

BIBLIOGRAPHY

MAGDALINA P. JAIME, April 2006. English Vocabulary Proficiency and the Academic Performance of the UB Science High School Freshmen, SY 2005-2006. Benguet State University, La Trinidad, Benguet.

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to identify the relationship between the English vocabulary proficiency level and the academic performance of the freshmen of the University of Baguio Science High School. It also sought to determine the English vocabulary proficiency levels of the respondents along the identified variables: sex, language spoken at home, reading material preferences.

As to the sex variable, both the male and the female respondents showed a competent English vocabulary proficiency level.

Along the language spoken at home variable, respondents who speak Tagalog and English showed a competent proficiency level. The Ilokanos and the lone Punjabi and French speakers performed moderately competent. Koreans manifested an incompetent proficiency level.

All the respondents in all kinds of reading material fared generally competent but differ significantly. The readers of English pocketbooks manifested an advantage over the readers of computer-generated reading materials, English newspapers and magazines, and English textbooks.

There is no significant difference in the English vocabulary proficiency levels of the respondents along sex and language spoken variables. Reading material preference variable, on the other hand, bears a difference in the respondents' proficiency level.

It was revealed that there is a significant and positive correlation between the respondents' English vocabulary proficiency levels and their academic performance. The higher the respondent's English vocabulary proficiency level, the better his academic performance.

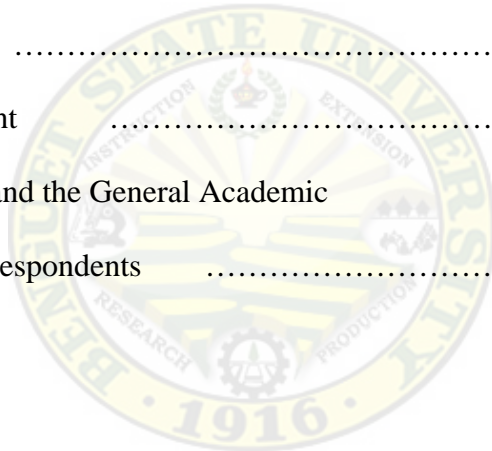


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INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

“Words are vehicles that can transport us from drab sands to the dazzling stars.” – M. Robert Syme

“From a large university,” Khan (2001) quotes in his article, “a group of researchers gave a group of people an English vocabulary test and then tracked those people for twenty years. Strange as it may seem, those who knew the definitions of the most words were in the highest income group twenty years later. The researchers discovered that the people who, in the beginning, had the worst vocabulary scores were in the lowest income group twenty years later. There wasn’t a single exception.”

In another study, the executive and supervisory personnel of thirty-nine manufacturing plants were given extensive testing. All of them, from the lowest level of supervisor to the top of the executive elite rated higher than average on leadership qualities. Between all the leaders, there was a close similarity in leadership ability. But there were striking differences on the vocabulary test. Basically, the higher the person’s score on the vocabulary test, the higher his position in that company. The presidents and vice presidents of the companies had an average score of 236 (a perfect score was 272). The average score for superintendents was 140. Foremen averaged 114. In virtually every case, vocabulary coincided with executive level and rank on the corporate ladder.

A Human Engineering laboratory study tested the vocabularies of thousands of people in various careers and age groups and found that the people drawing the highest salaries scored highest on the vocabulary test. In fact, they scored with a consistency that bordered on predictability. Moreover, of dozens of measures used, Human Engineering Laboratory could find only one common characteristic of successful people: a superior vocabulary.

So much must have been said about vocabulary as essential of learning. Indeed, the enduring effects of the vocabulary limitations of students with diverse learning needs are becoming increasingly apparent and this caught the educators' attention. And why not? Learning itself depends on language. Certainly, as Adams (1990) suggests, most of our formal education is acquired through language. Learning something new does not occur in vacuum. Rather, new learning always builds on what the learner already knows. Adams suggests that new learning is the process of forming novel combinations of familiar concepts. Learning, as a language-based activity, is fundamentally and profoundly dependent on vocabulary knowledge. Learners must have access to the meaning of words.

