

An Evaluation of Vocabulary Achievement of the Students of Feeder Schools of Universitas Klabat

Abstract

English vocabulary has expanded a lot in the past three hundred years. This expansion has not been limited only to scientific terms. There has been constant needs for new words to express concets or attitudes whichnewly emerged since of the change in communitiess have become more complex, there has also been corresponding growth in vocabulaty. This study evaluated vocabulaty achievement level of 641 second-year high school students from 12 feeder schools of Universitas Klabat. This study also sought to find out if there is significant difference in the test scores between:

Students studying in SDA schools and non SDA schools, students studying in porachial schools and public schools and male and female students.

The descriptive method was employed in this study. The researcher constructed his own test based on students' English text book and the input of the resource person; he also consulted the expertise in test construction. The test was then tried out and validated. The findings of the study were proved by the statistical test of significance.

Keywords: vocabulary achievement, feeder school

INTRODUCTION

The vocabulary level one attains is an indictor of one's success in education; one's vocabulary achievement is demonstrated in the way one expresses oneself. An educational authority says that a high level of vocabulary achievement is an important product of higher education (Troyka, 1987).

A person with large and rich vocabulary can successfully choose and use words and phrases that fit different situation. The abiliy to use words in effective ways is a valuable possession. The person who has this ability is able to communicate smoothly in social, education, and in business; he can accomplish more in personal goals. (Gartside, 1981).

Learning a second language or a foreign language involves learning its vocabulary. Vocabulary plays an important role in learning the four skills of English language. A person with a sufficient knowledge of vocabulary can easily comprehend the reading or listening materials. It is the same thing in speaking and writing; students with good vocabulary mastery can express themselveswell, can influence other people and can make their pupose understood well by others.

Having the ability to use oral or written English cannot be separated from the mastery of vocabulary. However, mastering vocabulary only is not enough. Applying words in daily communication is more important.

Background

Though one is highly competent in one's field of study, a mastery of English as a supporting factor is highly recommended as one venture into the real world. Factors, such as,

limitation of job openings, the flood of university graduates, and still others force people to be proficient in English to survive in the tightly competitive world today.

Students of Universitas Klabat, in particular, need to be proficient in English if they want to have a better future. They need to have sufficient vocabulary to build their competency in understanding and using the English language. However, it has been discovered, through interviews with English teachers who have taught freshmen, that freshmen at Universitas Klabat experienced difficulties in vocabulary. These freshmen have come from different high schools in Indonesia and North Sulawesi in particular. The researcher, therefore, is curious to find out the vocabulary achievement level of students at feeder schools of Universitas Klabat.

Statement of the Problem and

The main problem of this study is to measure the vocabulary level of second years high-school students from selectfeeder schools of Universitas Klabat, specifically, to find out whether there are significant differences in the students' vocabulary achievement between:

1. Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) operated schools and non-SDA operated schools.
2. Parochial schools and government schools
3. Males and Females

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study is limited to:

1. The use of content words: noun – verb – adjective – adverb
2. The second year students, 1998/1999 of the following schools:
 - 1) SMUN 1 Manado, 2) SMUN 7 Manado, 3) SMU Eben Hazer Manado, 4) SMU Rex Mundi Manado, 5) SMU Advent Manado, 6) SMU Pioneer Manado, 7) SMU Kristen Tomohon, 8) SMU Advent Tompas II, 9) SMUN 1 Tondano, 10) SMU Advent Kaima, 11) SMUN 1 Bitung, 12) SMUN II Bitung.

Methodology

The descriptive method was employed in studying the vocabulary achievement level of the students of the feeder schools of Universitas Klabat. A test was used to measure the achievement level of the students in using the following kinds of vocabulary: 1) noun, 2) verb, 3) adjective, 4) adverb.

Description of the Population

Six hundred forty-two students from 12 UNKLAB feeder schools in Kotamadya Manado, Kabupaten Minahasa, and Kotamadya Bitung. These schools were selected to be the sample population for this study because by ranking more of their graduates enrolled at Universitas Klabat than other feeder schools. They also represented Seventh Day Adventist operated schools and non Seventh Day Adventis operated schools which were easy to be reached by the researcher.

Procedure of Constructing the Test

A multiple choice completion type test was employed in this test. The researcher consulted textbooks which has been used by the second year students of high schools for test materials, and based on this source the researcher constructed his test. Authority on techniques of testing was also consulted for the test construction. He also consulted resource persons included English teachers of Universitas Klabat for the test draft. This is considered enough for the face validity of the test.

