

AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON THE ROLE OF
VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE IN ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE
(EFL) LISTENING COMPREHENSION

Approved

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Lo Giudice". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the beginning.

Date: March 30, 2015

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VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE IN ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE
(EFL) LISTENING COMPREHENSION

A Seminar Paper

Presented to

The Graduate Faculty

University of Wisconsin-Platteville

In Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirement for the Degree

Masters of Science

in

Education

Adult Education

by

Wang Suping

2015

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I express my deepest gratitude to all those whose kindness and advice have made this work possible.

Firstly, I am greatly indebted to my advisor Tom Lo Guidice, PhD who gave me valuable instructions and has improved my English language expression.. His effective advice and shrewd comments have kept the project in the right direction.

Then, I would like to thank my husband, for his assistance with the data processing and analysis. His constant encouragement helped me to fulfill the paper successfully.

Finally, thanks also go to my fellow workers, whose help guaranteed the proper collection of data.

ABSTRACT:

Existing literature supports the positive effects of vocabulary teaching on students' comprehensive English proficiency. However, there have been some imperfections in the research process such as the research framework being somewhat narrow and the statistical instruments being a little conservative, which makes it difficult to form differentiated instructional strategies aimed at different levels of students. Therefore, this paper, based on mature vocabulary testing instruments, incorporates vocabulary breadth, depth, listening comprehension into one study framework and conducts an empirical study by innovatively using quantile regression models, so as to analyze the relationship between the two vocabulary dimensions and listening comprehension at different levels of students. The study results offer important pedagogical implications to English vocabulary teaching strategies in EFL classes.

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Chapter One Introduction

Virtually every scholar of language recognizes that vocabulary knowledge is the basis and precondition for studies in second language acquisition. Many studies have shown that vocabulary knowledge is an important factor for successful reading comprehension in EFL (e.g. Hu & Nation 2000; Mecarty 2000; Qian 2002).

However, few studies have explored the relationship between lexical knowledge and listening comprehension, especially the listening comprehension in EFL. Thus, teachers and students have been long puzzled about the exact role that vocabulary knowledge plays in L2 listening comprehension.

Many researchers have pointed out that vocabulary usually involves two dimensions of breadth and depth (e.g. Qian, 1999; Read, 1993). However, among the few studies about vocabulary and listening, more attention has been put on the effect of vocabulary breadth. Recently, more and more researchers tend to acknowledge the essential role of vocabulary depth in listening. Nevertheless, not a few empirical studies have been conducted on the exact roles of vocabulary breadth and depth in EFL listening comprehension

The emphasis in the study is on both dimensions of vocabulary knowledge. The analysis emphasis will be on the role of vocabulary knowledge related to listening comprehension.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to provide a review of the research literature related to the role of vocabulary knowledge in listening comprehension and then to conduct an experimental study to test the respective effect of vocabulary breadth and depth on different parts of listening comprehension so as to provide an empirical support for vocabulary teaching in EFL listening class.

Significance of the Study

The study on the role of vocabulary knowledge in listening comprehension for EFL learners is important to the practice of vocabulary teaching in EFL listening classes. This empirical research will provide teachers and students with a relatively complete understanding about the correlation between vocabulary and listening, and

thus enhance their awareness about the importance of vocabulary in listening and help improve their teaching and learning methods in terms of vocabulary. The study will also be of importance to others seeking information related to this topic.

Definition of Terms

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

Vocabulary Breadth: the size of a learner's vocabulary, that is, the number of words for which the learner has at least some knowledge of meaning (Staeher, 2009)

Vocabulary Depth: relates to how well one knows a word and is defined as the quality of lexical knowledge that reflects how well a learner knows individual words and how well words are organized in the learner's mental lexicon. (Staeher, 2009)

CET 4: College English Test held nationally twice a year for non- English majors in China

Delimitations of Research

The research was conducted through the Karrmann library at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville. The University of Wisconsin System search tool was used utilizing the services of Karrmann Library. The service that started fall 2013 allows a scholar to search all university libraries in the state. Primary searches were also conducted through EBSCO host with ERIC and Academic Search Elite and via the Internet Google/Google Scholar as the primary sources.

The subjects chosen for this experiment were sophomores majoring in medicine from an average medical college in China. In this college, the students are divided into level A classes (covering 30% of the enrollment) and level B classes (the left 70%) according to their English proficiency. All the samples are from B classes.

Method of Approach

To conduct a brief literature review about the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and listening comprehension, and then to summarize and synthesize the recent relevant studies.

To design an empirical experiment consisting of three pen-and-paper tests: vocabulary levels test (Nation, 1990), productive levels test (Laufer & Nation, 1999) and CET-4 listening comprehension test. The quantitative research methods of Pearson Correlations analysis and a Multiple Regression Analysis programmed in SASS 9.3 will be employed as the primary analysis tools for the data collected.

Chapter Two Literature Review

It has long been recognized that there are many dimensions of vocabulary knowledge. Among the varying dimensions, breadth and depth are two primary dimensions of vocabulary knowledge. (Nation, 2001.) So the few studies about the relationship between lexis and listening mainly focus on the correlation of the two lexical dimensions and listening comprehension.

A popular claim is that vocabulary knowledge is the main obstacle to successful listening comprehension for EFL learners (Kelly, 1991), but this claim has not been fully supported by empirical results. Bonk (2000) investigated the relationship between knowledge of lexis in listening texts and gist comprehension of the texts. Fifty-nine Japanese university students of low-intermediate to advanced English ability were tested using first-language recall protocols as comprehension measures, and dictation as measures of lexical familiarity. The research was based on four texts of increasing amounts of low-frequency lexical words. The two variables were found to be only moderately associated (45%). Good comprehension frequently occurred with text-lexis familiarity levels at 90+ percent levels. But the study results also show that some learners obtained good comprehension although they knew less than 75% of the word types in the text and other learners knew more than 90% of the word types but did not obtain good comprehension. Bonk relates this finding to learners' ability with comprehension strategies, but "part of the explanation may be attributed to the measures used to assess word knowledge and listening comprehension" (Staehr, 2008, p.140). So this study by Bonk offered an equivocal result about the relationship between lexis and listening comprehension.

