

## Correlation among vocabulary size, English structure and reading comprehension scores of EFL students

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### Abstract

The purpose of this research is to find out the correlation among vocabulary size, structure and reading comprehension. This research applied quantitative and used correlation design. The population of this research was the first semester students of English Education Study Program at IAIN Palangka Raya on Academic Year 2016. Cluster sampling was used to gain the sample and 64 students were as the sample of this research. The instrument that used was test. After the calculation, the result showed that  $F_{\text{observed}}$  is higher than  $F_{\text{table}}$  ( $4.407 > 3.15$ ) so there was positive correlation among vocabulary size, English structure and reading comprehension scores of EFL students of English Education Study Program at IAIN Palangka Raya. It meant that the alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) which stated that there was correlation among vocabulary size, English structure and reading comprehension scores of EFL students at IAIN Palangka Raya was accepted and null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) which stated that there was no correlation among vocabulary size, English structure and reading comprehension scores of EFL students at IAIN Palangka Raya was rejected.

**Keywords:** Correlation, Vocabulary Size, Structure, Reading Comprehension.

### INTRODUCTION

English is one of the most important languages of the world. Spoken by more than 380 million people in the United Kingdom, the United States, and the former British Empire, it is the largest of the Western languages. (Bough & Cable, 2002: 3). Nowadays, English is as one of languages that taught and learnt by many people around the world. The one who learns language has to master four basic language skills. They are listening, reading, speaking and writing. Beside those skills, he also should master language components especially vocabulary. Vocabulary is one of important aspects in learning a foreign

language. Having limited vocabularies, there would be many problems in learning listening, reading, speaking and writing.

Vocabulary as one of important aspects in learning English has a role to make someone possible in using a language. It is one of the important language elements the students should master (Sulastri, 2011: 103). By mastering vocabulary, we would know the meaning of vocabulary in the context. Moreover, measuring vocabularies helps to avoid making mistakes in understanding. In learning, for example, one's ability in getting the message intended to transfer by a writer depends on his closely related vocabulary to the topic of the reading selection. In fact, without the recognition of the meaning of the words, it would be impossible to produce or perceive the language. Although someone may successfully decode and read fluently, knowing the meanings of words contained in a text is critical to reading comprehension.

Comprehension of the information in text is the ultimate reason for reading. Reading was one of the important language skills. By reading, people would get more information. Reading is very important activity in this era. Much of the reading we do is for information—sometimes for school purposes and other times for our own (Erliana, 2011: 50). Reading was a receptive skill that means we get the information or knowledge through reading activities. Much information made in English such as media, newspaper, magazine, article, and others.

Effective reading requires two types of vocabulary, word recognition vocabulary and word meaning. Word recognition is the readers' ability to pronounce or figure out the word by using word attack strategies. Word meaning refers to words students know or can define. In reading, to understand all types of information in the whole texts, it requires either reading activity or ability to understand the content (Miftah, 2013: 21). Also, in reading, vocabulary knowledge is essential to comprehend text. When one does not understand at least 90% of the words in a text, he does not adequately understand what he reads, and it means that vocabulary very important to reading (Hanson & Padua, 2011: 6-7). Then it can be assumed that both of vocabulary and reading comprehension have a tight relationship in order for someone, especially for students, comprehending and using a language whether spoken or written well.

IAIN Palangka Raya as one of state universities in Kalimantan Tengah which obliges all of the students in every study program of faculties to take and pass exam of TOEFL as one of requirements to propose the thesis. TOEFL type which held at IAIN Palangka Raya is TOEFL A LIKE where there are 3 sections

(Listening Comprehension, English Structure and Written Text and also Reading Comprehension) of test. Based on pre observation, the students have difficulties in order to gain minimum scores which required especially in English Structure and Written Expression section and Reading Comprehension section.

### **1. Objective of the Study**

The aim of study is tried to measure the correlation among vocabulary size, English structure and reading comprehension scores of EFL students at IAIN Palangka Raya in Academic Year 2016.