Test Tryout

After permission was secured from Kanwil P & K Sulawesi Utara and the Director and English teacher of SMU Negeri 1, Airmadidi, the researcher tried out the test early in April, 1999 to 18 students of SMU Negeri Airmadidi, Minahasa who were not included in sample population to be studied.

Validity of the Test

The test validity was based on two factors namely: 1) Item difficulty, and 2) Index of discrimination. Index of Difficulty of the present test range from .22 - .77 while the Index of Discriminating Power range from .20 – 1.00.

Reliability of the Test

The Pearson Moment Product Coefficient using the split-half method was applied in computing the reliability of the half test. The Spearman Brown formula was then applied to compute the reliability of the whole test. Correlation coefficient of the half test is .98, and the reliability coefficient of the whole test is .99 which is very high. Therefore the 44-item test was valid and reliable.

Administration of the Test

The forty four-item test was administered to 641 second year students of twelve schools during the months of April, May, and June 1999.

Criterion for Marketing

Ruhupatty (1987) citing Ahmann & Glock, Tuckman, Said that: “Indices for a test used for marking should have 50 – 75 percent correct answers.” Since the researcher decided to classify the students into three levels of ability, Gorow’s concept was clear enough to be the base for such classification. The researcher’s decision was clear confirmed by Ruhupatty (1987), citing Jean Edades, an authority if English teaching in the Philippines who said that the cut-off point should be entirely at the examiner’s discretion.

The mean scores in the subsets were converted to percentage skores to facilitate their interpretation against the the levels of performance set at these cut-off-points: Highly competent – above 75% correct; fair 50 – 75% correct; least – below 50% correct.

To find out if there is any significant in the test scores between different variables, the z-test was applied.

Findings

Problem one. What is the ability level of the students of UNKLAB's feeder schools in identifying vocabulary?

1. SMU Negeri 1, Manado

In this school, 49 students or 57% of the population is highly competent; twenty two students or 25% of the students are average, and 16 students or 18% of the students are least competent in vocabulary achievement.

2. SMU Negeri 7, Manado

Fourteen students or 13% of the population was highly competent 28 students or 32% of the whole population was average, and 47 students or 52% of the population was least competent.

3. SMU Kristen 1, Tomohon

Fourteen students or 28% of the total students are highly competent; fifteen students or 30% of the whole population are average, and 21 students or 42 of the whole population are least competent.

4. SMU Negeri 1, Tondano

In vocabulary as a whole, 9 students or 14% of the total students are highly competent; 19 students or 31% of the whole population are average, and thirty three students or 66% of the whole population are less competent.

5. SMU Negeri1, Bitung

In vocabulary as a whole five students or 10% of the total students are highly competent; twelve students or 24% of the population are average, and thirty three students or 66% of the whole population are less competent.

6. SMU Negeri 2 Bitung

As a whole 4 students or 8% of the whole population were highly competent; 6 students or 13% of the population were average, and 37 students or 79% of the students were less competent.

7. SMU Pioneer Manado

As a whole, 22 students or 30% of the population are highly competent; twenty eight students or 38% of the whole population are average, and 23 students or 32% of the population are least competent.

8. SMU Advent Klabat Manado

As a whole 8 students or 22% of the population are highly competent; 13 students or 36% of the population are fairly competent, and 15 students or 42% of the population are least competent.

9. SMU Ebenhaezer Manado

As a whole, 20 students or 48% of the population are highly competent; twelve students or 28% of the whole population are average, and 10 students or 24% of the population are least competent.

10. SMU Advent Tompaso II Minahasa

As a whole, 27 students or 73% of the population are highly competent; 6 students or 16% of the population are average, and 4 students or 11% of the whole population are least competent.

11. SMU Advent Kaima Minahasa

As a whole, 14 students or 58% of the whole population are highly competent; six students or 25% of the whole population are average, and four students or 17% of the whole population are least competent.

12. SMU Rex Mundi Manado

As a whole, 25 students or 58% of the whole population are highly competent; eleven students or 26% of the whole population are average, and 7 students or 16% of the whole population are least competent.

The ability level of UNKLAB feeder schools as a whole in identifying vocabulary is presented in the following table 1 and figure 1.

