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THE CORRELATION BETWEEN STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT IN VOCABULARY AND READING COMPREHENSION AT THE EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS OF SMP SWASTA SANTO YOSEPH MEDAN

Abstrak

Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk mengetahui hubungan antara penguasaan kosakata siswa dengan pencapaian pemahaman membaca mereka di kelas VIII SMP Swasta Santo Yoseph Medan pada tahun ajaran 2024/2025 yang terdiri dari empat kelas. Penulis mengambil 40 siswa sebagai sampel penelitian ini secara acak. Instrumen yang digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data adalah tes. Tes tersebut digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data pencapaian siswa dalam kosakata dan pemahaman membaca. Teknik yang digunakan untuk menganalisis data adalah uji normalitas, analisis statistik Regresi Linear, dan *Pearson Product Moment* dengan menggunakan *Statistical Product and Service Solution* (SPSS). Hasil uji hipotesis menunjukkan bahwa koefisien korelasi adalah 0,668 pada tingkat signifikansi 5%. Karena r hitung lebih besar dari r tabel ($0,668 > 0,312$) maka H_0 ditolak. Dapat disimpulkan bahwa terdapat hubungan yang signifikan antara pencapaian siswa dalam kosakata dengan pemahaman membaca pada siswa kelas VIII SMP Swasta Santo Yoseph Medan pada tahun ajaran 2024/2025. Ini menyiratkan bahwa ketika siswa mendapatkan nilai tinggi dalam kosakata, mereka cenderung mendapatkan nilai tinggi dalam pemahaman membaca juga.

Kata Kunci: Korelasi, Kosakata, Pemahaman Membaca.

Abstract

This study was conducted to find out the correlation between the mastery of students' vocabulary achievement and their reading comprehension achievement in the eighth grade of SMP Swasta Santo Yoseph Medan in the academic year 2024/2025 which consists of four classes. The writer took 40 students as samples of this research by random. The instrument in collecting data is the test. The test was used to collect data of the students' achievement in vocabulary and that in reading comprehension. The techniques used to analyze the data are normality test, Linear Regression Statistical analysis, and Pearson Product Moment by using Statistical Product and Service Solution (SPSS). The hypothesis test results showed that the correlation coefficient is 0.668 at 5%. Since the r count is higher than r table ($0,668 > 0,312$) it means that H_0 is rejected. It can be concluded that there is a significant correlation between students' achievement in vocabulary and that in reading comprehension at the eighth-grade students of SMP Swasta Santo Yoseph Medan in the Academic year of 2024/2025. It implies that when students get high score in vocabulary, they tend to have high score in reading comprehension as well.

Keywords: Correlation, Vocabulary, Reading Comprehension.

INTRODUCTION

English is one of the most important subjects taught at almost all levels of education. One of the primary goals of learning English is to develop the ability to communicate in the language. According to Pavlovskaya et al. (2022), mastering the English language involves more than just improving vocabulary and grammar skills; it also requires cultivating comprehensive language proficiency across multiple domains, including listening comprehension, verbal communication, reading comprehension, and written expression.

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Learning English is a complex process that emphasizes various language skills, which include listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Through reading, students can understand written language and expand their vocabulary.

According to Tsang (2023), reading is a crucial element that plays a vital role in the educational process. Those who frequently engage in reading activities tend to develop a broader understanding of various topics and subjects. Reading also has important benefits in daily life. Strong reading skills form the foundation for obtaining information in society and for personal development in today's modern era. The ability to access and comprehend information is fundamentally dependent on possessing a strong command of language and vocabulary. According to Liando et al. (2022), reading is a process used by readers to extract the message the writer intends to convey through a sequence of words or language. Reading is an important activity because it allows students to understand written language and enhance their vocabulary. Effective reading requires concentration to achieve optimal results. The purposes of reading as a language skill include: (1) seeking knowledge on a specific subject or issue; (2) expanding one's vocabulary; (3) acquiring instructions necessary to perform tasks related to work or daily life; and (4) improving overall comprehension. One of the types of reading skills is reading comprehension. This skill enables readers not only to understand the content but also to analyze it and provide judgments based on their experience and knowledge, thereby creating a deeper understanding. Reading comprehension is crucial for students, as these skills will be needed throughout their academic journey and beyond, especially as tools for learning various scientific fields.