### **2. Hypotheses of the Study**

There were two hypotheses in this study; alternative hypothesis and Null hypothesis that will be interpreted as follows:

- a. Alternative hypothesis (Ha). There was correlation among vocabulary size, English structure score and reading comprehension score of EFL students at IAIN Palangka Raya in Academic Year 2016/2017.
- b. Null hypothesis (Ho). There was no correlation among vocabulary size, English structure score and reading comprehension score of EFL students at IAIN Palangka Raya in Academic Year 2016/2017.

### **3. Limitation of the Study**

This study belongs to correlation study. It is limited on using test to measure the correlation among vocabulary size, English Structure and reading comprehension score. The subject of this study is first semester students of English Education Program at IAIN Palangka Raya in Academic Year 2016.

### **4. Significance of the Study**

Theoretically, this study is hoped can give some useful information on the real evidence of correlation among vocabulary size, English structure and reading comprehension of EFL students at IAIN Palangka Raya. So, this way, the lecturers can create the teaching strategy that emphasize at vocabulary size, English Structure and reading comprehension.

Practically, the result of the present study is hoped can be as useful information for the next researchers who interest in researching vocabulary size, English Structure and reading comprehension.

### **5. Operational Definition of Key Terms**

- a. Correlation Study is the measurement of between two or more variables to investigate the precise degree of their relationship.
- b. Vocabulary size is the number of words that a person knows.
- c. English Structure is the arrangement or system of language.
- d. Reading Comprehension is a cognitive process to acquire the knowledge by reading a text from book, internet, and magazines.

## **Related Literatures**

### **1. Vocabulary**

Vocabulary is the words which known and used by someone in communication either spoken or written. In addition, vocabulary is very important element that used among communities. By mastering many kinds of vocabularies, it is expected to be able to help his achievement in learning. Vocabulary referred to words we use to communicate whether spoken or written (Hanson & Padua, 2011:5). So, it can be concluded that vocabulary is words that person knows which used to communicate among others, to convey what he thinks and hears.

Vocabulary has two types of word; Function words and content words.

#### **a. Function Words**

Function words are words that serve to express grammatical relationship with other words within a sentence, or specific attitude or mood of the speaker. It has an important role to the English Structures of sentence. Function words might be preposition, conjunction, determiner and pronoun. All of which belong to group of closed-class words (Yule, 2006: 64).

Prepositions are words or group of words that is used to show the way in which other words were connected and use to expression the time. Example, *for, in, at, on*, etc (Azar, 2002: 45). Conjunctions are words used to link words, phrases or clauses. Some common conjunctions such as *and, but, and, or*, etc (Sargeant, 2007: 109). Determiners such as definite article, indefinite article, possessives, demonstrate, and quantifiers. Example, *the, a, an, this, some*, etc. Pronoun is a word that used in place of a noun or noun phrases. Example, *her, she, they*, etc.

#### **b. Content Words**

Content words are words which carry the meaning of messages that conveyed. It can be compared to the grammatical words, which are structural nouns, verbs, adjective, and adverbs. These words also called as open class because we can add new lexical morphemes to the language rather easily (Yule, 2006: 64).

## **2. English Structure of TOEFL**

Talking about structure of language, so it will also talk about sentence, where the arrangement or system of the language needs structure in order to be comprehended. A good sentence should have a good English Structure. English structure usually used to analyze the sentence like its subject, verb and/or object. Structure is tested in the second section on both of TOEFL paper based and TOEFL computer based. This section consisted of a number of multiple choice questions that test knowledge of the structure of English sentence and error recognition questions.

TOEFL paper based, the second section is called Structure and Written Expression. This section consisted of forty questions (though some tests may be longer). The time given is only twenty-five minutes to complete the forty questions in the section (Philips, 2001: 195). Types of sentence in this section such as, sentence with one clause, sentence with multiple clauses, more sentences with multiple clauses, sentence with reduced clauses and sentences with inverted subjects and verbs.

