

THE CORRELATION BETWEEN STUDENTS' VOCABULARY MASTERY AND THEIR LISTENING ABILITY

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ABSTRACT

This research addresses the observed discrepancies among students in the second semester of the English program at UIN Bukittinggi in the academic year 2022/2023. Some students showed low vocabulary proficiency together with low listening proficiency, while others showed high proficiency in both areas. The study aims to investigate the relationship between students' vocabulary mastery and their listening ability. Using a correlational design, the research involved a population of 105 second semester English students at UIN Bukittinggi, using cluster sampling due to the larger population size. Data collection methods included tests to assess vocabulary mastery and listening skills. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) was used for analysis using SPSS 25. The results showed a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.892$) between students' vocabulary mastery and listening ability. This correlation falls in the high range (0.70-0.90), indicating a robust relationship between the two variables. Hypothesis testing further supported this correlation, with the calculated r_{xy} (0.892) exceeding the critical value of the r -table (0.344) at $\alpha = 0.05$. Therefore, the research accepts the alternative hypothesis (H_a) and rejects the null hypothesis (H_0), confirming the positive correlation between students' vocabulary mastery and listening skills.

Keyword: *Correlation, Vocabulary mastery, Listening ability*

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary acquisition is a fundamental aspect of mastering the English language. Teaching vocabulary to English language learners is important because vocabulary is a lexicon of words used by speakers of a particular language. Individuals with a limited vocabulary often face challenges in constructing coherent sentences to effectively convey their messages. In contrast, those with a large vocabulary find it easier to engage in conversation, understand written materials, and actively participate in discussions or read articles in English. As articulated by Thornbury (2002), effective communication is

unattainable without sufficient vocabulary. Syariffudin et al. (2014) highlight the close relationship between vocabulary and words, emphasizing its central role in language learning for understanding, interpreting meanings, and integrating words into sentences.

Similarly, Tarigan in Gustian (2021) posits that the quality of students' language proficiency depends on the range of their vocabulary. A broader vocabulary correlates with higher language proficiency. Students with limited vocabulary often face challenges in acquiring English language skills, necessitating a focus on vocabulary mastery to improve overall language proficiency. Mastery, as defined by Hornby (2000), refers to a comprehensive understanding or skill that emphasizes one's ability to communicate vocabulary.

Based on preliminary research conducted through interviews with students in the second semester of the English Department at the Islamic University of Sjech M. Djamil Djambek in Bukittinggi on May 26, 2023, the researcher identified a notable issue - difficulties in listening due to inadequate vocabulary. The results showed that students tended to neglect listening in their free time, which led to challenges in exams due to insufficient vocabulary practice. Many students preferred leisure activities such as watching movies and browsing social media to specific listening exercises, which may have affected their overall listening skills. Some students expressed the belief that sufficient vocabulary would make listening easier, while others stated that mastering vocabulary would enable them to effortlessly understand and interpret spoken words or sentences. The researcher found a direct relationship between vocabulary knowledge and English listening skills.

Listening, one of the four basic language skills along with speaking, reading and writing, is of paramount importance. It is a common activity in everyday communication, involving a complex and systematic approach that is developing into an essential skill. Listening goes beyond the act of hearing to include the ability to connect auditory input with pre-existing knowledge. In language learning, students immerse themselves in the authentic version of the local language, making listening activities an integral part of English language teaching at the university level in Indonesia. As articulated by Nordquist (2019), listening involves receiving and responding to spoken messages, requiring active engagement and contributions in the form of feedback and demonstrated interest. The skill lies in accurately comprehending messages and understanding the information conveyed during communication, as noted by Chaplin & Rost (2011).

Existing research, as exemplified by the findings of Saadilah (2017), highlights a substantial and positive correlation between vocabulary mastery and listening proficiency.

Saadilah and colleagues have contributed to the understanding of language acquisition by demonstrating that individuals with a strong mastery of vocabulary tend to exhibit enhanced listening skills. Building on this notion, Staehr (2009) highlights a significant barrier to successful listening among English as a foreign language (EFL) learners - a lack of vocabulary knowledge. Staehr's findings shed light on the critical role that vocabulary mastery plays in overcoming barriers to effective listening comprehension. Nation (2001) further reinforces the critical role of vocabulary in listening. In recognizing that vocabulary is a key to understanding spoken language. Then, Wise et al. (2007) add that vocabulary and listening skills share an independent relationship, highlighting their distinct yet interconnected nature and their unique interplay with word recognition skills. In summary, these studies collectively contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the interrelated dynamics between vocabulary acquisition and listening skills. Their findings reaffirm the importance of a robust vocabulary in fostering effective listening comprehension and present it as a multifaceted process influenced by the intricate interplay of linguistic elements.