Indeed, facts have attested that vocabulary is one of the requisites of effective communication. For an individual to express his ideas in both written and oral discourse, he has to use the right words. There have been so many instances when a student has a profound idea to share but would hesitate to raise

his hand because he could not find the right words to say it. Or how a speaker would pause in the midst of speech because he has to grope for the precise words to express exactly what he has in his mind. A wide vocabulary is also needed if one has to correctly understand the drift of what is being said by the speaker or author. There had been so many instances, too, when, even the simplest mathematical or any problems seem to be complex because the intended client is not proficient in the language with which the problem is expressed.

In the light of formal instruction, the importance of early reading and writing has been heavily emphasized. In contrast, vocabulary development, although clearly recognized, has not received the same degree of instructional attention as other literacy skills. After all, as smith (1997) puts it, “Vocabulary development is not an academic subject like reading, mathematics, and science. Although vocabulary development pervades every subject from reading to mathematics to physical education, it is difficult to isolate for instructional purposes.”

This research tries to, in its farthest reach, describe the vocabulary proficiency of the respondents and its relationship to the general academic performance, which is, in its most objective form, measured by the general weighted average of all academic subjects in their school.

And as the problem on vocabulary development among learners rages on in the language subjects specifically English, there has been no local study that

establishes a solid link between vocabulary proficiency and the general performance of the students in all other academic subjects. In view of these, this study was conducted.

Statement of the Problem

This study, inspired by the prevalent insufficient vocabulary knowledge of students, aimed to identify if such level of English vocabulary proficiency has something to do with general academic performance.

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following queries:

1. What is the level of English vocabulary proficiency of the freshmen of University of Baguio Science High School along the following variables:
 - a. sex
 - b. language spoken at home, and
 - c. reading material preferences

2. Is there a significant difference in the vocabulary proficiency levels of the respondents along the variables:
 - a. sex
 - b. language spoken at home and
 - c. reading material preference

3. Is there a significant correlation between the respondents' English vocabulary proficiency level and their general academic performance in school?

Objectives of the Study

Generally, this study aimed to identify the correlation between the English vocabulary proficiency level and the general academic performance of the University of Baguio Science High School freshmen.

Specifically, this study was geared towards determining the:

1. English vocabulary proficiency level of the respondents along the variables:
 - a. sex
 - b. language spoken at home, and
 - c. reading material preference
2. Significance level of the difference in the English vocabulary proficiency levels of the respondents considering the following variables:
 - a. sex
 - b. language spoken at home, and
 - c. reading material preference
3. The correlation between the English vocabulary proficiency level and the general academic performance of the respondents.

Importance of the Study

The researcher's motivation to conduct this study stemmed from the foreseen contributions of this study to the teaching-learning field.

The results of this study may be of use to educators. English teachers will be informed of any relationship between the vocabulary proficiency and the general academic performance. Hence, the English teachers may come to know and understand the crux to good academic performance. This, in turn, may result to a strengthened and innovative instruction that targets vocabulary development of learners.

This study may also be of great help to syllabus makers. The results may help them identify which of the areas in language teaching needs more time and more preparation. Strategic activities for vocabulary acquisition can be devised to help students improve.

More so, course planners may design or include highly relevant subjects to bridge the gap between what the students at a particular educational level ought to know and what they know.

The knowledge of what reading material the students prefer and what reading materials are more helpful may be of great help for educators to plan strategies that may address vocabulary development problems.

To concerned parents, the findings of this research may be enlightening.

The findings may help them plan out-of-school study course that may help their children develop good reading habits and excellent vocabulary knowledge.

To future researchers who are interested in the same language area, this study may provide them initial findings to base further researches and may even inspire further researches on vocabulary development.

Most significantly, it would be the students who may greatly benefit from the results of the study since the results may be used by the teachers to improve whatever instructional methods or materials exist in the school to bridge the gap among students who are more proficient and less proficient in vocabulary acquisition.

To a mere reader, this research may be informative.