A slightly clearer picture is found by Milton, Wade and Hopkins (forthcoming), who investigated the relationship between two receptive vocabulary size measures (the X_Lex and the A_Lex) and the IELTS test with 29 EFL learners. The study produced modest, significant Spearman correlations between vocabulary size (the X_Lex) and the reading and listening components of IELTS (0.54 and 0.52, respectively).

“An important issue in studies of how much vocabulary is needed to read a text or listen to a movie is what amount of text coverage is needed for adequate comprehension to be likely to occur ” (Nation, 2006, p.61) . Hu and Nation (2000) examined the relationship between text coverage and reading comprehension for non-native speakers of English with a fiction text, finding that a 98% text coverage would be needed for most learners to gain adequate comprehension. Then, Nation (2006) reported on the trialing of fourteen 1,000 word-family lists made from the British National Corpus, and used these lists to see what vocabulary size is needed for unassisted comprehension. In this study Nation transferred this 98% lexical coverage found in reading to listening comprehension, suggesting that a vocabulary of as much as 6000 - 7000 word families is needed to gain adequate comprehension in spoken discourse. These figures are to some extent supported by an analysis of the spoken “CANCODE” corpus conducted by Adolphs and Schmitt (2003).

A study by Staehr (2008) about vocabulary size and the skills of listening, reading and writing similarly found a substantial correlation between vocabulary size and a listening comprehension test. Vocabulary size could predict 39% of the variance in the listening scores and 6000-7000 word families have been suggested for adequate listening. Staehr’s another study (2009) got the result that a lexical coverage of 98% is needed for coping with the spoken texts that constitute the listening test.

In a recent study Zeeland and Schmitt (2012) directly investigated the lexical coverage in regard to listening comprehension, to determine whether it is reasonable to transfer the 98% text coverage got in studies about reading to listening. Results showed that most native and non-native participants could adequately comprehend the spoken texts with only 90% coverage, but the non-natives showed considerable variation at this level. At 95% coverage, non-native participants also demonstrated relatively good comprehension, but with much less variation. Based on a 95% coverage figure, language users would need to know between 2,000 and 3,000 word families for adequate listening comprehension. The figures show a little difference from Nation’s (2006) calculation of 6,000–7,000 word families based on a 98% coverage.

Although a small number of studies have provided empirical research for the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and listening comprehension in L2, few of them have focused on the depth of vocabulary knowledge.

Staehr (2009) presents an empirical study to investigate the role of vocabulary knowledge in listening comprehension with 115 advanced Danish learners of English as a foreign language. The dimensions of depth and breadth of vocabulary knowledge were found to be significantly correlated with listening comprehension. Vocabulary breadth could predict 49% of the variance in the listening scores. However, after the vocabulary depth was included in the regression model, only 51% variance in listening comprehension could be achieved. Another study by Mecartty (2000) of Denver University examined the relationship of lexical and grammatical knowledge with reading and listening comprehension by foreign language learners of Spanish, finding that lexical and grammatical knowledge were significantly correlated to listening, but only lexical knowledge explained the variance in listening (13%). The inconsistency in research results mainly comes from the different levels of participants and the measurement instruments. In Staehr's research, the participants were 115 advanced Danish learners of English as a foreign language, 40% of whom once stayed in English-speaking countries for at least 5 months. The vocabulary breadth and depth knowledge were respectively measured by the Vocabulary Levels Test by Schmitt (2001) and the Word Associates Test by Read (1993). While in Mecartty's (2000) study, the 154 participants were "from a large Midwestern university in their final semester of a four-semester basic Spanish language sequence" (p.328) and the test score was based on word-association tasks and word-antonym tasks. Taking sophomore English majors as the subjects, Zhang (2011) examined the relationship between lexical knowledge and listening comprehension of TEM4 (Test for English Majors) and found that lexical breadth accounted for 27% variance of listening comprehension, 24% variance of dictation and different variance of other parts, while the depth explained 2% variance of listening comprehension and dictation

respectively. This study result about vocabulary depth is consistent with that in Staehr's (2009) research.

From above studies, one can see that, despite the minor differences in specific figures, researchers are close to agreement on the role of vocabulary breadth in listening comprehension. However, the study results about vocabulary depth have been few and inconsistent. What's more, there have been some imperfections in the research process, such as the research framework being somewhat narrow and the statistical instruments being a little conservative, which makes it difficult to form differentiated instructional strategies aimed at different levels of students. Therefore, this paper, based on mature vocabulary testing instruments, incorporates vocabulary breadth, depth, listening comprehension into one study framework and conducts an empirical study by innovatively using quantile regression models, so as to analyze the relationship between the two vocabulary dimensions and listening comprehension at different levels of students. This study will offer important pedagogical implications to English vocabulary teaching strategies in EFL classes.

Two questions are addressed:

- 1). How are vocabulary breadth and depth correlated with listening comprehension in general.
- 2). To what extent can vocabulary breadth and depth predict the variance of listening comprehension at different English levels.

Chapter Three Teaching Improvement Project

Project Approval

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) process was sought in spring 2014. Final approval of the process described below was granted in summer 2014.

Participants

120 non-English majors (80 females and 40 males respectively) participating in this study were chosen randomly from 3 natural classes in a medical university, with some extreme cases of especially being poor in English ticked out according to their academic performances in English exams. All the participants were sophomores and from different majors ranging from clinical medicine, nursing, psychology and laboratory medicine. They used the same English textbooks and attended the same English classes twice a week taught by the same teacher and they shared similar educational background. Moreover, all of them have learned English for at least 8 years and have prepared for the coming CET 4 in December for several months. All of them were quite serious about their performances in the CET4, which would be linked to their bachelor's degree.

