



VOCABULARY GAPS IN LEARNING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE: BASIS FOR GLOSSAURUS

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ABSTRACT

This descriptive study assessed the student's vocabulary competence in learning English as a Second Language among the Grade 7 Students of Agdahon Farm School in the School Year 2023-2024. The respondents of this study were the fifty-four (54) students taken via total enumeration. The instrument used was a validated and reliability-tested researcher-made questionnaire. Frequency count, percentage, rank, mean, and standard deviation were the descriptive statistics used, while Mann Whitney-U Test and Wilcoxon W. were the inferential statistical tools used. The criterion for rejection and non-rejection of the null hypothesis was set at 0.05 alpha level. Results revealed that the level of vocabulary competence among the respondents as a whole was "Moderate". When classified in terms of competencies, in Commonly Mispronounced words, respondents had a "proficient" level of vocabulary while in Context Clues, Commonly Confused words, and Words with Multiple Meaning, respondents had a "moderate" level of vocabulary. Moreover, the results emphasized that mobile phones were the most prevalent media used among the twelve categories of media, while the least prevalent was the personal computer. There existed a significant difference in the level of vocabulary competence among the respondents when classified as commonly used media. However when classified as to sex, the level of vocabulary competence among the respondents is not significantly different. Finally, based on the result of the study, a handbook entitled, Glossaurus: "An Epic Journey through the Enchanted Lexicon Woods" focusing on vocabulary skills enhancement, was developed.

Keywords: *ESL, Vocabulary Gaps, Learning English*

INTRODUCTION

Graves and Watts-Taffe (2015) found that vocabulary gaps are a major problem for learners, especially in schools, and can harm student performance in a variety of academic subjects. In the study of Beck et al. (2015), vocabulary competence is influenced by four factors: exposure to language, instruction in vocabulary, cognitive abilities, and motivation. Also, the presence of various dialects in the Philippines can influence vocabulary proficiency among Filipinos. The study of Pacris (2018), determined that the use of regional dialects in daily conversations can limit exposure and practice of standardized vocabulary.

The study of Santos and Alampay (2022), stated that school resources are an important factor in promoting vocabulary development in Filipino students. Schools should be provided with the necessary resources to support teachers in delivering effective vocabulary instruction. The local secondary education institution has implemented several programs to enhance the vocabulary skills of students. However, it has been observed that students, specifically in rural areas still need help in vocabulary acquisition, including the exposure to English outside the classroom and the large and complex nature of the English vocabulary.

The purpose of this study is to assess the vocabulary competence of the Grade 7 students of Agdahon Farm School and identify the areas that need improvements, which was used as a basis for the creation of a handbook entitled, *Glossaurus: "An Epic Journey through the Enchanted Lexicon Woods"* that is specifically geared to provide English as Second Language Learners (ESL) with practical strategies for improving their vocabulary skills.

Research Questions

This study aims to assess the student's vocabulary competence in learning English as a Second Language among the Grade 7 Students of Agdahon Farm School in the School Year 2023-2024.

Specifically, it seeks to answer the following:

1. What is the profile of the respondents when classified as to commonly used media and sex?
2. What is the most prevalent media used by the respondents in terms of gadgets, printed materials, and online media platforms?
3. What is the level of vocabulary competence among the respondents as a whole and in terms of competencies such as commonly mispronounced words, context clues, commonly confused words, words with multiple meanings?
4. What is the level of vocabulary competence among the respondents when classified as to sex?
5. Is there a significant difference in the level of vocabulary competence among the respondents when classified as to commonly used media and sex?
6. What learning tool can be developed to enhance the vocabulary competence of the respondents?

METHODOLOGY

The study employed the descriptive research design to determine and assess the vocabulary competence in learning English as a second language among the Grade 7 Students of Agdahon Farm School in the School Year 2023-2024. In a descriptive study, as defined by Creswell and Creswell (2018), descriptive research design is a research method that aims to systematically collect and analyze data to describe a population, situation, or phenomenon. The respondents of the study were the fifty-four (54) Grade 7 Students of Agdahon Farm School enrolled in the School Year 2023-2024 taken via total enumeration. They are classified according to commonly used media and sex.