To the researcher who is a language teacher, this study may enhance her confidence in conducting future language researches. Her readings on her study may deepen her knowledge and understanding of vocabulary acquisition which is a primary requirement of language acquisition.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The study was conducted at the University of Baguio Science High School, second quarter of the school year 2005-2006. The respondents were the freshmen.

The study delved only on the vocabulary proficiency of the respondents along sex, language spoken at home and reading material preference variables. It also

looked into whatever correlation between the vocabulary proficiency and the general academic performance of the respondents in school which is best represented by their weighted average in all academic subjects.

The study, however, is not into identifying other strenuous factors like study habits, motivations and socio-economic factors that may affect the vocabulary proficiency and the general academic performance of the respondents.



REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This section provides facts, findings, and highly relevant information from books, studies, reports and the Internet.

The Significance of English Vocabulary Proficiency

“All words are pegs to hang ideas on.” – Henry Word Becker

In the book “The Word-A-Day Vocabulary Builder”, lexicographer Borgen Evan as quoted by Clark (1984) states, “Words are the tools for the job of saying what you want to say. And what you want to say are your thoughts and feelings, your business and your pleasures – almost everything, indeed, that makes up you. Except for our vegetable-like growth and our animal-like impulse, almost all that we are is related to our use of words. Man has been defined as a tool-using animal, but his most important tool, the one that distinguishes him from all other animals, is his speech.

The significance of extensive vocabulary knowledge is further asserted by Brooks, (1964) "It is the utmost consequence in the life of an individual that he learns to use the form of communication. The skills he develops in the use of these tools influence his choice of vocation, the friends he draws about him and the pattern of personal living he builds for himself clearly and with confidence. And those who enjoy books and reading tend to select academic work in the high school, to go to college and to enter the profession or become a business,

industrial, social or political leader. A person who lacks linguistic skill - who has less extensive vocabulary and less facility in self- expressions or reading tends for his vocation to types of works with people and things in which the linguistic demands or of different sort and other competences or more important than facility in the use of language."

Groot (1994) gave empirical evidence that reading comprehension is dependent on word knowledge. He cited that for an adequate understanding of academic texts, a vocabulary of at least 7,000 words is required.

Hazenberg (1996) mentioned an even higher – 10,000 words. Nation (1993) and Laufer (1997) suggest target vocabulary of 5,000 as minimum lexical requirement for understanding general, non-specialized text. The rationale for these numbers is that only a vocabulary this size will result in a sufficiently dense lexical coverage of text of this kind. These researches have demonstrated that for adequate comprehension of texts, the readers must be familiar with more than 90 percent of the words used. With such a dense lexical coverage of text, percentage of unknown words is so low that they will either be not essential for an understanding of the text or their meaning may be deduced from the context.

Reading development researchers, Pikulski and Templeton (2003) assert that there is no question that people who have large speaking vocabularies generally tend to have large listening, reading, and writing vocabularies; likewise, people who are limited in one of these aspects are likely limited in

other aspects as well. Although this relationship does not exist in preliterate children, the relationship is evident in the years during which the children develop as readers and writers. There is an increasingly high relationship among all four aspects of vocabulary – listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Even in the field of Mathematics, the importance of language has been recognized. Martinez (2000) emphasized importance of mathematics language in the classroom as follows: a) Language is the medium of teaching. It is the major means of communication. b) Students build understanding as they process ideas through language. c) Teachers diagnose and assess students' understanding by listening to their oral communication and by reading their mathematical writings. One reason teachers are concerned with teaching vocabulary is to facilitate comprehension of a text that students are assigned to read. If students do not know the meaning of many words they encounter in a text, their comprehension of the selection is compromised. For strong obvious reasons, any learner needs to equip himself with sufficient, operational, and functional vocabularies.

Vocabulary Proficiency and Sex

One of the most known factors that explain differences in human preferences is the sex of an individual. In fact, many human attributes are classified as male or female attribute. Although many of the attributes are not strictly male or strictly female, there are many which are considered dominantly

female and dominantly male. Language, for example, is believed to be acquired more easily by females than males. The following authors attest to or contest this statement.

In her book, Burstall (1970) found out that “foreign language learning was less popular among boys than among girls who are better at it. It was found out that girls are more favorably disposed toward foreign language learning and made better progress than boys.