Instruments:

Test for breadth of vocabulary knowledge. Tests measuring vocabulary breadth in this study were based on Nation's Vocabulary Level Test (the 1990), which has been widely used in vocabulary research context and can provide a valid estimate of learners' vocabulary knowledge at the different frequency levels (Staehr, 2009). This kind of test is divided into five levels: 2000-word level, 3000-word level, 5000-word level, the university word level and 10000-word level. The 2000- and 3000-word level contain high-frequency words; the university word level represents one type of specialized vocabulary; and the 5000-word level is on the boundary of high- and low-frequency words. Finally, the 10000-word level contains low-frequency words (Nation, 1990, P. 261) and few EFL learners can achieve this level. In accordance with participants' reading vocabulary level and the requirement of Chinese New College English Syllabus (To master the vocabulary of about 4795

words and 700 phrases, of which about 2000 words are active vocabulary), the first four word frequency levels in Vocabulary Levels Test were chosen to test the participants. At each level, there are 10 groups comprising six words and three definitions. The participants are required to match the three definitions on the right with three of the six words on the left.

For example: (From 2000-word level)

1. copy
2. event (6) end or highest point
3. motor (3) This moves a car
4. pity (1) Thing made to be like another
5. profit
6. tip

The total score for this test was 120 points, with each blank one point.

Test for depth of vocabulary knowledge. Productive Levels Test (Version A) by Laufer and Nation (2001) was used to test students' vocabulary depth. Like the Vocabulary Levels Test, the Productive Levels Test involves the sample words from the same five word frequency levels. Each word level consists of eighteen sentences in which the target words are removed but the initial letter(s) given as clues to write it down. The students are required to complete the underlined words with initial letter(s) as clues according to the meaning of each sentence. Given their reading vocabulary level and the requirement of Chinese New College English Syllabus, the first four word frequency levels in Productive Vocabulary Levels Test were chosen to test the participants. In scoring the vocabulary test, each correct answer was given one point (grammar mistakes were ignored). The total score for this test was 72 points.

For example: (From 2000-word level)

“I'm glad we had this opportunity to talk.”

Listening comprehension test. In the case of listening comprehension test, the scores were extracted from CET4 held on December 19th, 2014. All the subjects took part in the test and the exam results came out in March, 2015. CET is the most formal and large-scale nationwide English proficiency test in China with relative high

validity and reliability. It is designed for all the college non-English majors who have finished the required English course to check their language proficiency after approximately one and half years' study. The Listening Comprehension part in CET-4, which takes about 30 minutes to complete and is read at the speed of 130 words per minute, contains three main sub-sections: Section A includes 15 multiple choices for short and long dialogues belonging to Listening Conversations part; Section B contains 3 short passages in the form of also multiple choices; and Section C is compound dictation requiring not only receptive knowledge but also productive knowledge. And each text is played only once, except the compound dictation which was played three times. Additionally, the accents of the recordings are native-like English, either British English or American English. The task types are ranged in multiple choice and sentence completion (see Table 1). As for the listening material selection, it is authentic and sourced from native English magazines and newspapers ranging from daily conversations, academic lectures, broadcast programs to interviews, concerning the subjects that vary from natural science and social science to humanity science, and other academic areas.

Table 1: Structure of CET-4 Listening Comprehension

Testing contents		Task type s	Score
Conversations	Short dialogues	Multiple choice	8%
	Long conversations	Multiple choice	7%
Passages	Passages	Multiple choice	10%
	Compound dictation	sentence completion	10%

The total score for listening comprehension is 35 points.

Procedures and Data Collection

Date collection was conducted through the vocabulary tests in the second week of December, 2014, the very week before the nationwide CET4. With the help of the fellow teachers, the survey was administered in regular English classes. The students were asked to finish the Vocabulary Levels Test first and then the Productive

Levels Test. Before they went down with the test, the examiners spent a span of time instructing the requirements specifically with the examples illustrated explicitly, making sure everyone tested was well equipped during the testing. When doing the vocabulary tests, the participants were asked to finish each part on their own without looking up dictionaries or turn to their classmates for help. The whole survey session was under the supervision of the English fellow teachers. The testing time for vocabulary was 60 minutes, the first 30 minutes for Nation's Vocabulary Level Test and the second 30 minutes for Productive Levels Test (Version A). After the first 30 minutes, the testing papers for vocabulary breadth were collected so that students could focus on the second test. For the sake of the effectiveness and authenticity of the experiment, the participants were told that all the tests would be documented and scored as one part of their daily evaluation which would contribute to the final score in the end of the semester.

And data for the listening test were collected at the beginning of March, 2015 after the exam results for CET4 (December. 2014) were released to public.

After all the data were collected, the quantitative research methods of Pearson Correlations analysis and a Multiple Regression Analysis programmed in SASS 9.3 were employed as the primary analysis tools for the data collected.

Chapter 4 Data Analysis and Research Results

When designing the model, the multi- correlations between the independent variables results in greatening parameter estimation interval, which is easy to make wrong judgment in hypothesis testing. Therefore, one should be first to check the presence of multi-correlations among the independent variables, generally using Spearman rank correlation coefficient index. In table 1, the correlation coefficient between breadth score (CHGD) and depth score (CHSD) is 0.758, and correlation test P value is less than 0.05, that is, reject the null hypothesis. There is significant correlation between the two independent variables, so, they are not suitable for us to establish simultaneous regression models with the dependent variable, namely listening score (TLCJ). The regression models should be established respectively. In addition, from Table 2 one can see the correlation test results between the dependent variable (TLCJ) and the two independent variables (CHGD and CHSD) show significant correlation, suitable for the establishment of regression models.

