



The Correlation between Vocabulary Knowledge and English Language Proficiency at Undergraduate Level

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ABSTRACT

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between undergraduate English language students' vocabulary knowledge and language proficiency. The population of the study was the English department students at the University of Lahore. The sample was taken from the fifth to eighth semesters using cluster sampling. Through a vocabulary test, the size of the productive vocabulary, the size of the receptive vocabulary, and the depth of knowledge of the vocabulary were all found to significantly correlate with speaking performance. In multiple regression analyses, vocabulary knowledge was found to be the cause of 26% of the variance in speaking proficiency. The sig. (two-tailed) coefficient of the relationship between the two factors, and a correlation coefficient R value of 0.784 at the 0.05 level of significance was deemed strong. It is expected that there was a strong positive connection between the vocabulary information and under-studies language capability. The regression explains a consolidated effect of vocabulary knowledge on students' language proficiency. Vocabulary knowledge is positively correlated with language proficiency, according to the findings. Pedagogical implications and suggestions for future research are presented on the basis of the findings of the study.

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1. Introduction

Language proficiency is essential for many aspects of human life, including education, employment, and social interactions, particularly in the form of efficient communication. The acquisition of a second language is a fundamental requirement for undergraduate programs in Pakistan, with the goal of providing students with the skills they need for academic and professional success. Speaking proficiency is highly valued among the various language skills because it enables individuals to express their thoughts, participate in discussions, and actively participate in academic and social contexts. Vocabulary information, a fundamental part of the language competence, assumes a huge part in the improvement of talking abilities in a subsequent language. The purpose of this proposal is to investigate the connection between undergraduate students' proficiency in speaking and their vocabulary knowledge in Pakistan. The significance of vocabulary knowledge for speaking proficiency in a second language is emphasized in Pakistani research. As indicated by M. T. A. Gurmani, Latiff, Abbasi, Jatoi, and Shahid (2023) vocabulary information contributes essentially to communicate in language creation and generally capability. A Study by Batool (2019); Shahid, Jatoi, Gurmani, and Saif (2023) study of undergraduate students in Pakistan found a positive correlation between speaking proficiency and vocabulary size.

In the context of Pakistan, these findings highlight the significance of vocabulary knowledge in improving speaking skills in a second language. Besides, studies have likewise revealed insight into explicit elements of vocabulary that essentially influence talking capability

among Pakistani college understudies. According to Z. Ahmed, Shah, M. S., & Anwar, S. (2017) and Shahid, Gurmani, Rehman, and Saif (2023) investigation of the connection between speaking performance and vocabulary depth, university students' speaking proficiency was significantly predicted by vocabulary depth. Furthermore, Ghauri (2014) featured the job of collocations and colloquial articulations in advancing talking capability in a moment language among Pakistani students. When looking into the connection between vocabulary knowledge and speaking proficiency, these studies emphasize the need to take into account a deep vocabulary, productive and receptive vocabulary.

1.1. Statement of Problem

N. Ahmad, & Iqbal, I. (2017) have featured the meaning of vocabulary profundity in foreseeing talking execution among college understudies, underscoring the requirement for a nearer assessment of the particular parts of vocabulary information that add to talking capability. Furthermore, the impact of language learning techniques on the connection between vocabulary information and talking capability in the Pakistani setting remains generally neglected. In spite of the fact that Aslam (2020) have laid out a positive connection between vocabulary learning methodologies and talking capability among Pakistani college understudies, further examination is important to comprehend what explicit techniques can upgrade vocabulary information and consequently mean for talking capacities (Shahid, Abbasi, & Bhutto, 2022). As a result, the issue that this study aims to address is the requirement for a comprehensive investigation into the connection between vocabulary knowledge and speaking proficiency in a second language in Pakistani undergraduate programs. In particular, it is necessary to investigate the particular aspects of vocabulary knowledge, including depth, breadth, and the application of efficient language learning strategies, as well as their effect on Pakistani undergraduate students' speaking proficiency.

1.2. Significance of the Study

This study will add to the existing literature on second language vocabulary acquisition and speaking proficiency, particularly in Pakistani undergraduate programs. Effective pedagogical approaches to improving vocabulary knowledge and speaking proficiency will be guided by an understanding of the influence of language learning strategies. The findings of the research will be of use to curriculum developers and policy makers in the creation of language programs that place an emphasis on the acquisition of vocabulary and speaking skills.