Encyclopedia of Educational Technology (1994) offers the information that primarily, females test better on perceptual speed, verbal fluency, determining the placement of objects, precision manual tasks, identifying specific attributes of objects and arithmetic calculations (simple math). Males, on the other hand, test better on spatial tasks, target motor skills, spotting shapes embedded in complex diagrams, and mathematical reasoning.

Locally, the study conducted by Galangco (1988) conforms with the preceding facts. Galangco found out that female teachers had a “good proficiency” while the male teachers had “fair proficiency” in their English proficiency test in which vocabulary is one of the area tested.

Similarly, Mangkarotai (1989) made a study on the problems met by his freshmen respondents in learning communication arts language and found out that there is a significant relationship between sex and the problems in

communication arts. The male respondents generally had a greater difficulty than their female counterparts.

Moreover, Millan's study (1992) revealed that female respondents showed a better competence with the score average of 161.7, the male respondents recorded 140.67 score average.

Furthermore, Calos (1991) shares the same findings with Millan. She concluded that females have better communicative competence.

As a further buttress to this claim, Maranan (1994) cited the study conducted by Lopez (1986) on communicative competence in English among high school students in the University of Baguio. Lopez discovered that as to the variable of sex, the female respondents performed better than their male counterparts.

Similarly, Dacanay (2000) revealed in her study that gender affected her respondents' comprehension of non-verbal materials which include graphs, flowcharts, diagrams, and tables. Accordingly, females performed better than their male counterparts.

Anderson and Hayes' (1996) study results paralleled the aforementioned studies. They explained, "Teachers had more interaction with girls in reading classrooms. The more interaction a girl had with the teacher in reading class, the higher the test score would be." At first, the initial ability of boys and girls in linguistic areas had no difference. However, because of the greater interaction of

the girls with their English teachers, by the year's end, girls were higher in language achievement than boys. Anderson and Hayes delved deeper into this phenomenon. They learned that girls are as not as capable as the boys in science and in mathematics and so they learn to compensate their perceived inability in these subjects by excelling in language classes. Hence, they exhibit a greater linguistic proficiency than boys.

Tiorisio (1998), in her thesis cited other authors who claimed that boys are not as good as girls in language skills. She quoted Rubin who asserted, "Girls surpass boys in verbal ability. From infancy to childhood, female usually express themselves in words more readily and skillfully than boys."

Tiorisio (1998) again referred to another source, this time Moir's study. Apparently, Moir maintained that males' and females' brains are structurally different from birth. Because of this structural difference, men's and women's brains process information in different ways which account for different perceptions, priorities, and behaviors. This structural difference explains why men have better spatial abilities and women have better language skills.

Tiorisio cited Feingold stating that on the average, males score higher than females on tests of general knowledge and mechanical reasoning; females score higher than males on tests of language usage such as grammar, spelling and vocabulary.

Agreeing to such assertion is Naiden as referred to by Tiorisio. He said that boys at every age are inferior to girls in size of vocabulary, in correctness of sentence and in the ability to express their meaning adequately. In fact, contemporary researches have found that boys usually outnumber girls in remedial reading classes as stressed by Naiden.

In the international scene, Trudeau (1997) reported that the part of the brain responsible for language skills is larger in women than in men. This, according to her, may explain why baby girls begin to talk earlier than baby boys, and it could account for other language differences between women and men.

Contradictory to the preceding studies and claims, Tiorisio's findings revealed that the vocabulary scores which were taken in remedial classes were the same regardless of gender. According to her, one cannot say that those females are more linguistically proficient than males or vice versa.

One with the finding of Tiorisio is the finding of Alsiyang (1997) that the communicative proficiency level of the respondents along the gender variable was of no significant difference.

Bautista (1995), in her research, also concluded that gender did not affect the English proficiency of her student teacher respondents.

A Hawaii-based researcher, Brant Meier (2003) shares the same result with Bautista's. He concluded that gender differences do not account for the difference in second language reading comprehension of which

vocabulary is the chief factor. “Male,” he says, “had no advantage over females, and females had no advantage over males.”