Table 2 Correlation test results between variables

Variables	breadth score	depth score	Listening score
Breadth score	1.000	0.758	0.368
depth score	0.758	1.000	0.408
Listening score	0.368	0.408	1.000

The existing research literature, when assessing the relationship between vocabulary mastery and language performance, usually employ classical least-squares linear regression method, for three reasons: linear estimate method is easy to calculate; when the random disturbance items are uncorrelated with independent variables and comply with a same-variance normal distribution whose mean is zero, the least square method shows unbiasedness, effectiveness and some other good properties; least squares provides a general method of estimating conditional mean

value function. However, the inescapable fact is that, when data show Leptokurtosis or have outliers and heteroscedastic cases, the normality, independence and variance homogeneity assumption of least squares are difficult to meet, which results in poor stability. In addition, the least squares regression assumes that the independent variables can only affect the dependent variables' conditional distribution position, but fail to depict the conditional distribution in greater detail and to describe the basic characteristics of the conditional distribution. In order to overcome the disadvantages of least squares, Koenker and Bassett in 1978 proposed the quantile regression (Quantile regression) idea. The basic thought is to perform regression to independent variables according to the conditional quantiles of dependent variables, then regression models on different quantiles are established. So, this method can accurately describe the influence of independent variables on the variation range and conditional distribution of the dependent variables, and at the same time capture the characteristics at tail distribution.

Therefore, to realize the transverse and longitudinal quantitative analysis evaluation about the relationship between vocabulary mastery and students' English listening proficiency at different English levels, this paper pioneered to introduce the concept of fractional regression to data mining and model design. The 2 model forms eventually established are shown in formula 1:

$$TLCJ = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 CHGD + \varepsilon \quad \text{Quant}_\theta(TLCJ|CHGD) = \beta_{TLCJ}^\theta CHGD$$

$$TLCJ = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 CHSD + \varepsilon \quad \text{Quant}_\theta(TLCJ|CHSD) = \beta_{TLCJ}^\theta CHSD$$

In the formula above, CHGD stands for the breadth of vocabulary, CHSD for the depth of vocabulary, and TLCJ for listening scores. $\text{Quant}_\theta(TLCJ|CHGD)$ represents the conditional quantile of TLCJ that corresponds to quantile theta ($0 < \theta < 1$) in a given case of CHGD (Liu Shenglong, 2008). And the coefficient vector β_{TLCJ}^θ corresponding to θ is estimated by minimizing the absolute deviation, i.e.:

$$\beta_{TLCJ}^\theta = \text{argmin}\{\sum \theta |TLCJ - CHGD\beta| + \sum (1 - \theta) |TLCJ - CHGD\beta|\}$$

Using Bootstrap intensive algorithm technology to achieve the estimation of regression coefficient, means obtaining samples' confidence interval by continuous sampling with replacement, thus to infer the coefficient. The estimation results from the 2 models are shown in Figure 1, Figure 2, Table 3 and Table 4.

Figure 1

Vocabulary breadth and listening scores

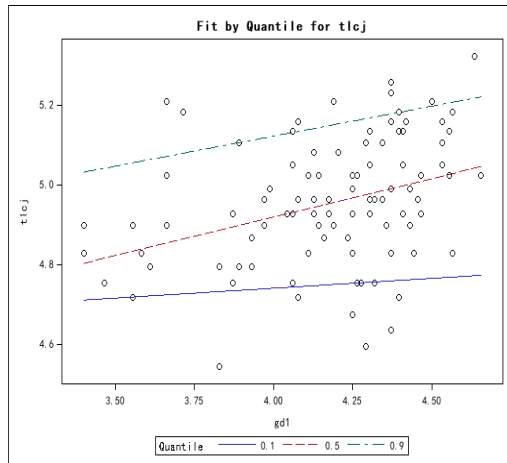


Figure 2

Vocabulary depth and listening scores

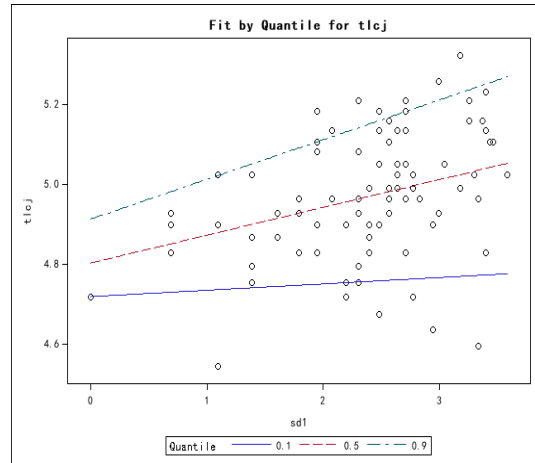


Table 3

Quantile regression results of vocabulary breadth and listening scores

quantile	variable	coefficient	S.E	the lower limit of the 95% confidence interval	the upper limit of the 95% confidence interval	P_ value
0.2	constant term	102.800	11.646	79.693	125.907	0.000
0.2	breath	0.371	0.184	0.006	0.737	0.046
0.5	constant term	111.071	9.524	92.158	129.985	0.000
0.5	breath	0.464	0.145	0.177	0.752	0.002
0.8	constant term	117.929	15.520	87.108	148.749	0.000
0.8	breath	0.643	0.203	0.240	1.046	0.002

Table 4

Quantile regression results of vocabulary depth and listening scores

quantile	variable	coefficient	S.E	the lower limit of the 95% confidence interval	the upper limit of the 95% confidence interval	P_ value
0.2	constant term	111.500	6.422	98.748	124.252	0.000
0.2	depth	1.125	0.512	0.108	2.142	0.031
0.5	constant term	130.793	4.071	122.708	138.878	0.000
0.5	depth	1.069	0.292	0.488	1.650	0.000
0.8	constant term	148.000	9.055	130.019	165.981	0.000
0.8	depth	1.300	0.624	0.060	2.540	0.040

As Table 3 and Table 4 show, the dependent variable fits the independent variables well, and in cases of 0.2, 0.5, 0.8 quantiles, the regression coefficients of the 2 models all show significance at 0.1 significance level. If the quantiles 0.2, 0.5 and 0.8 are respectively regarded as the low, the middle and the high grade levels, following conclusions can be drawn:

Conclusion one: From the transverse perspective, both vocabulary breadth and depth influenced listening scores significantly, but the overall effect of vocabulary depth was significantly greater than that of vocabulary breadth.

