogging site, people will tweet their daily lives. Indeed, they use their daily vocabularies. These vocabularies are always developed almost everyday. Eventually, some of them form academic vocabularies. Some people claim the tweets from native English speakers influence their knowledge in English vocabularies.

## METHODOLOGY

### Participants

Participants in this research were divided into 3 groups: Group A, B and C. Group A consists of people who follow mostly L1 on Twitter, while for Group B, they follow less number of L1, and Group C follows none of them. The number of the participants of the groups must be equal, and it is based on the total of the participants in Group A. The participants are English Literature (2010) students from Gunadarma University.

The participants should have registered on Twitter for more than 6 months and are active users.

### Materials

We used questionnaires to do this research. We also used the tool to clarify their Following list by using [Tweepi.com](http://Tweepi.com), so we would know the percentage of the L1 they follow on Twitter.



Figure 1. The Home Page of Tweepi

| User Information |                |                      |   |                  |             |           |            |           |            | Tweepi Stats   |  | Follow? |
|------------------|----------------|----------------------|---|------------------|-------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|----------------|--|---------|
| Image            | Screen Name    | Name                 | Bio   | Location         | # followers | # friends | # statuses | Verified? | Protected? | Last Tweet     |  |         |
|                  | Shelbywales    | Shelby Wales         | yes i am brish if you are from the UK must follow   | London,England   | 38          | 229       | 42         | no        | no         | 6 minutes ago  |  |         |
|                  | ShannonLamas   | Shannon Louise Dixon | I'm Shannon, I'm currently 16, I love pups. I'm a Youtube user, so I'd appreciate if you'd check my channel out. https://www.youtube.com/user/shannon...    |                  | 14          | 162       | 15         | no        | no         | 7 minutes ago  |  |         |
|                  | bayboo_20101   | beeseee MOUHAMMAD    |   |                  | 141         | 405       | 124        | no        | no         | 7 minutes ago  |  |         |
|                  | crazykay5      | Kaylee Douglas       |   |                  | 128         | 392       | 117        | no        | no         | 9 minutes ago  |  |         |
|                  | mattnixey      | matt nixey           | I a kiwi i live in New Zealand. I a very big fan of the amazing JamellOdeI and I love the mo to. I all was follow back.                                     | new zealand      | 179         | 611       | 1368       | no        | no         | 10 minutes ago |  |         |
|                  | ABDECEpromo    | Amy Brooks           | We are DECE designs. A fresh new Tahiti fashion label. All our tees are under K15 DECE.   |                  | 246         | 1286      | 31         | no        | no         | 12 minutes ago |  |         |
|                  | LTFCROBBOx     | Robson O'Reardon     | everyone follow Robson cos he's perfect and gorgeous and funny so follow him pa (p.s cats are fab and so is my gf @picklec4t ok bye) from @picklec4t x x x  | Luton            | 4611        | 4573      | 16100      | no        | no         | 12 minutes ago |  |         |
|                  | indiegirlrolox | iv@ni                | 13, single, Canberra. I love #avengedsevenfold and food (:  | Singapore        | 919         | 913       | 5821       | no        | no         | 13 minutes ago |  |         |
|                  | abbielouiseox  | ~Christian Grey~     | I tweet alot, sleep alot & listen to music alot. I have a pet unicorn called bluebell & @alexakimelov is my boyf. follow me on instagram: @abbielouiseabbi. | wisbech, england | 1754        | 1611      | 15120      | no        | no         | 13 minutes ago |  |         |

Figure 2. The Twitters' Activities

**Procedures**

This research took place in Gunadarma University J building. Firstly, we handed out the questionnaires, and the participants should fill their Twitter

usernames. Next, we divided the participants into three groups after knowing the percentage of the Following list.