In this study, the researchers utilized a researcher-made vocabulary assessment tool. To ensure the validity of the instrument, the panel of validators who are experts in the field checked the instrument as to its content and face value. The validated instrument was subjected to reliability by administering face-to-face pilot testing to twenty-seven (27) Grade 7 students of Passi National High School Annex Sablogon Campus. After the assessment tool undergoes the pilot testing, items for commonly mispronounced words, commonly confused words, and polysemy words with multiple meanings, and context clues in the vocabulary assessment tool are refined to improve the readability, clarity, and the selection of response options.

Following the revision of the assessment tool, the researchers produced copies of the revised instrument and began with the data gathering of the respondents which are the fifty-four (54) Grade 7 students of Agdahon Farm School. The respondents are informed that the data acquired are kept strictly confidential and used only for the study. After all the necessary data were gathered, the researcher thanked the respondents for their cooperation. The data gathered are tallied, analyzed, and interpreted using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Specifically, the researchers employed the following procedures: descriptive statistics, which include the mean, frequency count, standard deviation, and rank; and inferential statistical tools such as U-test and H-Test. Frequency count and Percentage were used to determine the profile of the respondents when classified as to their commonly used media and sex. Mean and Standard Deviation were used to determine the level of vocabulary competence of the respondents. Rank was used to determine the most prevalent media the respondents are exposed to. Wilcoxon W. was used to determine the significant difference in the level of vocabulary competence among the respondents when classified as to commonly used media. Mann Whitney-U Test was used to determine the significant difference in the level of vocabulary competence among the respondents when classified as sex.

RESULTS

Profile of the Respondents. Table 1 outlines that when respondents were categorized according to commonly used media, the results revealed that in terms of gadgets, eight (8) or 14.8% used laptops, fifty-two (52) or 96.3% used mobile phones, and four (4) or 7.4% used Ipad. In terms of written media, forty-nine (49), or 90.7 used books, five (5), or

9.3% used magazines, thirteen (13), or 24.1% used newspapers, four (4), or 7.4% used encyclopedias, and twenty-one (21) or 38.9% used dictionary. In terms of online media platforms, fifty (50) or 92.6% used Facebook, eleven (11) or 20.4% used Instagram, and nine (9) or 81.5% used Tiktok. When categorized according to sex, there were thirty (30), or 55.6% males and twenty-four (24), or 44.4% females.

Table 1
Profile of the Respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Gadgets		
Laptop	8	14.8
Mobile Phone	52	96.3
Ipad	4	7.4
Written Media		
Books	49	90.7
Magazine	5	9.3
Newspaper	13	24.1
Encyclopedia	4	7.4
Dictionary	21	38.9
Online Media Platforms		
Facebook	50	92.6
Instagram	11	20.4
Twitter	9	16.7
Tiktok	44	81.5
Sex		
Male	30	55.6
Female	24	44.4
Total		100

Most Prevalent Media Used by the Respondents at Home. Another objective of this study was to determine the prevalent media used by the respondents at home. The table 3 represents the overall findings for the most prevalent media used, ranked from one (1) to twelve (12). Mobile Phone (F=52; P=96.3) made it to rank 1, rank 2 was Facebook (F=50; P=92.6), rank 3 was Books (F=49; P=90.7), rank 4 was Tiktok (F=44; P=81.5), rank 5 was Dictionary (F=21; P=38.9), rank 6 was Newspaper (F=13; P=24.1), rank 7 was Instagram, rank 8 was Twitter (F=9; P=16.7), rank 9 was Laptop(F=8; P=14.8), rank 10 was Magazine(F=5; P=9.3), rank 11.5 was Encyclopedia(F=4; P=7.4), rank 11.5 Ipad(F=4; P=7.4), and the least prevalent media used by the respondents was Personal Computer (F=0; P=0).