Conclusion two: From a vertical view, at the lower, middle, and higher levels, the enhancing effects of vocabulary breadth showed a gradual increasing trend, i.e. vocabulary breadth teaching can greatly improve the listening scores of high level students more than the scores of other two level students; while the influence of vocabulary depth shows no significant difference at three levels of listening scores.

Chapter 5 Teaching Implications

The study results above have great implications to vocabulary teaching in EFL listening classes:

Firstly, both vocabulary breadth and depth influenced listening scores significantly, so via these study results, we could help students realize the importance of vocabulary study for their listening proficiency. Secondly, in actual English classes, vocabulary teaching should appropriately tilt to vocabulary depth, requiring students not only to remember the literal meaning of words, but give enough attention to lexical collocation, semantic field, etc. Teachers should lead students to lay stress on the accumulation and mastery of active words that are listed in textbooks. Thirdly, with the advance of students' English level, teachers should strengthen the teaching of vocabulary breadth by increasing students' reading quantity and diversifying their reading materials.

The factors affecting listening comprehension are various, such as cognitive strategies, emotion, motivation, attention, etc. This paper just investigated the influence of vocabulary at two dimensions. And, limited by the testing instruments, one can only test the relationship between reading vocabulary and listening comprehension. If conditions permitting, a study can be conducted to investigate the correlations between listening vocabulary and listening comprehension, and that would be of more practical significance to EFL listening.

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Appendix A: Vocabulary Level Test (Nation, 1990)

This is a vocabulary test. You must choose the right word to go with each meaning. Write the number of that word next to its meaning. Here is an example.

- | | | |
|---|----------|---------------------------------|
| 1 | business | |
| 2 | clock | _____part of a house |
| 3 | horse | _____animal with four legs |
| 4 | pencil | _____something used for writing |
| 5 | shoe | |
| 6 | wall | |

You answer it in the following way.

- | | | |
|---|----------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | business | |
| 2 | clock | <u>6</u> part of a house |
| 3 | horse | <u>3</u> animal with four legs |
| 4 | pencil | <u>4</u> something used for writing |
| 5 | shoe | |
| 6 | wall | |

Some words are in the test to make it more difficult. You do not have to find a meaning for these words. If you have no idea about the meaning of a word, do not guess. But if you think you might know the meaning, then you should try to find the answer.

The 2000 word level

- | | | | | | |
|---|--------|-------------------------|---|----------|-----------------------------|
| 1 | copy | _____end or highest | 1 | accident | _____loud deep |
| 2 | event | _____Point | 2 | debt | _____sound |
| 3 | motor | _____this moves a | 3 | fortune | _____something you |
| 4 | pity | _____Car | 4 | pride | _____must pay |
| 5 | profit | _____thing made to | 5 | roar | _____having a high |
| 6 | Tip | _____be like
another | 6 | thread | _____opinion of
Yourself |

- | | | | | | |
|---|---------|--------------------------|---|---------|---------------------|
| 1 | coffee | _____money for | 1 | arrange | _____grow |
| 2 | disease | _____Work | 2 | develop | _____put in order |
| 3 | justice | _____a piece of | 3 | lean | _____like more than |
| 4 | skirt | _____clothing | 4 | owe | _____something |
| 5 | stage | _____using the law | 5 | prefer | _____else |
| 6 | wage | _____in the right
Way | 6 | seize | |

- | | | | | | |
|---|---------|--------------------|---|-------------|------------------|
| 1 | clerk | _____a drink | 1 | blame | _____make |
| 2 | frame | _____office worker | 2 | elect | _____choose by |
| 3 | noise | _____Unwanted | 3 | jump | _____voting |
| 4 | respect | _____Sound | 4 | threaten | _____become like |
| 5 | theater | | 5 | melt | _____water |
| 6 | wine | | 6 | manufacture | |

- | | | | | | |
|---|-------|-------------|---|---------|---------------|
| 1 | dozen | _____Chance | 1 | ancient | _____not easy |
|---|-------|-------------|---|---------|---------------|

2	empire	_____	Twelve	2	curious	_____	very old
3	gift	_____	money paid	3	difficult	_____	related to God
4	tax		to the	4	entire		
5	relief		government	5	holy		
6	opportunity			6.	social		

1	admire	_____	make wider or	1	slight	_____	beautiful
2	complain		longer	2	bitter	_____	small
3	fix	_____	bring in for	3	lovely	_____	liked by many
4	hire		the first time	4	merry		people
5	introduce	_____	have a high	5	popular		
6	stretch		opinion of	6	independent someone		

The 3000 word level

1	bull	_____	formal and	1	muscle	_____	advice
2	champion		serious	2	counsel	_____	a place
3	dignity		manner	3	factor		covered with
4	hell	_____	winner of a	4	hen		grass
5	museum		sporting event	5	lawn	_____	female chicken
6.	solution	_____	building	6	atmosphere		
			where				
			valuable				
			objects are				
			shown				

1	blanket	_____	Holiday	1	abandon	_____	live in a place
2	contest	_____	good quality	2	dwelt	_____	follow in
3	generation	_____	wool covering	3	oblige		order to catch
4	merit		used on	4	pursue	_____	leave
5	plot		Beds	5	quote		something
6	vacation			6	resolve		permanently

1	comment	_____	long formal	1	assemble	_____	look closely
2	gown		Dress	2	attach	_____	stop doing
3	import	_____	goods from a	3	peer		Something
4	nerve		Foreign	4	quit	_____	cry out loudly
5	pasture		country	5	scream		in fear
6	tradition	_____	part of the	6	toss		
			body which				
			carries feeling				

1	pond	_____	group of	1	drift	_____	suffer
2	angel		animals	2	endure		patiently
3	frost	_____	spirit who	3	grasp	_____	join wool
4	herd		serves God	4	knit		threads
5	fort	_____	managing	5	register		together
6	administration		business and	6	tumble	_____	hold firmly
			affairs				with your
							hands