1.3. Research Questions

The following research questions have been articulated for this study:

- What is the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and speaking proficiency in a second language among undergraduates?
- Which specific dimensions of vocabulary contribute significantly to speaking proficiency in a second language?
- To what extent the vocabulary knowledge is associated with the proficiency in second language learning?

2. Literature Review

Language proficiency is necessary for effective communication in a variety of settings, including social interactions, employment, and education. The acquisition of a second language is an essential requirement for undergraduate programs in Pakistan that aim to provide students with the necessary skills for academic and professional success. Speaking ability is highly valued among the various language skills because it enables individuals to express their thoughts, participate in discussions, and actively participate in academic and social contexts. Speaking skills in a second language are greatly influenced by vocabulary knowledge, which is an essential component of language proficiency. The purpose of this proposal is to investigate the connection between undergraduate students' proficiency in speaking and their vocabulary knowledge in Pakistan.

2.1. Vocabulary Knowledge

Knowledge of vocabulary is an essential component of language proficiency and is necessary for many language skills, such as speaking, reading, and writing. Due to the significance of vocabulary in effective communication, vocabulary knowledge is essential in the Pakistani context M. T. Gurmani, Salmani, Shahid, Abbasi, and Ali (2022). The goal of this

literature review is to look at research on vocabulary knowledge among undergraduate students in Pakistan. The difficulties and factors that influence undergraduate students' vocabulary knowledge have been the focus of Pakistani research. Vocabulary development is hampered significantly by a lack of exposure to English-speaking contexts. A concentrate by Ali (2017) uncovered that Pakistani college understudies confronted provokes in vocabulary procurement because of an absence of openness to English-talking conditions. This finding highlights the significance of providing authentic language experiences and meaningful language input to improve vocabulary knowledge (M. T. Gurmani et al., 2022).

In the context of Pakistan, the effect of instructional practices on vocabulary knowledge has also been investigated. A concentrate by S. Khan, & Zainab, A. (2018) examined the viability of various vocabulary showing procedures among Pakistani college understudies. The findings suggested that context-based activities and explicit vocabulary instruction like word lists improved vocabulary knowledge. The significance of employing effective instructional strategies to encourage vocabulary acquisition is emphasized by these findings (Muhammad, Shahid, & Gurmani, 2023). In addition, the Pakistani context has been examined to determine the impact of technology-assisted vocabulary learning. Computer-based vocabulary learning programs have been studied for their ability to improve undergraduate students' vocabulary knowledge. For instance, a study by M. Khalid, & Khan, N. A. (2019) demonstrated that computer-based vocabulary learning helped undergraduate students in Pakistan acquire vocabulary. In the Pakistani context, these findings highlight the potential of technology to improve vocabulary knowledge (Shahid, Gurmani, et al., 2023). In addition, research has been conducted in Pakistan on the connection between reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge. Research has shown that vocabulary information altogether adds to perusing appreciation abilities among college understudies. A positive correlation between reading comprehension performance and vocabulary knowledge among Pakistani undergraduate students was found in a study. These discoveries underscore the significance of vocabulary information for generally language capability.

Additionally, a topic of investigation has been the Pakistani vocabulary knowledge assessment. The development and validation of vocabulary tests to accurately assess vocabulary knowledge have been the primary areas of research. A vocabulary test developed and validated by M. Ahmad, Zainab, A., & Akhtar, S. (2017) specifically targeted undergraduate students from Pakistan. The test was found to be reliable and valid, making it a useful tool for evaluating Pakistani vocabulary knowledge.

2.2. Language Proficiency

Speaking, listening, reading, and writing are just a few of the many language skills that make up language proficiency. Inside the Pakistani setting, understanding language capability is essential because of the different etymological scene and the significance of English as a worldwide language. The purpose of this literature review is to investigate the studies on language proficiency in the Pakistani context, with an emphasis on undergraduate students' speaking proficiency.