A difference in the comprehension levels among male and female subjects was noted by Bugel and Buunk (1996) as cited by Meier. They claim, however, that the difference is attributed to passage content and not to gender difference. Male subjects recalled significantly more idea units and scored higher in a test about boxing and the female subjects recalled significantly more idea units and scored higher in a test about a housewife.

Vocabulary and First Language

Whether a particular first language has a bearing on the vocabulary acquisition and/or development is a debate in the linguistic area.

Local researchers have come to the following conclusions after conducting their studies.

Alsiyang’s (1997) research on communicative proficiency with respect to the dialect spoken shows that there is no significant difference in the communicative proficiency level of her respondents exists.

Hufana (1980) probed into the errors of freshmen agricultural students who belonged to six linguistic groups – Ilocano, Pangasinan, Ibaloi, Ifugao, Benguet Kankana-ey, and Bontoc Kankana-ey. She found out that the first language of her respondents did not show any significant relationship with the type of errors her respondents made.

Corpuz (1987) also concluded that there is no significant relationship in the level of communicative competence in written communication of the University of Baguio student teachers along L₁ variable.

On the contrary, Wui concluded in her research that the dialect which her respondents spoke has a significant bearing on their written communicative proficiency.

Similarly, Rayos (1982) found out that along English vocabulary, students who spoke English at home performed significantly better than those who use only the vernacular.

Furthermore, Wandit (1990), concluded in his research that there is a significant difference in the competence of his respondents in the comprehension tests of two-word verbs. The Ibalois garnered 30.97 mean score; the Ifugaos, 30.29; Bontocs, 30.08; Northern Kankana-eyes, 29.75; and Kalinga-Apayao, 25.93.

International Language Researcher Galasso (2002) concluded in his research that there is a definite L₁ (first language) interference in L₂ (second language) learning. Particularly, he reported that the nature of L₂ errors are not just random errors taken from the myriad of possible L₁-L₂ mismatch constructs made available by UG (Universal Grammar), but rather, such errors, indeed, tend to be strategically derived from the speaker's native L₁ parameter settings. In a

stronger and simpler version, the L₂ learners tend to fall back to the L₁ rules when constrained by L₂'s different structures.

Vocabulary and Mass Media

The students are undoubtedly exposed to myriad types of mass media. Mass media, indeed, invaded everywhere: school, homes, work places and many more. Practically, the world is at the tip of everyone who is at least a computer literate.

Reading materials do not only come in the form of print but also non-print.

Al-Saghayer (2001) postulates that computer applications also have the potential to increase the depth of word knowledge of students. Many students develop vocabulary independently and sometimes even unconsciously. He adds that computer-generated vocabulary words create mental images in the learners, thus, words become easier to remember.

Groot (2003) conducted a computer-assisted Second language vocabulary acquisition. He identified problems on functional language proficiency. He said that functional language proficiency requires mastery of a considerably larger number of words and incidental acquisition has a very low frequency. Acquisition of new words from authentic L₂ reading texts is not also a solution for a number of reasons. There is a need for an intentional of many words in a relatively short period of time. Groot identified Computer-Assisted Second

Language Vocabulary Acquisition or CAVOCA as an alternative for slow unintentional word learning.

Another research by Krashen as quoted by Asraf and Ahmad (2003) suggests that the best way to help students increase their vocabulary proficiency is to encourage them to read extensively. He further explains that good vocabulary proficiency is a result of “in-school” reading and “out-of school” voluntary reading or sustained individual reading.

Likewise, Hayashi’s (1999) research on second language acquisition was very affirmative that the more exposed the L₂ learners are to English reading materials, the greater their improvement in reading ability and vocabulary knowledge is than their less exposed counterparts are.

The most convincing evidence for the benefits of extensive reading comes from what has come to be known as “book flood” studies Elly (1983) which looked at the effects of extensive reading on English language proficiency to be overwhelmingly positive. Academic performance also significantly improved.