1	brilliant	_____	Thin	1	aware	_____	Usual
2	distinct	_____	Steady	2	blank	_____	best or most
3	magic	_____	Without	3	desperate		Important
4	naked		clothes	4	normal	_____	knowing what
5	slender			5	striking		is happening
6	stable			6	supreme		

Academic Vocabulary

1	area	_____	Written	1	adult	_____	end
---	------	-------	---------	---	-------	-------	-----

2	contract	agreement	2	vehicle	_____ machine used
3	definition	_____ way of doing	3	exploitation	to move
4	evidence	Something	4	infrastructure	people or
5	method	_____ reason for	5	termination	goods
6	role	believing something is or is not true	6	schedule	_____ list of things to do at certain times

1	debate	_____ Plan	1	alter	_____ Change
2	exposure	_____ Choice	2	coincide	_____ say something
3	integration	_____ Joining	3	deny	is not true
4	option	Something	4	devote	_____ Describe
5	scheme	into a	5	release	clearly and
6	stability	Whole	6	specify	Exactly

1	access	_____ male or	1	correspond	_____ keep
2	gender	female	2	diminish	_____ match or be
3	psychology	_____ study of the	3	emerge	in agreement
4	license	mind	4	highlight	with
5	orientation	_____ entrance or	5	invoke	_____ give special
6	implementation	way in	6	retain	attention to something

1	edition	_____ collecting	1	bond	_____ make smaller
2	accumulation	things over	2	channel	_____ guess the
3	guarantee	time	3	estimate	number or
4	media	_____ promise to	4	identify	size of
5	motivation	repair a	5	mediate	something
6	phenomenon	broken Product _____ feeling a strong reason or need to do Something	6	minimize	_____ recognizing and naming a person or thing

1	explicit	_____ last	1	abstract	_____ next to
2	final	_____ stiff	2	adjacent	_____ added to
3	negative	_____ meaning	3	neutral	_____ concerning
4	professional	'no' or 'not'	4	global	the whole
5	Rigid		5	controversial	world
6	Sole		6	supplementary	

The 5000 word level

1	analysis	_____ Eagerness	1	artillery	_____ a kind of tree
2	curb	_____ loan to buy a	2	creed	
3	gravel	House	3	hydrogen	_____ system of
4	mortgage	_____ Small	4	maple	belief
5	scar	Stones	5	pork	_____ large gun
6	zeal	mixed with Sand	6	streak	on wheels

1	cavalry	_____ small hill	1	chart	_____ Map
2	eve	_____ day or night	2	forge	_____ large beautiful
3	ham	before a	3	mansion	house
4	mound	holiday	4	outfit	_____ place where
5	steak	_____ soldiers who	5	sample	metals are
6	switch	fight from	6	volunteer	made and

horses

- 1 circus _____musical
 2 jungle _____instrument
 3 trumpet _____seat without
 4 sermon _____a back or
 5 stool _____arms
 6 nomination _____speech
 given by a
 priest in a church

- 1 shatter _____have a rest
 2 embarrass _____break
 3 heave _____suddenly into
 4 obscure _____small
 5 demonstrate _____pieces
 6 relax _____make
 someone feel shy or nervous

- 1 correspond _____Exchange
 2 embroider _____Letters
 3 lurk _____hide and wait
 4 penetrate _____for someone
 5 prescribe _____feel angry
 6 resent _____About
 Something

shaped

- 1 revive _____think about
 2 extract _____deeply
 3 gamble _____bring back to
 4 launch _____health
 5 provoke _____make
 6 contemplate _____someone
 angry

- 1 decent _____weak
 2 frail _____concerning a
 3 harsh _____city
 4 incredible _____difficult to
 5 municipal _____believe
 6 specific

- 1 Adequate _____enough
 2 Internal _____fully grown
 3 Mature _____alone away
 4 Profound _____from other
 5 Solitary _____things
 6 Tragic

Appendix B Productive Levels Test (Version A) by Laufer and Nation (2001)

Complete the underlined words. Here is an example:

He was riding a bicycle.

* The 2000-word level

1. I'm glad we had this opp _____ to talk.
2. There are a doz _____ eggs in the basket.
3. Every working person must pay income t _____ .
4. The pirates buried the trea _____ on a desert island.
5. Her beauty and cha _____ had a powerful effect on men.
6. La _____ of rain led to a shortage of water in the city.
7. He takes cr _____ and sugar in his coffee.
8. The rich man died and left all his we _____ to his son.
9. Pup _____ must hand in their papers by the end of the week.
10. This sweater is too tight. It needs to be stret _____ .
11. Ann intro _____ her boyfriend to her mother.
12. Teenagers often adm _____ and worship pop singers.
13. If you blow up that balloon any more it will bur _____ .
14. In order to be accepted into the university, he had to impr _____ his grades.
15. The telegram was deli _____ two hours after it had been sent.
16. The differences were so sl _____ that they went unnoticed.
17. The dress you're wearing is lov _____ .
18. He wasn't very popu _____ when he was a teenager, but he has many friends now.

* The 3000-word level

1. He has a successful car _____ as a lawyer.
2. The thieves threw ac _____ in his face and made him blind.
3. To improve the country's economy, the government decided on economic ref _____ .
4. She wore a beautiful green go _____ to the ball.
5. The government tried to protect the country's industry by reducing the imp _____ of cheap goods.
6. The children's games were funny at first, but finally got on the parents' ner _____ .
7. The lawyer gave some wise coun _____ to his client.
8. Many people in England mow the la _____ of their houses on Sunday morning.
9. The farmer sells the eggs that his he _____ lays.
10. Sudden noises at night sca _____ me a lot.
11. France was proc _____ a republic in the 18th century.
12. Many people are inj _____ in road accidents every year.
13. Suddenly he was thru _____ into the dark room.

14. He perc _____ a light at the end of the tunnel.
15. Children are not independent. They are att _____ to their parents.
16. She showed off her sle _____ figure in a long narrow dress.
17. She has been changing partners often because she cannot have a sta _____ relationship with one person.
18. You must wear a bathing suit on a public beach. You're not allowed to be na _____ .