Agistiawati & Asbari (2020) emphasize that a solid grasp of vocabulary plays a crucial role and significantly contributes to an individual's ability to effectively comprehend and understand the English language. Vocabulary development is a key factor that must be considered in the English learning process. The richer the vocabulary, the greater the chance of understanding and using English proficiently in reading, writing, listening, or speaking contexts. This affects the quality of language mastery they possess. In education, language is one of the most important subjects. Therefore, an emphasis on acquiring a strong vocabulary is crucial for facilitating a more comprehensive and effective understanding of English.

Previous research on this topic has been conducted by various authors. Valentina (2017), in her research titled "The Correlation Between Students' Vocabulary Achievement and Reading Comprehension," examined the relationship between vocabulary achievement and reading comprehension among eleventh-grade students at SMA Islamiyah Pontianak. The results revealed that the students' mean vocabulary score was 76.09, while their mean reading comprehension score was 75.04. Crucially, the study found a moderate positive correlation of 0.563 between vocabulary achievement and reading comprehension. This correlation was statistically significant, as the obtained r -value of 3.043 exceeded the critical r -table value of 2.086, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis and acceptance of the alternative hypothesis.

Another study by Larasaty and Nurwalis (2019), titled "The Correlation Between Students' Vocabulary Mastery and Their Achievement in Reading Comprehension," focused on tenth-grade students at SMK AS-SAKIENAH. The findings indicated a positive correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension, with a correlation coefficient of 0.84089, which falls within the high to very high range (0.80 to 1.00). This suggests that as students' vocabulary mastery improves, their reading comprehension also tends to improve significantly. In other words, students with stronger vocabulary proficiency are more likely to excel in reading comprehension.

SMP Swasta Santo Yoseph Medan is one of the private middle schools in Medan. English is a compulsory subject taught twice a week at this school, with each session lasting 90 minutes, totaling 180 minutes per week. According to the Ministry of Education and Culture (2017), English language instruction is intended to develop students' communicative competence in interpersonal, transactional, and functional texts through both spoken and written forms of English. This implies that students are expected to enhance their vocabulary mastery by improving their communicative competence. However, based on the curriculum, vocabulary mastery is one of the key components that every student at SMP Swasta Santo

Yoseph must acquire. If students fail to master English, particularly in reading, as outlined in the Merdeka curriculum, it suggests that the English learning process is not effective. To achieve the required passing grade of 80 points in English, students' abilities must meet the curriculum standards.

Based on the author's observations during an internship at SMP Swasta Santo Yoseph Medan, especially with first-year students, several challenges were identified: some students had poor vocabulary mastery, some were unable to understand vocabulary within sentence contexts, some lacked confidence in mastering vocabulary, and others struggled with reading comprehension in English.

In light of the issues outlined above, it can be concluded that vocabulary mastery plays an essential role in students' reading comprehension skills. Adequate vocabulary is needed to understand word meanings and build a comprehensive understanding of a text. Therefore, this study is crucial in identifying the extent to which vocabulary acquisition contributes to students' reading comprehension. By examining the strength of the relationship between these two variables, valuable insights can be gained to develop more effective teaching strategies to improve vocabulary and reading skills simultaneously. The author hopes that this study can provide practical implications for both teachers and students in the English teaching and learning process.

METHOD

Research involves a structured and methodical approach aimed at solving problems and generating new information that has broad applicability. According to Gupta (2022), research is a structured inquiry that employs acceptable scientific methodology to ensure the validity and reliability of its findings. This research falls under the category of quantitative research. Quantitative research aims to investigate and establish relationships between two types of variables: the independent variable, which is manipulated or altered by the researcher, and the dependent variable, whose values fluctuate based on changes in the independent variable. As described by Sugiyono (2019), quantitative research follows the philosophy of positivism and is grounded in empirical, objective evidence. It emphasizes scientific principles such as objectivity, measurability, and systematic analysis. Quantitative research seeks to quantify phenomena using numerical data to uncover patterns and relationships.

In this study, a correlational research method is employed. According to Sugiyono (2019), correlational research is characterized by the examination of relationships between two or more variables. The goal is to determine whether there is a significant correlation between the variables and, if so, to what degree. The specific focus of this research is on investigating the relationship between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension. Initially, a vocabulary test is conducted to assess the validity and reliability of the test items. The data analysis used SPSS 26, beginning with a normality test to ensure data distribution followed a normal curve, followed by a linearity test to confirm the relationship between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation measured the strength of this relationship, with hypothesis testing validating the results...