Wakely (2004) also asserts in his article that for initial stages, the textbooks and teachers normally ensure that a basic vocabulary is acquired in the classroom and related homework study. As the course progresses, the passages become longer and are less likely to have been written especially for the courses. For the intermediate learners, readers with modified vocabulary load and with

accompanying explanations, notes and pictures are useful. For the more advanced learner, the best help comes from the unmodified texts with notes and glosses in the first language and second language to help in different passages. There is a debate on to whether literary works are best, since fiction has a high type-token ratio and therefore presents new words in abundance. More important is to ensure motivation by encouraging learners to choose texts that interest them. Accordingly, learners read such material, they feel the need to learn words and they get the continued and repeated exposure to appropriate items in unmodified language.

In the local scene, Lubrica (1986) attested to the favorable effects of mass media to vocabulary development among learners when she concluded that exposure to mass media in Filipino an increase the knowledge of students in words. Considering this finding, one can assume that exposure to English mass media can also facilitate the acquisition of English vocabulary among students.

A local study by Bautista (1995), however, revealed that exposure to media had nothing to do with English proficiency.

An American-based Filipino teacher, Crisostomo (1997) concluded that exposure to media did no significantly affect the English proficiency of his 515 respondents.

On the contrary, Corpuz (1987) reported that there is observed significant difference in his respondents' level of communicative competence with regards to mass media exposure.

Calos (1989) strengthens the findings of Corpuz when she concluded that exposure to mass media play a significant role in communicative competence. This is supported by the fact that the students who were exposed to mass media performed significantly better both in their vocabulary and linguistic competence.

Vocabulary and General Learning

One of the questions researchers sought to answer in multiple researches is this: "Why do poor children have so much trouble learning to read and learning how to learn?" One of America's great educational theorists, E.D. Hirsch Jr. as referred to by Wolf (2003) and a number of other researchers who are writing in the current edition of American Educator, have an answer. They present a compelling argument that the primary reason these children fall behind is a huge vocabulary deficit. This deficit puts them at an increasing disadvantage as they get older and the material they must read becomes more complex.

A very strong statement comes from Mc Laughlin (2004) that vocabulary is a key to successful reading and to successful academic learning generally. "Vocabulary is the best predictor of academic success," he added. Mc Laughlin's study looked not only at the size of the child's vocabulary, but also

the depth of understanding of meanings of the words. Mc Laughlin gave the example, the word “run.” In English, we say, “The clock runs”, “The boy runs”, “His nose runs”, “Her stockings run”. The child has to learn all of the multiple uses of such English words.

Literacy experts share the belief that vocabulary knowledge and the ability to comprehend text are inextricably linked – that the breadth and depth of a student’s vocabulary is a key predictor of his or her ability to understand a wide range of texts. According to Anderson and Freebody (1981), this fact is true for both native English speakers and non-native speakers.

The report of the National Reading Panel (2000), for example, concluded that the importance of vocabulary knowledge has long been recognized in the development of reading skills. As early as 1924, researchers noted the growth in reading power relies on continuous growth in word knowledge.

Effective vocabulary instruction develops the relationship between words and concepts. Concepts are the basic units of thought and belief (Smith, 1995), and words are the labels for these thoughts and beliefs. If a concept is a familiar one, then the word that corresponds to this underlying knowledge will be understood, remembered, and used. Concepts grow and develop through experiences and through examining those experiences, concretely and through reading and writing. This in turn leads to learning and using more labels — words.

One of the great challenges for educators in the early primary grades is helping students become independent learners. Independent learning in general cannot be separated from student independence in learning new vocabulary. However, if students are not continually challenged to expand their vocabularies, the degree to which they learn word meanings independently may begin to be reduced. This reduction in student independent learning is more of an issue for diverse learners than normal achievers. Diverse learners are less likely to have been exposed to the “rich” language environments that characterize the experiences of many normal achievers. This “rich” experience with language may provide the necessary context needed for word learning that characterizes many life-long word learners. Thus, a comprehensive vocabulary development program that meets the needs of diverse learners should (a) teach words that are strategic to academic success and not typically acquired independently, and (b) include systematic procedures to make students independent word learners, primarily by helping them become wide readers.