* The 5000-word level

1. Soldiers usually swear an oa _____ of loyalty to their country.
2. The voter placed the ball _____ in the box.
3. They keep their valuables in a vau _____ at the bank.
4. A bird perched at the window led _____ .
5. The kitten is playing with a ball of ya _____ .
6. The thieves have forced an ent _____ into the building.
7. The small hill was really a burial mou _____ .
8. We decided to celebrate New Year's E _____ together.
9. The soldier was asked to choose between infantry and cav _____ .
10. This is a complex problem which is difficult to compr _____ .
11. The angry crowd sho _____ the prisoner as he was leaving the court.
12. Don't pay attention to this rude remark. Just ign _____ it.
13. The management held a secret meeting. The issues discussed were not disc _____ to the workers.
14. We could hear the sergeant bel _____ commands to the troops.
15. The boss got angry with the secretary and it took a lot of tact to soo _____ him.
16. We do not have adeq _____ information to make a decision.
17. She is not a child, but a mat _____ woman. She can make her own decisions.
18. The prisoner was put in soli _____ confinement.

* The University Word List level

1. There has been a recent tr _____ among prosperous families towards a smaller number of children.
2. The ar _____ of his office is 25 square meters.
3. Phil _____ examines the meaning of life.
4. According to the communist doc _____ , workers should rule the world.
5. Spending many years together deepened their inti _____ .
6. He usually read the sport sec _____ of the newspaper first.
7. Because of the doctors' strike the cli _____ is closed today.
8. There are several misprints on each page of this te _____ .
9. The suspect had both opportunity and mot _____ to commit the murder.
10. They insp _____ all products before sending them out to stores.
11. A considerable amount of evidence was accum _____ during the investigation.
12. The victim's shirt was satu _____ with blood.
13. He is irresponsible. You cannot re _____ on him for help.
14. It's impossible to eva _____ these results without knowing about the research methods that were used.
15. He finally att _____ a position of power in the company.
16. The story tells us about a crime and subs _____ punishment.
17. In a hom _____ class all students are of a similar proficiency.
18. The urge to survive is inh _____ in all creatures.

Appendix C: Script for Listening Comprehension Part of CET 4 on Dec. 20th, 2014 (with the alternatives omitted)

Section A

Directions: In this section, you will hear 8 short conversations and two long conversations. At the end of each conversation, one or more questions will be asked about what was said. Both the conversation and the questions will be spoken only once. After each question there will be a pause. During the pause, you must read the four choices marked A), B), C), D), and decide which is the best answer. Then mark the corresponding letter on Answer Sheet 1 with a single linethrough the center.

Short conversations

1. Woman: When was the last time you dusted the apartment?

Man: When was the last time my mother came over?

Question: What does the man imply?

2. Woman: Hurry up Mark, there's a bus coming now.

Man: Why run? There'll be another one in 2 or 3 minutes.

Question: What does the man mean?

3. Man: Laura, it seems that you are up to your neck in work, how come you've been so busy?

Woman: Ms Smith has asked for a sick leave, and I have to take over her work for a couple of days.

Question: What do we learn about the woman?

4. Woman: Washing dishes at the cafeteria every day is really boring.

Man: Why don't you quit and deliver the flowers with me?

Question: What does the man suggest the woman do?

5. Woman: Rod, you said you'd take this package to the post office yesterday.

Man: Oh, no, it must have slipped my mind.

Question: What do we learn about the man from the conversation?

6. Man: I'm not surprised that you didn't like that movie. I find it really scary myself.

Woman: So did I. I don't care much for horror movies as a rule.

Question: What do we learn from the conversation?

7. Man: My life experience tells me that love is filled with happiness but it hurts you too.

Woman: Your words remind me of the saying honey is sweet but the bee stings.

Question: What do we learn from the conversation?

8.Man: How many more chairs should I bring in for the forum, six or seven?

Woman: Bring in all you can find. I'm expecting at least 20 participants.

Question: What are the speakers talking about?

Long conversations

Conversation 1

Man: Do you think there's discrimination against women in England today?

Woman: Certainly, and not just in education and work either, in many other fields as well. The tax situation for women is very unfair, for example.

Man: Are women better off in other countries then?

Woman: It depends on the country. There's certainly much less discrimination in Scandinavia, and maybe in America, too.

Man: Do you think the position of English women will improve?

Woman: In some ways it will of course. I'm sure more women will go out to work in the next 20 years. But the women have a much greater problem than this to solve.

Man: What's that?

Women: The problem of men's attitudes. We can earn more money in the future, but I'm not sure we can change men' attitudes. You see, most men really think that women are inferior. Maybe we are physically weaker, but I don't think this means we are inferior. Then there's another problem.

Man: Yes?

Women: The problem of women's attitudes. Lots of women are unhappy with their present situation, but most of them probably don't want to fight for change. It could be that the women's liberation movement has to spend more time changing women's attitudes than it spends in changing men's.

Man: One last question, some supporters of the woman's liberation movement believed that marriages should be abolished. You agree?

Women: No, I don't. It can't happen. What may and should happen is that we teach men to spend more time looking after children and doing housework.

9. Where are women said to be less discriminated against?

10. What will happen in England in 20 years according to the conversation?

11. What does the woman think the women's liberation movement should do?

Conversation 2

Man: Cheers, Shirley

Women: Cheers, Paul. What a lovely place for a business lunch. I hope I can concentrate in this heat.

Man: I will sure you will when I tell you about my ideas.

Woman: You know, I must say I was pleased to hear from you, but from what you said on the phone, everything is so sudden.

Man: Well, my father-in-law, who is also the managing director of Jayal Motors, has given me two weeks to

prepare a report on the possibility of moving into the export market.

Woman: Ah, now, just one thing Paul. Have you really thought the whole idea through?

Man: Of course I have.

Woman: Now the key thing in the whole operation is to get a good import agent, and you say the bank will help?

Man: I'm almost sure of it.

Woman: Preliminary studies are very good, Paul. But if the product can't sell, then there's little use in expanding the factory.

