Intelligibility of English Vocabulary for Young Learners in EFL

by Cek Turnitin

Intelligibility of English Vocabulary for Young Learners in EFL Context: Digital Book Vs Printed Book on Listening and Pronunciation Skills

Suhartawan Budianto[1], Nur Sayidah[2], Sucipto[3], Nurul Qomariah[2], Anjangsari Khaida Asaro[2], Wahyu Fajar Setiawan[4]

[1]English Department, Faculty of Letters, Dr. Soetomo University, Surabaya 60118, Indonesia
[2]Accounting Department, Faculty of Economics and Business, Dr. Soetomo University, Surabaya 60118, Indonesia
[3]Education Technology Department, Faculty of Education, Dr. Soetomo University, Surabaya 60118, Indonesia
[4]Informatics Engineering Department, Faculty of Engineering, Dr. Soetomo University, Surabaya 60118, Indonesia

Abstract

This study explores young learners' intelligibility of English vocabulary for young learners in the EFL context using Digital Books vs Printed Books which focus on listening and pronunciation skills. The intelligibility was measured from listening tests. The research is an experimental study with a pretest–posttest control group design. Sixty-one out of 156 elementary level from grade 4th were taken randomly thirty students belonged to the control group while another thirty belonged to the experimental group. This study applied the Mann-Whitney Test. The result showed that young learners with digital books outperformed listening and pronunciation for young learners in the EFL context. In short, digital books with listening and pronunciation are very beneficial for young learners in acquiring EFL vocabulary.

Keywords: Intelligibility, Vocabulary, Young Learners

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INTRODUCTION

Numerous study of English vocabulary has attracted many researchers to find out the best practice in both in EFL and ESL context (Abdullah, 2020; Boyinbode, 2018; Dakhi & Fitria, 2019; Elaish, Ghani, et al., 2019; Elaish, Shuib, et al., 2019; Fithriani, 2021; Hadj Said et al., 2018; Kacetl & Klímová, 2019; Klimova, 2019; Klimova & Polakova, 2020; Kohnke, 2020; Kohnke et al., 2019;Makoe & Shandu, 28; Nicolaidou et al., 2021; Putri, 2022; Sari & Aminatun, 2021; Sayakhan & Bradley, 2019; Sooryah & Soundarya, 2020; Statti & Villegas, 2020; Taghizadeh & Hasani Yourdshahi, 2020; Teng, 2020; Yang et al., 2020). Sadly, a little attention is concerned to young learners' vocabulary (Budianto et al., 2022b, 2022a; C. M. Chen, Chen, et al., 2019, 2019; C. M. Chen, Liu, et al., 2019; R. W. Chen

& Chan, 2019; Elyas & Al-Bogami, 2019; Larson et al., 2020; Leong et al., 2019; Novanti & Suprayogi, 2021; Puimege & Peters, 2019; Song & Ma, 2021; Vartiainen et al., 2020).

EFL young learners acquire new vocabulary by listening and watching NOT writing or even reading. Unlike adult learners, young learners prefer pictures audiovisuals like to study new vocabulary and like flashcards (R. W. Chen & Chan, 2019), digital story-telling (Leong et al., 2019), iPad tablet (Elyas & Al-Bogami, 2019), and the newest one; Artificial Intelligence (Vartiainen et al., 2020). Sometimes, Young learners even don't know how to write the word but they can recognize it.

It can be inferred that having sufficient vocabulary depends on how well EFL young learners' listening skills (Al-Shamsi et al., 2020; Aldukhayel, 2021; Bourdeaud'hui et al., 2021; Dung, 2021; Ghanbari & Hashemian, 2014; Ghonivita et al., 2021; Listiani et al., 2021; Syafii et al., 2020; Tan et al., 2020; Thi & Nhat, 2021; Tsang, 2022; Wah, 2019). Various techniques and methods have been applied to examine the appropriate ones in teaching listening for young learners. The results of previous studies report that most techniques and methods used are very effective to assist the young learners' listening skill (Dung, 2021; Ghanbari & Hashemian, 2014; Listiani et al., 2021; Tan et al., 2020). Few weaknesses relating to listening are also found like anxiety (Kormos et al., 2020; Wah, 2019), and motivation (Bourdeaud'hui et al., 2021; Tan et al., 2020). Listening new vocabulary for EFL young learners deals with how to pronounce the word correctly. Previous studies also claim pronunciation is one of prominent roles in acquiring vocabulary (Aratusa, 2019; Candan, 2020; Cox et al., 2019; Febrianto, 2021; GHOUNANE, 2019; A. P. Gilakjani et al., 2019; P. Gilakjani et al., 2020; Pennington & Rogerson-Revell, 2019; Playsted & Burri, 2021; Reid & Debnarova, 2020; Vančová, 2019).