The factors that influence speaking proficiency have been the subject of numerous studies that have looked at language proficiency among Pakistani undergraduate students. Concerns have been raised regarding Pakistani students' English language proficiency. According to a study by (R. M. I. Khan, Radzuan, Shahbaz, Ibrahim, & Mustafa, 2018), inadequate pedagogical practices and limited exposure to the target language made it difficult for Pakistani undergraduate students to achieve optimal English speaking proficiency. These discoveries underline the requirement for compelling showing strategies and expanded openness to English language settings to improve talking capability (Shahid et al., 2022). The impact of socio-social variables on talking capability in the Pakistani setting has likewise been investigated. Afzal (2016) analyzed the effect of social standards on the advancement of talking abilities among Pakistani college understudies. Students' confidence and willingness to engage in oral communication can be affected by cultural factors, such as societal expectations and gender roles, according to the study. Such factors should be thought about while planning language projects to advance talking capability (Shahid et al., 2022).

In addition, research into the Pakistani context has examined the role of language learning strategies in the development of speaking proficiency. M. Khalid, & Javed, M. (2017) investigated the connection between speaking proficiency among Pakistani undergraduate students and language learning strategies. The results showed that speaking proficiency improved when effective strategies like practice and interaction were used. In order to improve speaking abilities, these findings highlight the significance of incorporating appropriate language learning strategies into language instruction. Besides, innovation helped language learning (TALL) has acquired consideration as a way to work on talking capability among Pakistani college undergraduates. Computer-assisted language learning (CALL) programs have been studied for their ability to improve speaking skills. For example, M. Khalid, & Khan, N. A. (2019) directed a review that showed the positive effect of CALL programs on talking capability among Pakistani college undergraduates (Shahid, Gurmani, et al., 2023). Based on these findings, it appears that incorporating technology into language instruction can offer authentic speaking practice opportunities and boost speaking proficiency.

The evaluation of speaking proficiency in the context of Pakistan has also been the focus of research. The development and validation of speaking proficiency tests has been the primary focus of research. A speaking test developed and validated by Z. Ahmed, Shah, M. S., & Anwar, S. (2017) specifically targeted undergraduate students from Pakistan. The test was found to be reliable and valid, making it a useful tool for determining speaking proficiency in Pakistani.

2.3. Relationship between Vocabulary and Language Proficiency

When learning a second language, vocabulary knowledge and speaking proficiency are crucial for effective communication. Understanding the connection between vocabulary information and talking capability among undergrad programs in Pakistan is critical for streamlining language guidance and improving undergraduates' language abilities. This writing survey plans to investigate the current exploration on the connection between vocabulary information and talking capability in the Pakistani setting.

A few examinations have explored the connection between vocabulary information and talking capability among Pakistani college undergraduates. For example, Batool (2019) led a review zeroing in on vocabulary information and talking capability among Pakistani EFL students. The discoveries showed a positive relationship between's vocabulary information and talking capability, recommending that a bigger vocabulary collection adds to better talking abilities. This study features the meaning of vocabulary information for talking capability among college undergraduates in Pakistan. A crucial aspect of speaking proficiency has been identified as the depth of vocabulary knowledge, in addition to overall vocabulary size. Ahmad and Iqbal (2017) investigated the connection between Pakistani university students' speaking performance and vocabulary depth. Speaking proficiency was positively influenced by a deeper comprehension of vocabulary, including word meanings, collocations, and idiomatic expressions, according to the study. These discoveries stress the significance of fostering a nuanced and broad vocabulary information base for viable talking abilities.

In addition, research has explored the impact of language learning procedures on the connection between vocabulary information and talking capability. Aslam (2020) inspected the connection between vocabulary learning systems and talking capability among Pakistani EFL students. Speaking proficiency was found to be positively correlated with the use of vocabulary learning strategies like word association and contextual guessing. These results show that effective language learning strategies help undergraduate students in Pakistan improve their speaking proficiency by increasing their vocabulary knowledge (M. Ahmed, Shahid, Ali, Akmal, & Arif, 2022). Additionally, exposure to real-world language situations has been shown to improve speaking and vocabulary knowledge in students. According to R. M. I. Khan et al. (2018), limited exposure to English-speaking environments is a barrier to vocabulary acquisition and speaking proficiency among Pakistani undergraduate students, who face difficulties speaking English. This features the significance of setting out open doors for significant language openness and cooperation to upgrade vocabulary information and talking abilities among college undergraduates in Pakistan. Generally, the current writing proposes a positive connection between vocabulary information and talking capability among undergrad programs in Pakistan. Improved speaking abilities are aided by a broader vocabulary repertoire, a deeper comprehension of vocabulary, and the application of efficient methods for language teaching (Abbasi, Shahid, & Shah, 2022). Additionally, speaking proficiency and vocabulary acquisition are significantly influenced by exposure to authentic language contexts.