Man: Yes, I realize that, Shirley. But we have a very good product. The chief designer has just completed a new improved model.

Woman: I know your bikes have a very good reputation here, but you have to build up a reputation and mark it in Africa.

Man: Yes, of course. But the immediate problem is that my father-in-law wants a detailed report by next Monday. Two weeks isn't enough time to prepare a report, so I need your help.

Woman: OK, Paul, you've convinced me. I must say I admire your determination.

12. Where does the conversation most probably take place?

13. What do we learn about the man's father-in-law?

14. What does the woman think is important in the whole operation?

15. What does the woman admire in the man?

Section B

Directions: In this section, you will hear 3 short passages. At the end of each passage, you will hear some questions. Both the passage and the questions will be spoken only once. After you hear a question, you must choose the best answer from the four choices marked A), B), C), D), Then mark the corresponding letter on Answer Sheet 1 with a single line through the center.

Passage 1

Scientists know how twins were born, now though, they are trying to explain how being half of the biological pair influences a twin's identity. They want to know why many identical twins make similar choices even when they don't live near each other. For example, Jim Springer and Jim Louis are identical twins. They were separated when they were only 4 months old. The two Jims grew up in different families and did not meet for 39 years. When they finally met, they discovered some surprising similarities between them. Both men were married twice, their first wives were named Linda, and their second wives were both named Betty. Both twins named their first sons James Allen. Scientists want to know what influences are personality. They study pairs of identical twins who grew up in different surroundings, like Jim Springer and Jim Louis. These twins help scientists understand the connection between environment and biology. Researchers at the University of Minnesota, studies 350 sets of identical twins who did not grow up together. They discovered many similarities in their personalities. Scientists believed that personality characteristics such as friendliness, shyness and fears are not result of environment. These characteristics are probably inherited. Scientists continue to study identical twins because they are uncertain about

them and have many questions. For example, they want to know ‘can twins really communicate without speaking’, ‘can one twin really feel another twin’s pain’. Perhaps with more research, scientists will find the answers.

16. What are scientists trying to explain according to the passage?

17. What do we learn about the twin Jims?

18. Why are scientists interested in studying identical twins raised in different families?

Passage 2

Today I’m going to talk about tents. Camping is still one of the cheapest ways of having a holiday. And each year, over 3 million people take camping vacations, either here in Britain or abroad, mostly on the continent. Obviously, camping can’t be as comfortable as living in a permanent house, but modern tents can be very comfortable indeed, with windows, bedrooms, kitchens and sitting rooms. The most popular tent sold in Britain is the frame tent with 2 bedrooms and sleeping accommodation for 4 people. There is usually an outer tent of water-proofed fabric and a lighter inner tent or tents with a built-in ground sheet. The outer tent fits over the frame work. This is made of metal poles which are fitted together. The inner tent is attached to this frame. Generally, the inner tent is about half the area of the outer tent. The other half of the outer tent is the living area. This doesn’t usually have a ground sheet but you can buy one to fit, though it costs extra. The ordinary 4 bed frame tent doesn’t usually have a separate kitchen area, but the larger ones often do. You can buy a kitchen extension for many tents, and it’s worth buying one if you plan to stay camping in one place for more than a few days.

19. What does the speaker say about camping?

20. What does the passage tell us about the most popular tent sold in Britain?

21. What does the speaker suggest buying if you plan to stay camping in one place for more than a few days?

Passage 3

Andorra, one of the smallest countries in the world, is located high in the mountains between France and Spain. The country covers only 179 square miles. That is less than half the size of New York City. High, rocky mountains surround Andorra. Until the 1930s, travelers had difficulty in reaching the country. Up until that time, people in Andorra lived in the way they had lived for centuries. Most Andorrans worked as farmers. Things did not change quickly. When roads were built from France and Spain to Andorra in the 1930s, life picked up speed. Tourists began to visit the small country. These tourists brought in a lot of money to spend while visiting. Many people in Andorra found new jobs in shops or hotels. These changes helped to keep young people in Andorra. There were many more jobs than before the roads were built. Today tourists provided 80 to 90 percent of Andorra’s income. More than a million people visit each year. They come to view the rough mountains. They enjoy the quiet way of life. Most people are also interested in the ancient buildings. There are many shops for tourists to browse in, clothes, watches, wines and other items are sold at low prices in Andorra. Import fees are low, so tourists enjoy the inexpensive shopping. Most of the businesses in Andorra are owned by its citizens. There are not many foreign businesses. Some Andorrans still farm and raise sheep and cattle. But most are now involved with the tourist trade.

22. How big does the speaker say Andorra is?
23. What can be said about Andorra before the 1930s?
24. What event changed the situation in Andorra?
25. What do most people do in Andorra do nowadays?

Section C

Directions: In this section, you will hear a passage three times. When the passage is read for the first time, you should listen carefully for its general idea. When the passage is read for the second time, you are required to fill in the blanks with the exact words you have just heard. Finally, when the passage is read for the third time, you should check what you have written.

Don't take many English courses, they won't help you get a decent job. Sign up for management classes, so you will be ready to join the family business when you graduate. Sound (26) familiar? Many of us have heard suggestions like these (27) put forward by parents or others close to us. Such comments often seem quite reasonable. Why then should suggestions like these be taken with (28) caution? The reason is they relate to the decisions you should make. You are the one who must (29) live with their consequences. One of the worst reasons to follow a particular path in life is that other people want you to. Decisions that affect your life should be your decisions. Decisions you make after you've considered various (30) alternatives and chosen the path that suits you best. Making your own decisions does not mean that you should (31) ignore the suggestions of others. For instance, your parents do have their own unique experiences that may make their advice helpful and having (32) participated in a great deal of your personal history. They may have a clear view of your strength and weaknesses. Still, their views are not necessarily accurate. They may still see you as a child, (33) in need of care and protection. Or they may see only your strength or in some unfortunate cases, they may (34) focus only on your flaws and shortcomings. People will always be giving your advice, ultimately, though you have to make your own (35) judgments.