A few teachers and learners may argue that pronunciation is a trivial matter in learning a language but not for young learners. EFL university students state that as long as the pronunciation is intelligible, it can be said it is good (Candan, 2020). In fact, pronunciation is not easy not only for young learners (Asmaradhani et al., 2019; A. P. Gilakjani et al., 2019; P. Gilakjani et al., 2020; Yürük, 2020), but also for university students (Candan, 2020; GHOUNANE, 2019; Zafary, 2021), English teachers (Astina;, 2020; Bai & Yuan, 2019; Cox et al., 2019; Febrianto, 2021; A. P. Gilakjani et al., 2019; P. Gilakjani et al., 2020). A little attention for teaching

pronunciation leads misinterpretation in comprehending a word. The main goal of foreign language learning is to be a native-like.

Young learners don't need to be good at writing at the beginning of acquiring language. They are supposed to have adequate listening skills which leads to improve their speaking ones (Kormos et al., 2020), metacognitive (Bourdeaud'hui et al., 2021; Kormos et al., 2020), and pronunciation (Tsang, 2022).

Previous studies of learning vocabulary sadly haven't applied the long-term effect how young learners retain new word they learn. Only few studies concern the long-term effect (Leong et al., 2019; Novanti & Suprayogi, 2021; Puimege & Peters, 2019; Song & Ma, 2021) while others have focused on the short term effect has become the focus from the recent studies to examine the effectiveness of learning vocabulary (Budianto et al., 2022b, 2022a; C. M. Chen, Chen, et al., 2019, 2019; C. M. Chen, Liu, et al., 2019; R. W. Chen & Chan, 2019; Elaish, Ghani, et al., 2019; Elaish, Shuib, et al., 2019; Elyas & Al-Bogami, 2019; Putri, 2022).

The vocabulary mastery of the EYL can be measured from two indicators; visual (Budianto et al., 2022b, 2022a; C. M. Chen, Chen, et al., 2019, 2019; C. M. Chen, Liu, et al., 2019; R. W. Chen & Chan, 2019; Elaish, Ghani, et al., 2019; Elaish, Shuib, et al., 2019; Leong et al., 2019; Makoe & Shandu, 2018; Nicolaidou et al., 2021; Novanti & Suprayogi, 2021; Putri, 2022), and sound where is usually dealing with pronunciation (Agarwal & Chakraborty, 2019; Alkhawaldeh & Khasawneh, 2021; Aratusa, 2019; Kissová, 2020; Kralova & Kucerka, 2019; Mahdi & Khateeb, 2019; Najeh & Khafajy, 2019; Saldıraner & Cinkara, 2021; Shanmugavelu & RK Sundaram, 2020)

English teacher has a very crucial role in developing students' speaking. One of the elements of speaking is pronunciation. In the EFL context, the teacher quality has to get careful attention. Moreover, a study showed that EYL's parents suggest to emphasizing on native-like pronunciation from English teachers (Bozsó & Nagy, 2018). Through the previous studies of teachers' and students' pronunciation have indicated some factors which affect the pronunciation quality as so-called RP (received pronunciation) like institutional sociocultural context (Bozsó & Nagy, 2018), motivation (Aratusa, 2019; Astina;, 2020; Reid & Debnarova, 2020), error correction (Couper, 2019; Febrianto, 2021; A. P. Gilakjani et al., 2019; P. Gilakjani et al., 2020; Quoc et al., 2021; Reid & Debnarova, 2020). In short, English teachers have a crucial role to better students

pronunciation since a teacher with a good theoretical background can raise students awareness and performance in pronunciation (Vančová, 2019).