3. Methodology

This study has used a correlational design as suggested by (Stæhr, 2008, 2009) to analyze the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and language proficiency in an attempt to relate various parts of vocabulary knowledge to estimate language competence. Through cluster sampling technique 100 hundred students from the English department were selected from the University of Lahore (25 from each semester 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th). To measure the receptive, productive vocabulary and its depth and its relationship with the proficiency of the students' three instruments were used as suggested by (Stæhr, 2008).

- Receptive Vocabulary Levels Test (RVLT) by Schmitt, Schmitt, and Clapham (2001).
- Productive Vocabulary Levels Test (PVLТ) by Laufer and Nation (1999)
- Word Associates Test (WAT) by Read (2000)

Three testing sessions were used because there were three clusters. Pearson coefficients were determined to figure out the relationship among the deliberate parts of vocabulary information. Finally, in order to ascertain the extent of the influence that various aspects of vocabulary knowledge have on speaking performance, stepwise multiple regression analyses were carried out.

4. Research Findings

4.1. Descriptive and Reliability Statistics

The Table 1 shows the means, standard deviations, score ranges, Maximum Possible Scores (MPS) and reliability coefficients are the statistics chosen for reporting.

Table 1: Descriptive and Reliability Statistics

	Mini	Maxi	MPS	Mean	St.Dev	Reliability
.RVLT	14	65	91	46.50	11.50	.79
.PVLТ	13	35	64	30.86	8.70	.80
.WAT	28	90	154	67.90	17.83	.84

The Shapiro-Wilk normality tests for each of the three variables and the assumption of normality based on the values of Skewness and kurtosis have been reported in Table 3 of three tests: RVLT = receptive vocabulary levels test, PVLТ =productive vocabulary levels test, and WAT = word associates test.

Table 2: The Statistics of Normality

	Skewness		Kurtosis		Shapiro-Wilk		
	value	Std. Error	value	Std. Error	Statistic	n	p
.RVLT	.434	.346	.223	.625	.967	100	.245
.PVLТ	.001	.346	.148	.625	.963	100	.268
.WAT	.534	.346	.434	.625	.978	100	.128

The receptive vocabulary level test and word association test had moderate positive Skewness (.434 and.534), as shown in Table 2. Nonetheless, the p values got from the Shapiro-Wilk tests demonstrated that the appropriation of cases for every variable is near being typical, since Shapiro-Wilk tests didn't uncover measurable importance for any of the factors.

Q 1: What is the Relationship between Vocabulary Knowledge and Speaking Proficiency in a Second Language among Undergraduate Students in Pakistan?

Table 3: The Calculation of Pearson Product Moment Correlation

Vocabulary	Pearson Correlation	1	.784**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
Speaking	Pearson Correlation	.784**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	100

*significant at 0.01(2-tailed)

In light of the computation by utilizing SPSS 26 Program, it was tracked down that r-value = 0.784. It indicated that Ho was rejected while Ha was accepted. As shown in the table below,

the result of R value = 0.784 was found to be significantly higher than R table = 0.361 at df 98 with a significance level of 5 percent and 0.462 at df 98 with a significance level of 1 p.

Table 4: The Calculation of Pearson Product Moment Correlation

Variable	R value	R table		Df=n-2
		5%	1%	
X – Y	0.784	0.361	0.462	98

Then, the rvalue was consulted with the table of the interpretation coefficient correlation as follows.