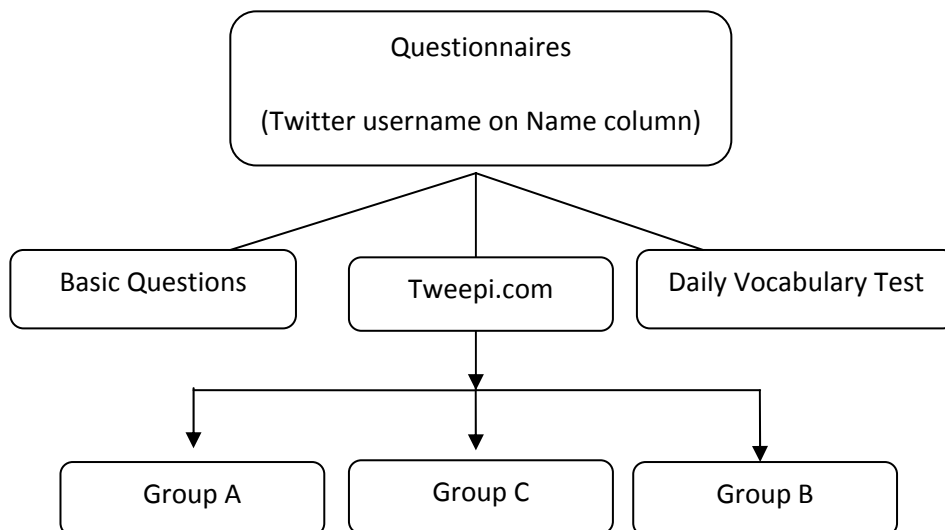


Figure 3. The Procedures of the Research

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

According to Jennifer Wagaman (2008), we can improve our vocabularies by reading; read everything we can; reading books, newspapers, magazines and anything else you can get your hands on will improve your vocabulary. In this case, we read our Timeline on Twitter.

Vocabulary is one of aspects of language. Hornby (2005) states that vocabulary is as a collection or list of words with brief explanations of their meanings. Vocabulary has important role in learning language. It is also said by Nation (2000) that vocabulary is all the words that a person knows or uses. Moreover, a good vocabulary is essential to effective speaking, listening and reading. Without knowing vocabulary that impossible to understand the language and gave idea clearly that in learning English, vocabulary is necessary.

Through reading, people can learn new words; and by building vocabulary, they can develop reading skill. As Nation (as cited in Nation and Waring, 1997) explained, "Vocabulary knowledge enables language use, language use enables the increase of vocabulary knowledge, knowledge of the world enables the increase of vocabulary knowledge and language use and so on." Moreover Oxford and Scarcella (1994) stated that research now has extensively

showed that vocabulary can be acquired through reading or any "fully contextualized activities".

Computer technology will change this situation by providing interaction and stimulation that people do not find on the printed page. Furthermore, various functions of the Internet appeal to different learning styles.

In general, to use the Internet is to communicate (Anderson, 1995). The main purpose of the Internet, for instance Twitter, is to connect people all over the world to share information, experiences, and opinions. Because the Internet is a natural resource, it contains real language. As people navigate their way around the primarily text-based Internet, they must read and write in English, which helps them acquire the language (Falsetti, 1995).

## RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

### Result 1

Group A : Following L1 (Majority)

Group B : Following L1

Group C : Not following L1 at all

From the total of the final sample, 70.59% of participants follow L1, 29.41% of participants do not follow L1 at all, and 0% of participants follow L1 in majority.

|         | Gross Sample | Invalid Sample* | Final Sample |
|---------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Group A | 0            | 0               | 0            |
| Group B | 23           | 11              | 12           |
| Group C | 14           | 9               | 5            |

\*Not active users, registered on Twitter less than 6 months, and Fake Twitter username

## Result 2

Question: "Do you think Twitter and the development of your daily vocabularies have a relation?"

|         | "Yes" | "No" |
|---------|-------|------|
| Group B | 11    | 1    |
| Group C | 5     | 0    |

From the total of final sample, 94.12% of participants agree that following L1 on Twitter can develop their daily vocabularies, and only 5.88% of participants do not agree.

## Result 3

Assessment:

|                        |             |
|------------------------|-------------|
| No                     | = 0 point.  |
| Yes, wrong explanation | = 1 point.  |
| Yes, right explanation | = 2 points. |

- Word Test

|                   | Average Score<br>(max. 20<br>points) | Percentage |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------|------------|
| Group B           | 3.83                                 | 19.15%     |
| Group C           | 3.80                                 | 19.00%     |
| Superior Group: B |                                      |            |

- Phrase Test

|                   | Average Score<br>(max. 20 points) | Percentage |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|------------|
| Group B           | 5.75                              | 28.75%     |
| Group C           | 6.80                              | 34.00%     |
| Superior Group: C |                                   |            |

- Sentence Test

|                   | Average Score<br>(max. 10 points) | Percentage |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|------------|
| Group B           | 4.42                              | 44.20%     |
| Group C           | 3.60                              | 26.00%     |
| Superior Group: B |                                   |            |

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Most of Twitter users are interested in following L1 on Twitter, but not in majority. By following L1, Twitter users agree and claim that it can develop and enrich their daily English vocabularies, although the fact shows the opposite. The

result also describes that most Twitter users do not understand some of the words, phrases, and sentences which are often used in Twitter. Mostly, they do not use them in their daily conversation. Twitter, actually, shows many daily words, phrases, and sentences from native speakers, but Twitter users cannot improve their skill in vocabulary from that. From all the facts above, it is proven that Twitter cannot be called as an alternative way to develop or improve daily English vocabularies.

Our suggestion for the next research is to add more correspondents since this reserach was held in a small scale in English Literature Gunadarma J building only.

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