Table 2
Most Prevalent Media Used by the Respondents at Home

Media	Frequency	Percent	Rank
Laptop	8	14.8	9
Mobile Phone	52	96.3	1
Ipad	4	7.4	11
Books	49	90.7	3
Magazine	5	9.3	10
Newspaper	13	24.1	6
Encyclopedia	4	7.4	11
Dictionary	21	38.9	5
Facebook	50	92.6	2
Instagram	11	20.4	7
Twitter	9	16.7	8
Tiktok	44	81.5	4
Total	54	100	

Level of Vocabulary Competence among the Respondents as a Whole and in terms of Competencies such as Commonly Mispronounced Words, Context Clues, Commonly Confused Words, Words with Multiple Meanings. The primary goal of this study was to determine the level of Vocabulary Competence of the Respondents. As shown in Table 3, the result indicated that the vocabulary competence among the respondents as a whole is “Moderate” (4.02 to 6.02) (M=5.28; SD=1.85).

Table 3
Level of Vocabulary Competence among the Respondents as a Whole and in terms of Competencies such as Commonly Mispronounced Words, Context Clues, Commonly Confused Words, Words with Multiple Meaning

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Level
Commonly Mispronounced Words	54	0	10	6.39	2.42	Proficient
Context Clues	54	1	10	4.56	2.26	Moderate
Commonly Confused Words	54	1	9	5.06	1.90	Moderate

Words with Multiple Meanings	54	0	10	5.13	3.00	Moderate
As a Whole	54	1.5	8.5	5.28	1.85	Moderate

Note: The instrumentation was made based on: "Very Low" (0.00 to 2.00), "Low" (2.01 to 4.01), "Moderate" (4.02 to 6.02), "Proficient" (6.03 to 8.04), "Highly Proficient" (8.05 to 10.00).

Level of Vocabulary Competence among the Respondents when Classified as to Sex. Table 4 offers insights that when respondents were classified as to sex, the results revealed that males had a mean of 5.3667 and a standard deviation of 1.66445 (M=5.3667; SD=1.66445). The female had a mean of 4.8333 and a standard deviation of 2.08341 (M=4.8333; SD=2.08341). This result showed that both male (M=5.3667; SD=1.66445) and female (M=4.8333; SD=2.08341) respondents had a "Moderate" (4.02 to 6.02)

Table 4
Level of Vocabulary Competence among the Respondents when Classified as to Sex

Sex	Mean	N	SD
Male	5.3667	30	1.66445
Female	4.8333	24	2.08341
Total	5.1296	54	1.86309

Note: The instrumentation was made based on: "Very Low" (0.00 to 2.00), "Low" (2.01 to 4.01), "Moderate" (4.02 to 6.02), "Proficient" (6.03 to 8.04), "Highly Proficient" (8.05 to 10.00).

Level of Vocabulary Competence among the Respondents when Classified as to Commonly Used Media. Table 5 shows that there was a significant difference in the level of vocabulary competence among the respondents when classified as to commonly used media (-24.666^b; p=.000).

Table 5***Difference in the Level of Vocabulary Competence among the Respondents when Classified as to Commonly Used Media***

Variables	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Level of Vocabulary Competence - Commonly Used Media	-24.666 ^b	.000	Significant

* $p < \alpha = 0.05$, Significant

Difference in the Level of Vocabulary Competence among the Respondents when Classified as to Sex. Table 6 illustrates that there was no significant difference in the level of vocabulary competence among the respondents when classified as to sex. (-1.386; $p = .166$).

Table 6***Difference in the Level of Vocabulary Competence among the Respondents when Classified as to Sex***

Variables	Mann-Whitney U	Wilcoxon W	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
As a Whole	280.500	745.500		.166	not significant