The result of the test indicates that a simple majority or 61% of the whole population were competent (highly competent + average), while only 38% of the whole population were least competent

Table 1
Distribution of Students Unklab Feeder Schools As a whole in the Three Ability Levels in the Four Categories In Identifying Vocabulary as Converter to Percentage Scores

Ability Level	Category	Percentage
Above Average	noun	35%
	verb	40%
	adjective	33%
	adverb	32%
Average	noun	33%
	verb	21%
	adjective	33%
	adverb	22%
Below Average	noun	32%
	verb	39%
	adjective	34%
	adverb	45%

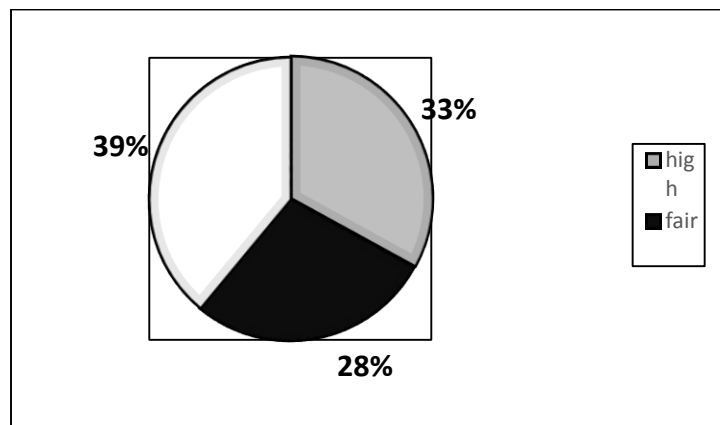


Figura 1
The Distribution of the Ability Level
Of UNKLAB Feeder Schools Students as a Whole in
Identifying Vocabulary as Converted to Percentage Scores

However, when student from feeder schools study in Universitas Klabat it has been found that they are least competent in vocabulary. This phenomenon seems to be the difference in cut-of point. The cut of point used in this study is 50% and below – least competent; 50 – 75% is average; 75 – 100% is highly competent. While the cut of point in the grading system in Universitas Klabat is 67% and below is least competent; 67 – 90 is fairly competent, and 97 – 100%[^] is considered highly competent. Ruhupatty (1997), assessed the speaking ability of the Freshmen at Universitas Klabat during second semester, 1995/1996 found that in the category of vocabulary, 6.52% of the population was highly competent; 25% fairly competent; and 68.48%, least competent. This fact gives additional information concerning these phenomena.

Problem Two

2a. the difference in the test scores between student studying in SDA schools and non SDA schools.

There is significant difference in the test scores between students studying in SDA schools and non SDA schools. Mean scores of students in SDA schools is 62.00 while the mean scores of students studying in non SDA schools is 54.85. the testof significance indicated that the obtained value is 3.52 which is larger than the critical z value of 1.96. this than indicated that the hypothesis is rejected.

Some factors might make the difference such as students studying in SDA schools spent more time out side classroom practicing English; Sometimes they also used English in religious activities could be another factor.

2b. The difference in the test scores between students studying in parochial schools and in public schools.

There is significance in the test scores between students studying in parochial schools and students studying in public schools. The mean scores of students studying in parochial schools is 62.56, while the mean scores of students studying in public schools is 51.44. the difference was proved to be significant by statistical test.

Some of the students of the Parochial schools are dormitory students where the environment is conducive for students to practice English in general particularly to build better vocabulary. Fifty percent of the numbers of feeder schools under this study were parochial schools.

2c. The difference in the test scores between male and female students

There is no significant difference in test scores between male and female students. There is very small difference in mean scores between male and female students and this fact was proved to be true by the test of significant. This finding is confirmed by Ruhupatty (1997). In assessing the effect of interactive method on reading comprehension of the freshmen at Universitas Klabat in 1996, she found out that there was no significant difference in the test scores between males and females.

The main reason is the fact that there is no difference in the interest in studying English between males and females in this particular study. Likart Scale was applied to find the mean scores of these two groups of students. Z-test was then applied to prove the fact that there is no significant difference in interest in studying English between male and female students. Other reason for this might be that male students now realize more fully the importance of English language in this era of globalization. This could motivate them to put more efforts in studying English.

Conclusion

From the findings the following conclusions are drawn:

1. The distribution of students' test scores was not normal. Students of UNKLAB feeder schools were least competent in their ability to identify vocabulary.
2. Time allocation for vocabulary emphasis may not have been enough in teaching learning activities.
3. Students' interest in studying English can predict their achievement in identifying vocabulary.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions the following recommendations are presented:

1. That the same study be done using more numbers of vocabulary of each category.
2. That a similar study can replicate this study, using a different research design.
3. That the same study be done using a different population.
4. That effort be made to find the best method possible in teaching vocabulary.
5. That a similar study be done using the cut-of point similar to the UNKLAB' grading system.

Nathan Ruhupatty has taught various English subjects such as Linguistics, Language Acquisition, and General English at Universitas Klabat.

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