Further asserted by Hodges (2004) is the fact that vocabulary development is, of course, a lifetime undertaking in which schools play a critical role in enriching and extending the young child’s basic lexical repertoire, particularly through the medium of written language. Yet, “it is not the enlargement of vocabulary itself that is of value but the enlargement of the mind to new ideas”. For this reason, vocabulary instruction properly belongs in all

subjects of the curriculum in which students meet both new ideas and the words by which they are represented in the language. The opportunities for vocabulary instruction are especially pronounced; however, in language arts and reading where words themselves can be an appropriate focus of study. Bearing in mind the dictum that knowledge of word meaning is the ultimate objective of the study teachers can provide numerous opportunities for students to explore the origins and forms of words as a means of extending and enriching their word knowledge. Teachers can also use students' personal experiences and prior knowledge to develop vocabulary in the classroom. Through informal activities such as semantic association students brainstorm a list of words associated with a familiar word, pooling their knowledge of pertinent vocabulary as they discuss the less familiar words on the list.

Dissociation of Language

And General Intelligence

Pinker, in his book, explained the human brain circuitry. The left hemisphere surrounding the sylvan fissure appears to be designed for language, though how exactly their internal wiring gives rise to rules of language is unknown. The brain mechanisms underlying language are not just those allowing humans to be smart in general. Pinker cites a poof for the dissociation between language and general intelligence. Strokes, for example, leave adults with catastrophic losses in language though not necessarily impaired in other aspects

of intelligence such as those measured on the non-verbal parts of the intelligence quotient tests. Similarly, there is an inherited set of syndromes called specific language impairment which is marked by delayed onset of language, difficulties in articulation in childhood, and lasting difficulties in understanding, producing, and judging grammatical sentences. More interestingly, there are syndromes showing the opposite dissociation where intact language coexists with severe retardation. These cases show that language development does not fully depend on fully functioning general intelligence.

It may have also been thought that language and its different aspects go together as dictated by the left-right hemispheres of the brain. But even in the specific area of the brain devoted to language, there are further subdivisions that account to highly specific language concerns. Multiple Intelligence proponent Howard Gardner, for example, cited the Broca's area of the brain. If this area is damaged, a person will lose the ability to express himself in clear grammatical sentences, though his understanding of vocabulary and syntax remains intact.

Conceptual Framework

This study is grounded on the paradigm (Figure 1), the process, from which significant findings are expected to arise.

The input identifies the linguistic theories on whose account the variables were chosen. This includes theories which attempt to explain the language differences in male and female humans, the interplay of an individual's L_1 and L_2

INPUT

1. Linguistic theories
2. English Vocabulary Proficiency Level
3. Learner Variables
 - a. Sex
 - b. Language spoken at home
 - c. Reading material preference
4. General Academic Performance (General weighted average of grades in all academic subjects)



PROCESS

Analysis of test results (English vocabulary proficiency Level)



OUTPUT

1. Level of performance
 - 49 - 60 = very competent
 - 37 - 48 = competent
 - 24 - 36 = moderately competent
 - 13 - 24 = incompetent
 - 0 - 12 = very incompetent
2. Effects of the learners variables on the English vocabulary proficiency level
3. Correlation of the English vocabulary proficiency level and general academic performance

Figure 1. Paradigm of the Study

and the intricacies of L₂ vocabulary acquisition, and the general learning implications of language.

On account of the sex variable, a well-established and accepted scientific finding offers the explanation of the language difference between the two sexes. Encyclopedia of Educational Technology (1994) offers the information that primarily, females test better on perceptual speed, verbal fluency, determining the placement of objects, precision manual tasks, identifying specific attributes of objects and arithmetic calculations (simple math). Males, on the other hand, test better on spatial tasks, target motor skills, spotting shapes embedded in complex diagrams, and mathematical reasoning.

What accounts for the individual language learning differences and other learning preferences aside from socio-cultural influences may be the brain dominance.

It has long been accepted and certified true that for most people (practically all right-handers and most left-handers) the two sides of the cortex perform different functions. The left hemisphere is responsible for most linguistic performance in adults.