## **3. Reading Comprehension of TOEFL**

Clay defines reading as a message-getting, problem-solving activity which increases in power and flexibility the more it is practiced. He also stated that within the directional constraints of the printer's code, language and visual perception responses were purposefully directed by the reader in some integrated way to the problem of extracting meaning from cues in a text, in sequence, so that the reader brings a maximum of understanding to the author's message (1997: 6). It means that reading may be defined as a total individual inter-relationship of many different cognitive skills and abilities with information symbolically.

Reading comprehension is important at every part which related to symbolical information, such as understanding text, for our social lives which related to email, text, and social networking sites. Reading comprehension is also necessarily dependent on at least adequate word reading: readers cannot understand a whole text if they cannot identify (decode) the words in that text. (Oakhill, Cain & Elbro, 2015: 1). In other words, comprehension requires understanding of the English structure text. English Structure is important because it can help the reader to identify the main idea of a story or other text, and provide a framework for the mental model.

Reading is tested at the third section on both of TOEFL paper based and TOEFL computer based. This section consisted of reading passages followed by a number of questions.

The third section of TOEFL paper based is called Reading comprehension. This section consists of five passages and fifty questions (although some test may be longer). The time to answer the fifty questions is fifty-five minute. There is only one type question in the reading comprehension section on the TOEFL paper based; it is Multiple-Choice questions which asked the testee to select the best answer to questions about the information given in the reading passage. A multiple-choice question on the paper test may ask about the main ideas, directly answered details, indirectly answered details, vocabulary, or overall review ideas (Philips, 2001: 359).

#### **4. The Importance of Vocabulary to Reading**

The role of vocabulary and reading is a complex one, as reading researchers have long recognized. Words represent complex and, often, multiple meanings. Furthermore, these complexes, multiple meanings of words need to be understood in the context of other words in the sentences and paragraph of texts. Not only the students who are expected to understand words in texts, but also texts can be expected to introduce them to many new words (Hiebert & Kamil, 2005 :1).

Hiebert and Kamil also mention that The National Reading Panel identified the components of reading as phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Vocabulary holds a special place among these components. Vocabulary is not a developmental skill or one that can ever be seen as fully mastered. The expansion and elaboration of vocabularies is something that extends across a lifetime.

Good reading comprehension depends on understanding the words we are reading. The more words we recognize and understand in a text, the better our comprehension will be. So, the vocabulary holds the most importance role on reading especially reading comprehension, it is impossible to understand the text if do not know or not recognize the words from it text. (Mikulecky & Jeffries, 2007 : 26).

## **METHOD**

### **1. Design of the Research**

This research belongs to quantitative research and design of the research is correlation research. Ary et all (2010: 349) stated that correlation research is



non-experimental research that is similar to ex post facto research in that they both employ data derived from preexisting variables. There was no manipulation of the variables in this type of research. Correlation research assesses the relationships among two or more variables in a single group. The correlation is indicated by correlation coefficient represented with numbers from 0 to 1 showing the degree of relationship, and the direction of the correlation indicated with (-) showing negative correlation and (+) showing positive correlation. The present research is tried to measure the correlation among vocabulary size, structure and reading comprehension score of first semester students of English Education Program at IAIN Palangka Raya.

## **2. Population and Sample**

The populations of this study were all of the first semester students of English Education Study Program at IAIN Palangka Raya in academic year 2016. Simple random cluster is applied to gain the sample. Based on the students' attendance, there were 64 students who became the sample of the study.

## **3. Research Instrument**

The correlation among vocabulary size, structure and reading comprehension score of first semester students of English Education Program at IAIN Palangka Raya is tried to be measured in this research. In order to measure it, test is used as research instrument. The test consisted of three kinds. They were vocabulary size test, structure test and reading comprehension test.

There were 50 questions of vocabulary instruments where the students were asked to find word meaning or synonym. The structure and reading comprehension instrument is the test from TOEFL A LIKE paper based that held in IAIN Palangka Raya. There were 50 items of reading comprehension where the students asked to find the correct answer based on the text. There are a number of multiple choice questions that test knowledge of the structure of English sentence and error recognition questions which consisted of 40 items.