Consequently, teaching English vocabulary is mispronouncing words may lead to misinterpretation for EYL. Later, it leads young learners' vocabulary improvement. This research focused on students listening skills through visual (pictures) and audio (listening of word's pronunciation). The aim of this study was to find whether visual (pictures) and audio are beneficial for young learners listening skills in EFL context.

METHODS

This research used experimental study with pretest–posttest control group design. Sixty one out of 156 elementary level from grade 4th were taken randomly which thirty students belonged to the control group while another thirty belonged to the experimental group. The pre-test was given to ensure the homogeneity among the sample. This research used True Experimental Design so that the researcher was able to control all external variables that influence the ongoing experiment in a hope that the research design implementation had high quality. Post-test was conducted to find out whether there are significant differences between the two groups (with and without audiovisual vocabulary) or not. After the treatment group had received vocabulary teaching using audiovisual vocabulary as learning media, the posttest was a listening test. In the post-test, students were given 25 questions using quizzes application from the listening test.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The test of normality revealed that the p-value of the use of digital book is 0.00 which is less than 0.05 and the p-value of the use of printed book was also 0.02 which is less than 0.05. Therefore, it can be stated that the data was not normally distributed. To find whether the use of digital book and printed book are significantly different, the Mann Whitney test was applied.

Figure Example

Table. Test of Normality on Post-Test

Score	Method	N	KS	P-Value	Distribution
Total	Digital Book	31	0,245	0,000	Not normal
	Printed Book	30	0,174	0,021	Not normal

To compare the effect of the use of digital book and printed one, the Mann Whitney Test was performed on post-test. The results of the computation showed p-value is 0.00 which is less than 0.05, so it indicates that there is a significant difference between the use of digital book and printed book where the median score of the use of digital book (88) is higher than printed book (74). This also shows that

the students taught by use of digital book have a better listening and pronunciation skills than taught by printed book without listening and pronunciation materials.

Table. Mann Whitney Test on Post-Test

Method	N	Median
Digital Book	31	88
Printed Book	30	74

W = 673.000
P-Value = 0,00

The results of this study derived from post-test by using vocabulary tests conclude that the use of digital book with listening and pronunciation is significant. The result is in line with the previous studies saying that young learners prefer pictures audiovisuals like to study new vocabulary and like flashcards (R. W. Chen & Chan, 2019), digital story-telling (Leong et al., 2019), iPad tablets (Elyas & Al-Bogami, 2019), and the newest one; Artificial Intelligence (Vartiainen et al., 2020). Sometimes, young learners even don't know how to write the word but they can recognize it. However, the use of flashcards and other media frequently performs the two pieces of information like pictures and their names simultaneously in the EFL context. Surely, it is contradictory to the concepts of this study where EFL young learners acquire new vocabulary by listening and watching NOT writing or even reading (Budianto et al., 2022b, 2022a). The most inportant target in teaching vocabulary for EFL young learners is that they can recognize the vocabulary. It can be conducted by two sensory details; seeing and hearing.

Hearing is similar to listening skills in learning language. Relating to listening skills, this study shows definitely that listening has a crucial role in helping students understand new vocabulary. A similar finding reports that having sufficient vocabulary depends on how well EFL young learners' listening skills (Al-Shamsi et al., 2020; Aldukhayel, 2021; Bourdeaud'hui et al., 2021; Dung, 2021; Ghanbari & Hashemian, 2014; Ghonivita et al., 2021; Listiani et al., 2021; Syafii et al., 2020; Tan et al., 2020; Thi & Nhat, 2021; Tsang, 2022; Wah, 2019). Moreover, the results of previous studies report that most techniques and methods used are very effective in assisting young learners' listening skills (Dung, 2021; Ghanbari & Hashemian, 2014; Listiani et al., 2021; Tan et al., 2020). However, a few weaknesses relating to listening are also found like anxiety (Kormos et al., 2020; Wah, 2019),

and motivation (Bourdeaud'hui et al., 2021; Tan et al., 2020). The weaknesses of young learners listening skills reported by the previous studies were caused probably classical ways to present the vocabulary lesson like uncolorful pictures and no audio to show the way to pronounce correctly. EFL young learners' listening skills influences their pronunciation abilities. Most EFL young learners have got incorrect pronunciation when learning vocabulary.