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The study commenced in July 2023, involving a random sampling method to ensure a representative sample of 40 students, selected from four eighth-grade classes. This sampling method, which involved choosing students based on odd and even numbers from the class roster, was designed to maintain randomness and reduce potential bias. The subsequent sections will detail the data collected from these students, analyze the findings, and discuss their implications concerning the research question.

The reliability of the vocabulary mastery test was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, yielding a coefficient of 0.890, indicating a high level of internal consistency. This value falls within the "good" to "excellent" range, suggesting that the items consistently measure the intended construct. In terms of validity, 31 out of 40 items (77.5%) were classified as valid based on their correlation coefficients exceeding the critical R-value of 0.304, while 9 items (22.5%) were deemed invalid. The analysis revealed that the valid items effectively contribute

to measuring vocabulary mastery, thereby enhancing the instrument's reliability and supporting the validity of the study's conclusions.

The results indicated a diverse range of student performance in both vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension. For vocabulary mastery, scores ranged from 50.00 to 96.67, with the most frequently occurring score being 83.33, achieved by 7.5% of the sample. This suggests a slight skew towards higher performance. In terms of reading comprehension, scores also ranged from 50.00 to 96.67, with a concentration of scores around the 80.00 mark, where 20% of the sample scored. Overall, the data reflect a strong performance across the assessed areas, with significant implications for understanding the relationship between vocabulary achievement and reading comprehension within this student population.

Tabel 1. The Pearson Product Moment

R result	N	Df =N-2	R-table	
			5%	1%
0.668	40	38	0.320	0.413

The observed correlation coefficient of 0.668 indicates a strong positive relationship between vocabulary and reading skills, surpassing critical values for statistical significance at both the 5% and 1% levels. This finding allows us to confidently reject the null hypothesis, which posits no correlation. The strength of this correlation suggests that as students' vocabulary scores increase, their reading scores also tend to rise, and vice versa, highlighting an important association in educational outcomes. The significance level of .000 further confirms that this relationship is not a result of random chance, reinforcing the notion that vocabulary mastery plays a critical role in enhancing reading comprehension. However, while the correlation is strong, it is essential to recognize that it does not imply causation; other factors may simultaneously influence both variables. The correlation coefficient falls within the range indicating a significant connection, with values approaching 1 indicating stronger relationships. In summary, the analysis reveals a meaningful association, suggesting that effective vocabulary development could be pivotal in improving reading skills, thereby offering valuable insights for educators and literacy researchers. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted, emphasizing the interdependence of vocabulary and reading comprehension achievement among students.

The findings of this study reveal a significant correlation between vocabulary achievement and reading comprehension among eighth-grade students at SMP Swasta Santo Yoseph Medan. The analysis yielded a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.668, indicating a strong positive relationship between these two variables. This suggests that students who excel in vocabulary acquisition tend to have higher reading comprehension levels, while those with lower vocabulary scores typically struggle with reading comprehension as well. According to the correlation interpretation table, a coefficient of 0.668 falls within the strong correlation range of 0.60 to 0.79. Furthermore, the significance test results demonstrate that this correlation is statistically significant, as the calculated r value of 0.668 exceeds the critical r table value of 0.320 at a significance level of 0.05 with 38 degrees of freedom. These findings align with previous research in language acquisition and literacy development, reinforcing the critical role of vocabulary mastery in enhancing reading comprehension skills among students.

From the result of the analysis, it is clear that there is a strong correlation between vocabulary achievement and reading comprehension achievement. Vocabulary is actually the basis of the four language skills. Each language skills for example listening requires adequate vocabulary stock in order to understand the meaning of the utterances being heard without sufficient vocabulary we cannot understand what is being spoken. Other language skills also need vocabulary stock to make the learning work well. As a result the teaching of vocabulary should be emphasized in the classroom since it becomes the basis to continue other language skills such as reading, writing, speaking and listening. When one has enough vocabulary it will not be difficult for him to follow other language skills. Vocabulary holds strong role in learning English.

CONCLUSION

This research examines the significant correlation between vocabulary achievement and reading comprehension among eighth-grade students at SMP Swasta Santo Yoseph Medan. The analysis reveals a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.668, exceeding the critical value of 0.320 at a significance level of 0.05, indicating a strong positive relationship. This suggests that as students' vocabulary knowledge increases, their reading comprehension skills also improve. The average scores for vocabulary (75.08) and reading comprehension (77.08) further reinforce this connection. Overall, the findings highlight the importance of vocabulary development in enhancing reading comprehension, supporting existing theories in language learning and literacy development.

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