Table 5: Correlation

Interval Coefficient	Level of Correlation
-0.80	Very strong
-0.60	Strong
-0.40	Moderate
-0.20	Weak
-0.00	Very weak (No correlation)

(Arikunto, 2014)

In this manner, coefficient relationship Rvalue = 0.784 was sorted areas of strength for into. It intended that there was a huge positive relationship between vocabulary dominance and talking skill.

Q 2: Which Specific Dimensions of Vocabulary Contribute Significantly to Speaking Proficiency in a Second Language?

The Pearson correlations were calculated and the table 6 shows the results.

Table 6: Pearson correlations Results

Test	RVLT	PVLT
WAT	.87*	.75*
RVLT	-	.84*

** Significant at $p < .001$ (2-tailed)

Receptive and productive vocabulary sizes are both significantly correlated with vocabulary knowledge depth ($p.001$), as shown in Table 2. The correlation coefficient for receptive vocabulary size was .87, indicating a strong connection between a learner's vocabulary knowledge depth and receptive vocabulary size. The correlation for productive vocabulary size was slightly lower, at .75, but the strength of the relationship is still very strong. Accordingly, in light of the examination, the two distinct parts of vocabulary size should be considered as having serious areas of strength for similarly with the profundity of vocabulary information. In addition, there is a strong correlation between receptive vocabulary size and productive vocabulary size, as shown by the Pearson correlation ($r = .84, p = .001$).

Q 3: To What Degree the Vocabulary Knowledge is Associated with the Proficiency in Second Language?

All of the measured aspects of vocabulary knowledge were found to have low to moderate correlations with the participants' speaking performance, according to the correlation analyses. In light of this finding a stepwise direct various relapse examination was led to decide the singular commitments of every part of vocabulary information. The outcomes should be visible in Table 6.

Table 7: Pearson Correlation Results

Test	RVLT	PVLT	WAT
Proficiency	.42*	.38*	.35*

* Significant at $p < .01$ (two tailed)

The regression shows impact of vocabulary information on language capability 26% (25.6%) of the total change. The equation's explanation of variance increased by 4% when productive vocabulary was included (F change = 2.712, $p.05$), bringing the total variance to

18.4% (stepwise regression, F change = 6.653, p.05). The size of the responsive vocabulary was added to the model in the last step, and the aggregate sum of made sense of variety changed marginally (F change = .464, p .05). The receptive vocabulary's size increased by 2.5% more.

Table 8: Multiple Regression

Procedure	Variables	R ²	R ² (change)
Variables		.256*	.256*
Step 1	. WAT	.138*	.114*
Step 2	. PVLТ	.184*	.058*
Step 3	. RVLT	.256*	.025*

* Significant at $p < .05$ (two tailed).

4.2. Discussion

It has also been acknowledged that language learning strategies have an effect on vocabulary knowledge and speaking proficiency in the context of Pakistan. According to R. M. I. Khan et al. (2018), language learning strategies play a crucial role in the development of speaking and vocabulary skills. A positive correlation between vocabulary learning strategies and speaking proficiency among Pakistani undergraduate students was discovered in a study by (Aslam, 2020). This suggests that Pakistani learners can improve their vocabulary and speaking skills through the use of effective language learning strategies.

A similar study by González-Fernández (2017) have proven that depth and breadth of contribute to language proficiency. Various studies by Milton, Wade, and Hopkins (2010) and Johnson, Acevedo, and Mercado (2016) have shown the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and language competence. Similar relationship have also been observed by Uchihara and Saito (2019) and Uchihara and Clenton (2020). A study by Aristi, Prawati, and Maria (2016) has shown that high level of vocabulary is a strong predictor of language proficiency. Further studies by Seffar (2015); (2018); Uzer (2017) have also shown a strong correlation between vocabulary and English language proficiency.

Past exploration led in the Pakistani setting gives a few experiences into the connection between vocabulary information and talking capability. Undergraduate students in Pakistan have shown a positive correlation between vocabulary size and speaking proficiency in studies like (Batool, 2019). These discoveries recommend that a bigger vocabulary collection can add to worked on talking abilities. Nonetheless, these investigations have principally centered on the relationship between in general vocabulary size and talking capability, without diving into the particular elements of vocabulary information that might strangely affect talking capacities.