In light of these considerations, this study aims to investigate the correlation between students' vocabulary mastery and their listening ability in the second semester of English students at UIN Bukittinggi. It seeks to discern the correlation direction and magnitude, contributing valuable insights to the understanding of the relationship between vocabulary mastery and listening skills among university-level English learners.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a correlational design, in accordance with Cresswell's (2012) recommendation that correlation serves as a statistical control measure for the identification of trends or patterns within variable fluctuations. The researcher chose to use a correlational approach to examine the relationship between students' vocabulary mastery and their listening abilities, with the goal of clarifying the nature of this relationship and testing certain hypotheses. The use of a quantitative method facilitated the quantification of the degree of correlation between the two variables.

To collect data, the researcher administered tests that assessed students' vocabulary mastery and listening ability. The decision to use a quantitative method and testing instruments was strategic and allowed for a nuanced understanding of the relationship under investigation. The subsequent data analysis involved the application of the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (r) using SPSS 25 for Windows.

Population and Sample

The population of this study consisted of second semester English students enrolled in UIN Bukittinggi, academic year 2022/2023. The population refers to a group of people who have the same characteristics, as described by Cresswell (2012). The population of the research were all of the 2nd semester English college students of UIN Bukittinggi academic year 2022/2023. There were three classes within the second semester, namely PBI A, PBI B, and PBI C. The total population was one hundred and five students.

Cohen et al. (2007) recommended that researchers gather data from a subset of the total population. This smaller group, known as a sample, is crucial when utilizing a specific research design. Factors influencing sample selection include sample size (greater than one hundred), representativeness and parameters of the sample, access to the sample, and the chosen sampling approach. In this study, the researcher employed probability sampling, specifically cluster sampling.

According to Cohen et al. (2007), cluster sampling involves dividing the population into clusters, such as districts or classes, and randomly selecting a subset of these clusters for the sample. In this research, cluster sampling was used to select the sample from the second-semester English college students at UIN Bukittinggi for the academic year 2022/2023, specifically from the PBI A class, which comprised 35 students.

Research Instruments

To collect data, the researcher administered a vocabulary test to assess students' mastery of vocabulary and a listening test to evaluate their listening abilities. The vocabulary test comprised 20 multiple-choice questions designed to gauge proficiency in vocabulary. The entire test had a total duration of 30 minutes, and each question carried a score of 5 points, summing up to a maximum total score of 100 points. For the assessment of students' listening abilities, a test with 20 multiple-choice questions was employed. This test was structured to align with indicators of listening ability. The overall duration of the test was 40 minutes, and it included six audio segments. Each audio segment was played twice. Each question in the listening test carried a score of 5 points, resulting in a maximum total score of 100 points. Following the data collection for each variable, statistical analyses were performed using SPSS 25 for Windows. The utilization of SPSS 25 facilitated the calculation and interpretation of statistical measures to analyze the relationship between students' vocabulary mastery and listening abilities.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

In the results and discussion, the researcher shows an approximate correlation between location and interpretation of events obtained through students' vocabulary mastery and listening skills.

The Data Description of Students' Vocabulary Mastery

In assessing variable X, students' vocabulary mastery was evaluated using a 20-question multiple-choice test that took approximately 30 minutes. The study included 35 students, and data analysis was conducted using the SPSS 25 software.

Data Description of Students' Listening Ability

The examination of variable Y focused on assessing students' listening ability through a multiple-choice test comprising 20 questions, with a duration of approximately 40 minutes. Similar to the vocabulary test, 35 students participated in this study, and the data analysis was carried out using SPSS 25.

The Analysis of the Data of Students' Vocabulary Mastery

Upon analyzing the results of the vocabulary mastery test for the second semester of English students at UIN Bukittinggi during the academic year 2022/2023, it was observed that the highest score attained was 90, while the lowest was 45. To categorize students' performance levels, the researcher classified the data into five categories: very good, good, sufficient, less, and fail, based on the standard scoring of the test. The breakdown of students' proficiency levels is presented in the table below:

Table 1: Classification of Students' Vocabulary Mastery

Score	Frequency	Percentage	Category
80-100	7	20%	Very Good
66-79	13	37,14%	Good
56-65	10	28,57%	Sufficient
40-55	5	14,28%	Less
30-39	0	0%	Fail
Total	N = 35	100%	

The table above shows students' ability to master vocabulary. 20% of students were at a very good level, 37.14% of students were at a sufficient level, 28.57% of students were at a less level, 14.28% of students were less level and there were no students at a fail level.

a. The Analysis of the Data of Students' Listening Ability

Upon examining the results of the listening ability test for the second semester of English students at UIN Bukittinggi during the academic year 2022/2023, it was identified that the highest score attained was 100, while the lowest score was 35. The cumulative score for all participants was 2,435. To assess students' proficiency levels, the researcher classified the data into five categories: very good, good, sufficient, less, and fail, based on the standard scoring of the test. The classification of students' abilities is presented in the table below:

