

A CORRELATIONAL STUDY OF THE THIRD YEAR STUDENTS' VOCABULARY MASTERY AND SPEAKING ABILITY AT ENGLISH DEPARTMENT BUNG HATTA UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

The background of the problem in this research was aimed at finding out the correlation between vocabulary mastery and speaking ability of the third year students of English Department, Bung Hatta University. The population of this research was the third year students of Bung Hatta University. The members of population were 112 students. The researcher took a class of 30 students as the class sample by using Cluster Random Sampling. The hypothesis in this research was there is a significant correlation between vocabulary mastery and speaking ability of third year students of Bung Hatta University. In gathering the data, the researcher used the multiple choice test to measure vocabulary mastery and oral test to measure speaking ability. In analyzing the data, the researcher used the Pearson Product Moment formula. After analyzing the data, it was found that r calculated was .84 with level significance .05, and the degree of freedom ($df = n - 2$) was 28. It means that r -counted was higher than r -table (.84 > .31). So, the relationship between two variables above was significant. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis, that said "There is significant correlation between vocabulary mastery and speaking ability of third year students of English Department of Bung Hatta University" was accepted. Based on the finding of this research, it could be concluded that there is correlation between vocabulary mastery and speaking ability of the third year students of English Department of Bung Hatta University. It means that the students' vocabulary mastery will support students' speaking ability.

Key Word: Correlational Study, Vocabulary Mastery and Speaking Ability.

INTRODUCTION

The Background of the Problem

It is known that English as one of the important international languages and it has been used in many aspects of life. English is main tool in communication, science and technology development, and business activities. Day by day, more people in the world have the awareness about the importance of English.

According to Crystal (2003), English has been spread and used by one fourth of people in the world and will develop until one half billion in this year. It means that the majority of population in the world always grows to learn English. The people decide to study English in order to face the world's progress. After having the ability in English, the people can understand and speak in English, so that it can make the

people be able to communicate with each other, to get new ideas and to share some sources of knowledge. Beside, university students also cannot avoid that now all activities have connection with English. For example, to get scholarship, one of the requirements is able to speak English fluently and accurately. Moreover, to get a job in a company, generally more opportunities are given to the employers who can speak English well. It happens because many companies in Indonesia have cooperation with foreign companies.

Because of the importance of English as described above, many schools and universities in Indonesia have put English as main curriculum, such as International Standard Schools. In some schools even have used English as major language in teaching and learning process. In learning English, students should master four language skills namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. Among the four skills, speaking is the most important one due to the large number of the students who want to study English in order to be able to use English for communicative purposes. It can be understood because English is used widely to communicate with other people from foreign countries. Beside that, speaking skill is really needed because somebody can be said to have the ability in English when she can speak English well. Richard and Renandya

(2002) state that a large percentage of the world's language learners study English in order to develop proficiency in speaking.

Although English has been studied all over the world in long time, problems are found during teaching and learning process. Mukminatien (1999) finds that students of English Department have a great number of errors when speaking. Some of them include grammatical accuracy (e.g., tenses, preposition, and sentence construction), vocabulary (e.g., incorrect word choice), fluency (e.g., frequent repair), and interactive communication (e.g., difficulties in getting the meaning across or keeping the conversation going). In addition, Eviyuliwati (1997) observes that students had difficulties in using grammar and applying new vocabulary items in speaking class. These conditions prove that vocabulary has strong influence in speaking. It can be understood because to be able to speak, the students must have various vocabularies. Meanwhile the main target in studying English is to make the students able to speak. Moreover, it can be said that vocabulary mastery has correlation with speaking ability.

Vocabulary is one of the supporting elements in learning speaking. The students' knowledge must be increased in vocabularies because speaking skills depends on how well the students

can express their ideas through the words. Therefore, mastering vocabulary has an important role because the more the students possess words in English, the easier they can speak.

Personally, the researcher also paid some attention about this matter around campus. The researcher observed that most students could not speak English well because of some possible crucial factors such as being afraid of making mistakes, having lack of vocabulary, feeling ashamed to express their ideas in English, having low confidence to practice, and the condition of daily activities in campus where many students usually talk everything in Indonesia. Those were some factors that influence the students to speak English. Based on the phenomena as already discussed, the researcher was deeply interested in conducting a research about the correlation between the students' vocabulary and their speaking ability.

The Formulation of the Problem

According to limitation of the problem that is stated previously, the problem of this research is formulated in the following question; "Is there a significant correlation between vocabulary mastery and speaking ability of the third year students of English Department Bung Hatta University?"

The Significance of the Problem

The result of the research can give contribution for both vocabulary and speaking lecturer. For the lecturers, having known the result of this research, the lecturers can get knowledge about the correlation between vocabulary mastery and speaking ability. Furthermore, the result of this research, students are expected that have more awareness and attention in vocabulary mastery to support speaking ability.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research was correlational research. The purpose of this research was to find out the correlation between vocabulary mastery and speaking ability. The population of this research was the third year students of English Department of Bung Hatta University Padang registered firstly in academic year 2010/2011. The total number of population members of this research was 112 students. They were divided into three classes: A, B, and C.