Correct pronunciation is the main fundamental in learning pronunciation for young learners. The result of this study also in accordance with the previous studies reporting that pronunciation is one of prominent roles in acquiring vocabulary (Aratusa, 2019; Candan, 2020; Cox et al., 2019; Febrianto, 2021; GHOUNANE, 2019; A. P. Gilakjani et al., 2019; P. Gilakjani et al., 2020; Pennington & Rogerson-Revell, 2019; Playsted & Burri, 2021; Reid & Debnarova, 2020; Vančová, 2019). Unfortunately, pronunciation is assumed as a trivial matter in acquiring new vocabulary in EFL. Consequently, EFL teachers have to be aware of it. In short, listening new vocabulary for EFL young learners deals with how to pronounce the word correctly for searching long-term effects and having a standard English dealing RP (received pronunciation). One of the reasons why English pronunciation is not easy is that some English phonemes are not found in EFL young learners' native language. Indonesian young learners of English are not familiar with phonemes such /θ/, /δ/, /ʧ /, /dʒ/, /ʒ/, and /ʃ/.

In fact, previous studies claim pronunciation is not easy not only for young learners (Asmaradhani et al., 2019; A. P. Gilakjani et al., 2019; P. Gilakjani et al., 2020; Yürük, 2020). It is in agreement with the finding of the study where pronunciation skills are correlated to listening skills of a young learners in acquiring vocabulary. It means when a student has a difficulty in listening, he also has a problem in pronunciation in EFL. It happens since the way student pronounce a word is not like what it should be pronounced.

In addition, what found in the study match the previous finding saying that the vocabulary mastery of the EYL can be measured from two indicators; visual (Budianto et al., 2022b, 2022a; C. M. Chen, Chen, et al., 2019, 2019; C. M. Chen, Liu, et al., 2019; R. W. Chen & Chan, 2019; Elaish, Ghani, et al., 2019; Elaish, Shuib, et al., 2019; Leong et al., 2019; Makoe & Shandu, 2018; Nicolaidou et al., 2021; Novanti & Suprayogi, 2021; utri, 2022), and sound where is usually dealing with pronunciation (Agarwal & Chakraborty, 2019; Alkhawaldeh & Khasawneh, 2021; Aratusa, 2019;

Kissová, 2020; Kralova & Kucerka, 2019; Mahdi & Khateeb, 2019; Najeh & Khafajy, 2019; Saldıraner & Cinkara, 2021; Shanmugavelu & RK Sundaram, 2020).

Shortly, teaching vocabulary should concern aspects such as visual and audio ones. The visual methods are showing interesting colorful pictures which attract young learners. Furthermore, it also has to be supported by the correct way to pronounce the words. English teachers have a crucial role to better students pronunciation since a teacher with a good theoretical background can raise students awareness and performance in pronunciation (Vančová, 2019). Finally, teaching English vocabulary is mispronouncing words may lead to misinterpretation for EYL. Later, it leads young learners' vocabulary improvement and becomes the obstacles in students listening and speaking.

CONCLUSION

Teaching English vocabulary for EFL young learners should focus on two prominent aspects; visual and audio where visual represented by the pictures while audio represented by listening and pronunciation to measure young learners' intelligibility. To show a new vocabulary in EFL context, young learners should be taught how the word is pronounced correctly through listening NOT by showing the spelling of the word. When, the young learners have recognized the new vocabulary and the way how to pronounce it, the spelling of the word can be taught. Having a good listening and pronunciation skills would not lead the misinterpretation of the word's meaning in students' speaking and writing ability in the future. Consequently, the presence of digital book with listening and pronunciation are very beneficial for young learners in acquiring EFL vocabulary.

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