## **4. Data Analysis Procedures**

Data analysis procedures in this study were:

- a. Calculated the students' score of vocabulary size by using formula:

$$S = \frac{n}{N} \times 100$$

- b. Calculate the mean of the vocabulary size test score using formula:

$$M = \frac{\sum Y}{N}$$

- c. Calculate the students' score of reading comprehension by using formula:

$$S = \frac{n}{N} \times 100$$

- d. Calculate the mean of the reading comprehension test score using formula:

$$M = \frac{\sum X1}{N}$$

- e. Calculate the students' structure test score will using formula

$$S = \frac{n}{N} \times 100$$

- f. Calculate the mean of students' structure test score

$$M = \frac{\sum X2}{N}$$

- g. To find out the correlation coefficient of the structure and vocabulary size, the researcher will use SPSS 21.0 program, also to find the correlation coefficient between reading comprehension and vocabulary size and the correlation between structure and reading comprehension.

- h. To find the multiple correlation coefficient, the researcher is used formula as follow :

$$R_{x1.x2.y} = \sqrt{\frac{r^2 x1.y + r^2 x2.y - 2(r x1.y)(r x2.y)(r x1.x2)}{1 - r^2 x1.x2}}$$

- i) To know the significant of multiple correlation X1, X2 and Y, the researcher used the formula that Riduwan stated in his book ( 2013 : 238 ) :

$$f \text{ value} = \frac{\frac{R^2}{k}}{\frac{(1-R^2)}{n-k-1}}$$

- j. To know the score of F<sub>value</sub> the researcher used F table that stated by Riduwan (2013: 239) with formula :

$$F \text{ table} = \begin{matrix} df1 = k-1 \\ df2 = n-k \end{matrix}$$

- k. Interpretation

After the researcher found the F<sub>observe</sub>, the next step is compare with the F table, if the F observe is greater than F table, it meant there is correlation among the variables.

## FINDINGS

Based on the calculation variable Y was found  $\sum Y = 3524.44$  and  $\sum X^2 = 217087.9$ . Based on the data above, it is known that the highest score was 94



and the lowest score was 16. The classification of the students' scores can be seen in the table below:

Table 1. Distribution Frequency and Presentation Score of the Students' Vocabulary Size Test

No	Category	Predicate	Letter Value	Frequency	Percent
1	Score 80 – 100	Very good	A	10	15.625%
2	Score 70 - <80	Good	B	4	6.25%
3	Score 60 - <70	Fair	C	10	15.625%
4	Score 50 - <60	Poor	D	13	20.3125%
5	Score <50	Bad	E	27	42.1875%
Total				64	100%

Here can be explained that there were 15.625% students who acquired scores 80-100, then 6.25% students who acquired score 70-<80, 15.625% students who acquired score 60 - <70, 20.3125% students who acquired score 50 - <60 and there were 42.1875% students who acquired score < 50. The following is chart about the frequency of vocabulary size test scores.

Table 2. Distribution Frequency and Presentation Score of the Students' Structure Score Test

No	Category	Predicate	Letter Value	Frequency	Percent
1	Score 80 – 100	Very good	A	0	0%
2	Score 70 - <80	Good	B	2	3.125%
3	Score 60 - <70	Fair	C	0	0%
4	Score 50 - <60	Poor	D	3	4.6875%
5	Score <50	Bad	E	59	92.1875%
				64	100%

Based on the data above, it can be explained that there were 3.125% students who acquired scores 70 - <80, there were 4.6875% students who acquired score 50 - <60 and 92.1875% students who acquired score < 50.

Table 3. Distribution Frequency and Presentation Score of the Students' Reading Comprehension Score Test

No	Category	Predicate	Letter Value	Frequency	Percent
1	Score 80 – 100	Very good	A	0	0%
2	Score 70 - <80	Good	B	0	0%
3	Score 60 - <70	Fair	C	0	0%

4	Score 50 - <60	Poor	D	2	3.125%
5	Score <50	Bad	E	62	96.875%
	Total			64	100%

Based on the data above, it can be explained that there were 3.125% students who acquired scores 50 - <60 and there were 96.875% students who acquired scores <50.