The researcher chose Cluster Random Sampling technique because the population was homogeneous; they used the same materials, syllabus, and curriculum. In selecting the sample, the researcher wrote the name of each class on small pieces of papers and put them into the box, where piece of paper was given

Class A, B, C. The researcher shook the box and took one of the papers in the box with closed eyes and class B was selected as sample class. The members of class B were 30 students.

Instrumentation

To collect the data of this research, the researcher used vocabulary test and speaking test to measure students' vocabulary mastery and speaking ability. Each instrument would be discussed in detail in the following paragraphs.

Technique of Analyzing Data

To analyze the data, the researcher followed the following steps:

1. Counting the total scores from objectives test (vocabulary score) and speaking skill score.

The following formula was used to count the students' speaking score :

$$\text{Students' score} = \frac{\text{first score} + \text{second score}}{2}$$

2. Correlating the total score of two tests by using Pearson Product Moment Formula as follows:

$$3. r_{xy} = \frac{n\sum xy - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{[n\sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2][n\sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2]}}$$

Where :

r_{xy} = The coefficient correlation

between two variables of the test

n = The total number of the students

$\sum xy$ =The total scores of cross product
xy

$\sum x$ =The sum of vocabulary test'
score

$\sum y$ = The sum of speaking test' score

$\sum x^2$ =The square of vocabulary test'
score

$\sum y^2$ =The square of speaking test' score

DESCRIPTION OF DATA AND FINDING

Description of the Data

As already discussed previously, the instrument used to collect data for the two variables were vocabulary test and speaking test. Both instruments were given to 30 students of chosen sample of this research. There were 34 items of test of vocabulary mastery test. Oral on speaking was done by choosing one topic from three topics that are given by the researcher. Based on the result of the correlation of the students' answer sheet of vocabulary test, it was found that the lowest score for vocabulary mastery was 12 and the highest score was 27. While the result of the students ability in speaking test got the the lowest score was 12 and the highest score was 24.

Finding

To find out the correlation of the third year students' vocabulary mastery

and speaking ability at English Department Bung Hatta University, the researcher used Pearson Product Moment formula. From the data analysis, it was found the value of r -counted was .84.

Testing Hypothesis

From the finding, it can be seen that the value of r -counted in this research was .84 with the level of significance .05. The value of r -table in the degree of freedom ($df = n-2$) was .31. To test the hypothesis, the researcher compared the r -counted with r -table ($.84 > .31$). If r -counted is bigger than r -table, the correlation is significant (Arikunto, 2002:245). So, from the result, r -counted (.84) was bigger than r -table (.31) with the level of significance .05 and degree of freedom ($df = n-2 : 28$). It meant that there is significant positive correlation between vocabulary mastery and speaking ability of the third year students at English Department Bung Hatta University.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

There was positive and significant correlation between the third year students' vocabulary mastery and speaking ability at English Department Bung Hatta University. It was proved by the value of r -counted which was bigger than r -table, at

the level of significant .05 $r = .84$ and ($df = n-2$).

Suggestions

Since the finding of this research showed that there was a significant correlation between vocabulary mastery and speaking ability, it is suggested to the vocabulary and speaking lecturer to elaborate students' vocabulary in speaking subject.

1. For vocabulary lecturer, the teachers should increase their students' vocabulary in order that the students have good ability in speaking.
2. For speaking lecturer, it is suggested to improve their students' speaking ability through building their vocabulary.
3. For the students, it is suggested to increase their vocabularies and practice more their speaking skill.

Acknowledgment

The researcher would like to express her deepest regard and gratitude to her advisors, Dra. Ernati, M.Pd. (also as the Chairwoman of English Department) and Lailatul Husna, S.Pd, M.Pd for spending their time guiding and supporting her for the improvement of this thesis. She also would like to express her thankful to the Dean of Faculty of Teacher Training and Education of Bung Hatta University,

Dr. Marsis, M.Pd, the Vice Dean of Faculty of Teacher Training and Education of Bung Hatta University, Drs. Khairuddin, M.Si, and the Secretary of English Department, Dra. Lisa Tavriyanti, M.Pd. Then the researcher also thanks all of lecturers who have taught and guided her during studying at this department. She also would like to express her deepest gratitude and appreciate to her beloved parents, Damris and Eliza who have given fully support to the researcher in writing this thesis. Then she does not forget to extend her great thanks to her classmates who have helped her a lot.

Finally, the researcher hopes this research can be useful for the better process of teaching and learning English in the future. The researcher realizes that this thesis is not perfect yet. Therefore, she welcomes any suggestions and criticisms from the readers.

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