* $p < \alpha = 0.05$, not Significant

DISCUSSION

This study investigated the student's vocabulary competence in learning English as a Second Language. The researcher's initial findings revealed the level of vocabulary competence of the English as Second Language learners. Subsequently, the results showed that when respondents were categorized according to commonly used media, the results revealed that in terms of gadgets, eight (8) or 14.8% used laptop, fifty-two (52) or 96.3% used mobile phone, and four (4) or 7.4% used Ipad. In terms of written media, forty-nine (49) or 90.7 used books, five (5) or 9.3% used magazine, thirteen (13) or 24.1% used newspaper, four (4) or 7.4% used encyclopedia, and twenty-one (21) or 38.9% used dictionary. In terms of online media platforms, fifty (50) or 92.6% used Facebook, eleven (11) or 20.4% used Instagram, nine (9) or 81.5% used Tiktok. When categorized according to sex, there were thirty (30) or 55.6% males and twenty-four (24) or 44.4% females. This result indicated that the majority of respondents and Grade 7 students in Agdahon Farm School were male. It also implied that students primarily rely on mobile phones for consuming media due to their convenience and versatility. Traditional media

formats, such as books and newspapers, are still relevant but challenged by online sources. Social media platforms, particularly Facebook and TikTok, are the dominant forces in online media engagement.

Concerning the prevalent media used by the respondents at home, results indicate that mobile phones are the most prevalent media used by the respondents at home, followed by Facebook, books, TikTok, and dictionaries. Newspapers, Instagram, Twitter, laptops, magazines, encyclopedias, and iPads are less prevalent, and personal computers are the least prevalent. Therefore, these results concluded that mobile phones are playing an increasingly important role in the respondents, even when they are at home.

Moving on to respondent classifications based on competencies, Commonly Mispronounced words had a mean of 6.39 and a standard deviation of 2.42. Context Clues had a mean of 4.56 and a standard deviation of 2.26, Commonly Confused words gained a weighted mean of 5.06 and a standard deviation of 1.90, and Words with Multiple Meanings had a mean of 5.13 and a standard deviation of 3.00. This indicates that in Commonly Mispronounced words, respondents had a “proficient” (6.03 to 8.04) level of vocabulary while in Context Clues, Commonly Confused words and Words with Multiple Meaning; respondents had a “moderate” (4.02 to 6.02) level of vocabulary. Generally, these results implied that respondent demonstrated a strong understanding of proper pronunciation. On the other hand, respondents encountered greater difficulty in interpreting context clues, identifying differences between commonly confused words, and understanding multiple meanings of a single word.

In the level of vocabulary competence among the respondents when classified as to sex, the results revealed that male had a mean of 5.3667 and a standard deviation of 1.66445 ($M=5.3667$; $SD=1.66445$). The female had a mean of 4.8333 and a standard deviation of 2.08341 ($M=4.8333$; $SD=2.08341$). This suggests that both male ($M=5.3667$; $SD=1.66445$) and female ($M=4.8333$; $SD=2.08341$) respondents had a “Moderate” (4.02 to 6.02) level of vocabulary competence.

Meanwhile, the researchers’ findings revealed a significant difference in the level of vocabulary competence among the respondents when classified as to commonly used media. This means that students find different media tools as effective and efficient platforms in improving their vocabulary competence. In contrast, the results showed that there was no significant difference in the level of vocabulary competence among the respondents when classified as to vocabulary competence among the respondents when classified as to sex (-1.386 ; $p=.166$). The results indicated that vocabulary competences of male and female are not comparable with each other.

Conclusions

Based on the findings from the study, it reveals a clear preference for mobile phones as the primary media device among the respondents. This finding aligns with broader trends highlighting the dominance of mobile technologies in media consumption. A study by

Lenthang and Hing (2019) supports this notion, demonstrating a significant shift towards mobile media consumption compared to traditional media formats.

Furthermore, this study revealed a clear preference for mobile phones as the primary media device among the respondents. This finding aligns with broader trends highlighting the dominance of mobile technologies in media consumption. This study found out that mobile phones are the most prevalent media used by the respondents. This result is corroborated by the study of Cabreza and Villalon (2015) in the Philippines specifically examines smartphone use for media consumption among college students. While this study focuses on a slightly older age group, it provides valuable data on the dominance of mobile phones within the Philippine context, potentially extending this trend to senior high school students.