### 1. Correlation between Vocabulary Size and Structure

		Vocabulary Size	Structure
Vocabulary_Size	Pearson Correlation	1	,377**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,002
	N	64	64
Structure	Pearson Correlation	,377**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,002	
	N	64	64

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

From the table above can be seen that index of product moment correlation was 0.377 for 0.01 significance level. The result of the calculation that was counted by the product moment above showed that the index of correlation was 0.377. To prove the value of "r" based on the calculation degree of freedom was known that  $df = N - nr$ ,  $N = 64$ ,  $nr = 2$ .

Even so, it was known that the result of  $r$  observed =  $0.377 > 0.242$ . It can be explained that the value of  $r$  observed (0.377) showed positive correlation between structure and vocabulary size in significant level 1%.

### 2. The Correlation Between Vocabulary size and Reading Comprehension

		Reading_Comp rehension	Vocabulary_Siz e
Reading_Comprehension	Pearson Correlation	1	,310*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,013
	N	64	64
Vocabulary_Size	Pearson Correlation	,310*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,013	
	N	64	64

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Based on SPSS 21.0 statistic program calculation, the result of  $r_{\text{observed}}$  (Correlation coefficient) between reading comprehension and vocabulary size was 0.310. After check in the table pearson product moment coefficient at significance level 0.01, the  $r_{\text{table}}$  ( $r = 0.242$ ), so the  $r_{\text{observed}}$  is higher than  $r_{\text{table}}$  ( $0.310 > 0.242$ ). It can be concluded that both variables was in positive correlation.

### 3. The Correlation between Structure and Reading Comprehension

		Reading_Comp rehesion	Structure
Reading_Comp rehesion	Pearson Correlation	1	,278*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,026
	N	64	64
Structure	Pearson Correlation	,278*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,026	
	N	64	64

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Based on SPSS 21.0 statistic program calculation, the result of  $r_{\text{observed}}$  (Correlation coefficient) between structure and reading comprehension was 0.278. Related to the of table pearson product moment coefficient at significance level 0.01, the  $r_{\text{table}}$  ( $r = 0.242$ ), so the  $r_{\text{observed}}$  is higher than  $r_{\text{table}}$  ( $0.278 > 0.242$ ). It can be concluded that both variables was in positive correlation.

### 4. The Correlation between Vocabulary Size, Structure and Reading Comprehension

The researcher used formula multiple correlation as follow:

$$\begin{aligned}
 R_{x_1, x_2, y} &= \sqrt{\frac{r^2 x_1, y + r^2 x_2, y - 2 (r x_1, y)(r x_2, y)(r x_1, x_2)}{1 - r^2 x_1, x_2}} \\
 R_{x_1, x_2, y} &= \sqrt{\frac{0,142 + 0,096 - 2 (0,377)(0,310)(0,278)}{1 - 0,077}} \\
 &= \sqrt{\frac{0,238 - 0,064}{0,923}} \\
 &= \sqrt{\frac{0,174}{0,923}} \\
 &= \sqrt{0,188} \\
 &= 0,433
 \end{aligned}$$

Next the researcher measured the MDC (Multiple Correlation Determinant) after getting multiple correlation coefficients:

$$\text{MDC} = R_{X_1X_2Y} \times 100\%$$

$$\text{MDC} = 0.433^2 \times 100\%$$

$$\text{MDC} = 18.7$$

After using manual calculation, the researcher also used SPSS 21.0 program to find the  $F_{\text{observed}}$  that can be seen in the table below:

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	688.417	2	344.209	4.407	.016 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	4764.520	61	78.107		
Total	5452.938	63			

a. Dependent Variable: Reading Comprehension

b. Predictors: (Constant), Vocabulary Size, Structure

Based on the table above, it can be seen that the result of  $F_{\text{value}}$  was 4.407. Next the researcher also found the  $F_{\text{table}}$  using the formula below:

$$df_1 = k - 1 = 3 - 1 = 2$$

$$df_2 = n - k = 64 - 3 = 61$$

So, the F table at  $df_1 = 2$ , and the  $df_2 = 61$ . After checked at the Ftable, the score of Ftable was 3.15. After that the researcher compared the  $F_{\text{observe}}$  and the  $F_{\text{table}}$ . The value  $F_{\text{observe}}$  was greater than  $F_{\text{table}}$  ( $4.407 > 3.15$ ). It meant that the Null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected and the Alternative Hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) was accepted. There was positive correlation among vocabulary size, structure and reading comprehension.

## DISCUSSION

### 1. The Correlation between Structure and Vocabulary Size

Based on the result of used SPSS 21.0 program it was indicated that vocabulary size gave contribution to structure, it meant that every improvement of vocabulary size will be followed by the improvement structure. In other word, the better students' vocabulary size then they would be better in structure. In this case there was positive correlation where  $r_{\text{observe}}$  greater than  $r_{\text{table}}$  ( $0.377 > 0.242$ ).

### 2. The Correlation between Vocabulary Size and Reading Comprehension

Based on the result of used SPSS 21.0 program it was indicated that vocabulary size gave contribution to reading comprehension, it meant that every improvement of vocabulary size will be followed by the improvement

reading comprehension. In other word, the better students' vocabulary size then they would be better in reading comprehension. In this case there was positive correlation where  $r_{\text{observe}}$  greater than  $r_{\text{table}}$  ( $0.310 > 0.242$ ).

### **3. The Correlation between Structure and Reading Comprehension**

Based on the result of used SPSS 21.0 program it was indicated that structure gave contribution to reading comprehension, it meant that every improvement of structure will be followed by the improvement reading comprehension. In other word, the better students' structure then they would be better in reading comprehension. In this case there was positive correlation where  $r_{\text{observe}}$  greater than  $r_{\text{table}}$  ( $0.278 > 0.242$ ).

### **4. Correlation among the Vocabulary Size, Structure and Reading Comprehension**

Based on the analyses, vocabulary size and structure gave contribution 18.7% to reading comprehension. It can be assumed that if a student had a good vocabulary size they would be better on reading comprehension. Also if students had good structure, it would make them easier to understand text. The value of  $F_{\text{observe}}$  was greater than  $F_{\text{table}}$  ( $4.407 > 3.150$ ). It meant that there was correlation among the vocabulary size, structure and reading comprehension. It meant that vocabulary size and structure fluent reading comprehension.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded:

1. There was positive simultaneous correlation among vocabulary size, structure and reading comprehension of EFL Students at IAIN Palangka Raya in academic year 2016. After gaining the significant values of correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) from each correlation (vocabulary size and structure, vocabulary size and reading comprehension also structure and reading comprehension) it was known that the significant value of multiple correlation ( $R$ ) from the correlation among vocabulary size, structure and reading comprehension, the score was 0,433. If it was consulted to the table of  $r$  interpretation, it meant that the value of  $R$  was included in the range value average.
2. Based on the calculation of Multiple Determination Coefficient, it was gained that the vocabulary size and structure gave contribution to reading comprehension 18.7 % and the rest is other variables.

3. After testing the  $F_{\text{value}}$  using  $F_{\text{test}}$ , it was gained that the value of  $F_{\text{observe}}$  was 4.407. Meanwhile the value  $F_{\text{table}}$  was 3.15. Based on the value of  $F_{\text{observe}}$  and  $F_{\text{table}}$ , the value of  $F_{\text{observe}}$  was greater than the value of  $F_{\text{table}}$  ( $4.407 > 3.15$ ), it meant the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant correlation among vocabulary size, structure and reading comprehension was rejected and the alternative hypothesis stating that there is significance correlation among vocabulary size, structure and reading comprehension was accepted.

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