Research demonstrates that vocabulary information is firmly connected to generally language capability (Schmitt, 2014). Vocabulary addresses the lexical assets accessible to people for correspondence, and it gives the establishment to communicating thoughts, figuring out others, and building sound sentences. With regards to second language obtaining, vocabulary assumes a vital part in powerful talking. As students grow their vocabulary, they get close enough to a more extensive scope of words and articulations, empowering them to explain their contemplations and participate in significant discussions. Hence, vocabulary information goes about as a facilitator for communicated in language creation and capability.

The connection between second language acquisition speaking proficiency and vocabulary knowledge has been the subject of numerous studies. There has always been a positive correlation between these two variables, according to the findings. For instance, Laufer and Nation (1999) research with people learning a second language found that having a solid vocabulary significantly improved speaking proficiency. Similar findings were presented by Liu and Nation (1985), who discovered that students' speaking abilities improved when they had a greater vocabulary. The significance of vocabulary knowledge in facilitating spoken language production and proficiency is highlighted in these studies (Shahid, Gurmani, et al., 2023). There has been little research on the connection between speaking proficiency and vocabulary knowledge in Pakistani undergraduate programs. While a few examinations have inspected language capability as a general rule, less examinations have explicitly centered on the connection between vocabulary information and talking capability in the Pakistani undergrad setting. Thusly, there is a need to research this relationship to acquire bits of knowledge into the

particular difficulties and elements of vocabulary obtaining and talking capability among college understudies in Pakistan (Shahid, Gurmani, et al., 2023).

This study also focuses on gaining an understanding of the specific aspects of vocabulary that significantly influence speaking proficiency. According to Nation (1994), vocabulary is a complex construct that includes word knowledge, word use, collocations, and idiomatic expressions. The specific dimensions that have a significant impact on speaking proficiency can provide educators and curriculum developers with valuable information. Educators can assist students in developing the vocabulary knowledge necessary for effective spoken language production by focusing on targeted vocabulary instruction (M. T. A. Gurmani et al., 2023).

Another important aspect of this study to take into consideration is how language learning strategies affect vocabulary knowledge and speaking proficiency. According to Oxford (1992), language learning strategies are cognitive and metacognitive processes that students use to enhance their language learning experiences. According to Dang, Webb, and Coxhead (2022); (Mukhtar et al.) ESL learners tactics may have a significant impact on vocabulary acquisition and speaking proficiency. Exploring the impact of language learning methodologies in the Pakistani undergrad setting can give bits of knowledge into successful educational methodologies that advance vocabulary procurement and talking capability (M. T. A. Gurmani, Yusoff, & Shahid, 2021).

5. Conclusion and Implications

Pakistani undergraduate programs place a significant emphasis on the connection between vocabulary knowledge and speaking proficiency in a second language. Restricted research has been directed in this particular setting, justifying further examination. By investigating the particular components of vocabulary that add to talking capability and inspecting the effect of language learning techniques, this exploration proposition intends to give important bits of knowledge to teachers, educational plan engineers, and policymakers. In the end, this study's findings will help improve language learning and teaching practices, which will help undergraduate students improve their spoken language proficiency. In conclusion, the difficulties and factors that influence undergraduate students' vocabulary knowledge are highlighted by Pakistani-based research. The integration of technology, instructional practices, and a lack of exposure to English-speaking environments have been identified as significant factors. Additionally, the connection between reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge has been emphasized. To improve undergraduate vocabulary knowledge among Pakistani students, it is suggested that valid vocabulary assessments be developed and that effective instructional strategies be implemented.

It is necessary to conduct additional studies to investigate additional factors and interventions that have the potential to improve vocabulary knowledge in the Pakistani context. All in all, research led inside the Pakistani setting features the difficulties and elements affecting talking capability among college understudies. Restricted openness to the objective language, social standards, and lacking academic practices have been distinguished as possible boundaries. This study has implications for the language teachers, curriculum planners and plicy makers in the area of second language teaching and learning to more focus on the development of students' vocabulary knowledge in order to develop their competence in second language learning. The utilization of successful language learning systems, coordination of innovation helped language learning, and the improvement of substantial talking evaluations are prescribed to upgrade talking capability. Further research is expected to investigate extra factors and intercessions that can add to the improvement of talking capability among Pakistani college students.

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