The concluded investigation also revealed an overall "Moderate" level of vocabulary competence among the respondents. This suggests that they generally understand and use words appropriately, but there are areas for improvement. Commonly mispronounced words: Respondents' competence demonstrates a "Proficient" level. Context clues: the "Moderate" level suggests respondents can often use context to understand unfamiliar words, but additional practice could enhance their ability to do so consistently and efficiently. Confused words and words with multiple meanings: Both areas show "Moderate" competence, implying some understanding but potential confusion at times. These findings align with the study of Alviar et al. (2020), who used various instruments to assess the vocabulary of 320 Philippine Grade 7 students. They found similar results, concluding that students generally demonstrated proficiency in recognizing basic words but grappled with more complex vocabulary and nuanced meanings. This moderate level of vocabulary competence can be attributed, in part, to the learning environment students' encounter.

The study also revealed that both male and female respondents had a "Moderate" level of vocabulary competence. This suggests potential for improvement, particularly in areas like understanding nuanced meanings and using vocabulary in context. As highlighted by Stahls (2016) comprehensive review of vocabulary development practices, educators can prioritize strategies that address these challenges. By incorporating etymology, context clues, and differentiated instruction, educators can equip students with the tools to build a deeper understanding and usage of words. Additionally, Nation (2013) emphasizes the importance of encountering vocabulary multiple times and in various contexts for language learners to achieve deeper understanding and usage.

The study identified a significant difference in vocabulary competence based on the respondents' commonly used media. This mirrors the findings in the study of Zheng and Warschauer (2017) that there is a statistically significant difference in vocabulary acquisition between students who read on-screen and those who read printed materials. This directly translates to the idea that the type of media students use can significantly impact their vocabulary development. Interestingly, the study showed no significant difference in vocabulary competence based on the respondents' sex. These findings align with the study of Navarro and Guzman (2015) that found no significant sex differences in

English language proficiency among senior high school students in the Philippines, supporting the notion of similar vocabulary competence across genders.

This study embarked on a mission to develop and evaluate an innovative learning tool, "Glossaurus: An Epic Journey through the Enchanted Lexicon Woods," aimed at enhancing the vocabulary competence of students. This meticulously crafted handbook serves as a comprehensive guide, offering a curated list of common words along with their meanings and pronunciations, inviting students on an engaging adventure through the enchanting realm of language.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. For the Department of Education (DepEd), it is recommended that the Department of Education (DepEd) should create engaging resources to strengthen areas like interpreting context clues, distinguishing commonly confused words, and understanding words with multiple meanings. These resources can be integrated into the "Glossaurus" learning tool or offered as separate activities like worksheets, quizzes, or games.
2. For Teachers, it is recommended that the teachers should understand students' media habits and learning styles to create personalized vocabulary activities and offer targeted support. Combine text-based activities with audio, video, and interactive platforms to cater to various learning preferences and keep students engaged. Teachers can utilize "Glossaurus" as a learning tool that will help them effectively build vocabulary knowledge in their students across different competencies, ultimately enhancing students' vocabulary across various domains.
3. For Learners, it is best if learners should not hesitate to ask teachers or classmates for clarification on unfamiliar words or pronunciation struggles. Embrace seeking help as part of the learning process. Learners should go beyond mobile phones and explore diverse media sources like books in the libraries, educational apps, and websites to broaden vocabulary exposure.
4. For Future Researchers, vocabulary gaps are relevant topics in academics. Further studies and progress in the field are necessary to keep track of the vocabulary skills of the learners. Future researchers could use the provided data and information in this study to re-assess the learning tool entitled, "Glossaurus: An Epic Journey through the Lexicon Woods". The researchers recommend conducting further study to make effective and broader findings in the vocabulary competence of the learners.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

In conducting this study, strict adherence to ethical standards was maintained throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all respondents prior to their participation, ensuring they were fully aware of the study's purpose and procedures.

Respondents were explicitly informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative repercussions. Anonymity was rigorously upheld, with all personal identifiers removed to protect the identities of the participants. The well-being of the respondents was safeguarded at all times, ensuring that their participation did not cause any harm or distress. There were no conflicts of interest influencing the conduct of the study, and the researchers ensured that all findings were presented objectively without bias. Plagiarism was strictly avoided, with all sources and references appropriately cited. The results of the study were utilized solely for academic and research purposes, contributing to the understanding of the students. Through these measures, the researchers ensured the highest standards of ethical integrity in the study.

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