Table 2: Classification of Students' Listening Ability

Score	Frequency	Percentage	Category
80-100	14	40%	Very Good
66-79	6	17,14 %	Good
56-65	5	14, 28%	Sufficient
40-55	9	25,71%	Less
30-39	1	2,85%	Fail
Total	N = 35	100%	

The table above shows students' listening skills. 40% of students were at a very good level, 17.14% of students were at a good level, 14.28% of students were at a sufficient level, 25.71% of students were at a less level and 2.85% of students were at a fail level.

b. The Correlation between Vocabulary Mastery and their Listening Ability of the second semester of English Students in UIN Bukittinggi academic year 2022/2023

The researcher used statistical computing to analyze the data obtained. The researcher used the formula using Pearson's product-moment correlation to find the correlation.

Table 3: Results Correlations

Vocabulary Mastery	Pearson Correlation	1	.892 ^{**}
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	35	35
Listening Ability	Pearson Correlation	.892 ^{**}	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	35	35

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

The table above shows the correlation coefficient $r=0.892$. This means there is an excellent correlation between vocabulary mastery and listening potential. Primarily based on the interpretation of Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient between 0.70 - 0.90, there is a strong correlation between the two variables. can be seen on the desktop as below:

Tabel 4: Magnitude Correlation

Index Correlation (r _{xy})	Interpretation
0.90-1.00	Very high correlation
0.70-0.90	High correlation
0.40-0.70	Sufficient correlation
0.20-0.30	Low correlation
0.00-0.20	Very low correlation

c. Testing the hypothesis

The researcher formulated two hypotheses for the study. The first hypothesis (H_a) posited that there is a correlation between students' vocabulary mastery and their listening skills. The second hypothesis (H_o) suggested that there is no correlation between students' vocabulary mastery and listening ability. To test these hypotheses, the researcher consulted the r-table with a significance level (alpha, α) set at 0.05 and degrees of freedom (df) equal to 33. The critical value obtained from the table was 0.344. However, the researcher found that the actual correlation coefficient (r_{xy}) calculated from the study's data was 0.892, surpassing the critical value from the table.

In summary, the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_o) was warranted since the calculated correlation coefficient (r_{xy} = 0.892) exceeded the critical value from the table (0.344). Therefore, the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted, indicating a significant correlation between college students' vocabulary mastery and their listening ability.

Discussion

The research on students' vocabulary mastery and listening skills in the second semester of English Program at UIN Bukittinggi for the academic year 2022/2023 has yielded significant results. The significant correlation of 0.892 between these variables underscores a strong relationship and sheds light on the intricate relationship between vocabulary mastery and listening skills. As stated by Wise et al. (2007), vocabulary and listening skills are independently related to sentence recognition skills. This suggests that a well-developed

vocabulary is uniquely associated with improved listening skills. The theoretical underpinnings are validated by the results of the study, which confirm a significant correlation between students' vocabulary mastery and their listening skills. This underscores the central role of a strong vocabulary in facilitating effective listening skills.

In addition, the importance of each variable is illustrated by the high correlation coefficients, which range from 0.70 to 0.90. The results of the study support Saadilah's (2017) assertion that students with accurate vocabulary mastery find it easier to learn listening. This underscores the critical role of a robust vocabulary in facilitating effective listening skills, as indicated by the high correlations found.

In summary, the findings underscore the interrelated nature of vocabulary mastery and listening skills. This is consistent with established theoretical perspectives. The study not only confirms the integral relationship between these language components, but also highlights the practical implications for language acquisition. The high correlation coefficients further underscore the importance of vocabulary in improving listening skills. This reinforces the critical role of vocabulary in the language learning process.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

In conclusion, this study successfully investigated the correlation between students' vocabulary mastery and listening ability among English students at UIN Bukittinggi in the academic year 2022/2023. The results showed a positive correlation between these two variables in the second semester of the academic year. The results consistently showed that students with higher vocabulary mastery tended to have better listening skills. This correlation underscores the interrelated nature of language components and highlights the importance of a well-developed vocabulary in fostering effective listening skills. The researcher encourages educational institutions to prioritize vocabulary development initiatives, recognizing its central role in language acquisition. By incorporating such programs, institutions can contribute to students' linguistic growth and foster better language skills. For students, this study underscores the importance of actively engaging in vocabulary development. Students are encouraged to proactively expand their vocabulary in order to improve their language skills. Given the correlation between vocabulary mastery and listening skills, students should actively seek out opportunities to enrich their lexical knowledge and thereby improve their overall language proficiency. This study serves as a reminder for students to prioritize vocabulary development as an integral aspect of their language learning journey.

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