Recent studies strongly suggest that the left brain is also involved in certain non- linguistic functions, specifically those related to the perception of time: for example, the left hemisphere is superior to the right in judging temporal order, or deciding which of two stimuli was presented first. The "other side of the

brain, the right hemisphere, appears to be responsible for spatial relations, so-called "gestalt" perception (exemplified by the ability to rapidly estimate the number of dots on a card after an extremely brief exposure, without actually counting each dot), and "part-to-whole" judgments (for example, matching arcs to circles). Some aspects of musical perception may also be done by the right hemisphere.

On L₁-L₂ intricacies, Chomsky offered his theory on the universality of language. Chomsky's Universal Grammar describes how the first language (L₁) affects second language (L₂) acquisition. In the Universal Grammar theory or UG, he postulated that there is a universality of all language. This theory claims that UG which is present in every human renders all languages identical. It further suggests that there is a set of universal principles which is activated when an individual begins to acquire his L₁ and which facilitates a positive carryover from L₁ to L₂ learning. On this account, it may be said that L₂ learning should not be difficult.

Another theory, Krashen's theory (1981) contradictorily posits that the learner's knowledge of L₁ will have no effect on the L₂ learning processes – neither positively, negatively via default or otherwise. In a stronger version of this, transfer of L₁ to L₂ is strictly impossible.

Obviously, there is a vast difference between the development of the native, or first language, and the subsequent learning of a second language.

Central to the understanding of the process of second language acquisition is Cummins' theory of language proficiency. He claims that in order for a student to become proficient in a second language, both Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) need to be developed. The latter is the basis for a student's academic success but may take anywhere from 5 to 7 years, or longer, to master. Basic interpersonal communication skills, in contrast, are usually attained within the first two years of exposure to a second language and are characterized by superficial oral language skills. Language proficiency develops along continuums: from context-embedded to context-reduced communication on which vocabulary knowledge is a requirement, and from cognitively undemanding to cognitively demanding tasks.

Another hypothesis offered by L₂ researcher is the Interaction Hypothesis. This hypothesis proposes that language acquisition is strongly facilitated by the use of the target language in interaction. In particular, the negotiation of meaning has been shown to contribute greatly to the acquisition of vocabulary.

The richness of a person's vocabulary is popularly thought to be a reflection of intelligence or level of education. In fact, most standardized tests, such as the SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Tests), K-BIT (Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test) have questions that test vocabulary. Even non-linguists have recognized the

potency of vocabulary as a component of the famous human attribute – intelligence.

These theories and claims have established a sufficient ground on which the study is anchored.

The second phase, process, treats the analysis of test results known in this study as the English vocabulary proficiency level.

The final phase, output, offers the description of the English vocabulary proficiency of the respondents using the five-point scale. It also describes the effects of the learner variables on the English vocabulary proficiency level of the respondents. Finally, it will identify and describe the correlation between the respondents' English vocabulary proficiency level and their general academic performance.

With this assumed working framework, the study is expected to rev into actuality.

Definition of Terms

The common terms employed in this study, are the following:

Computer-generated articles. These refer to all kinds of reading articles accessible through the computer.

English Textbooks. These refer to all textbooks written in English regardless of the subject.

English Vocabulary Proficiency. This refers to the knowledge of the meanings of words and their use in different context.

Freshmen. This refer to the first year students of the University of Baguio Science High School SY 2005-2006.

General Academic Performance. This refers to the weighted average of the respondents' grades in all academic subjects during the second academic quarter of SY 2005-2006.

Interaction Hypothesis. This proposes that language acquisition is strongly facilitated by the use of the target language in interaction.

Interference. This refers to the negative transfer or carryover of L_1 to the L_2 .

Language Spoken at Home. This refers to the primary language used by the family members.

Lexis. This refers to words.

L_1 . This refers to first language.

L_2 . This refers to second language or English.

Reading Material Preferences. This refer to English pocketbooks, computer-generated reading materials, English newspapers and magazines, and English textbooks.

UG. This stands for Universal Grammar which Chomsky claimed to be present in every human. This, accordingly, renders all languages identical. This

set of universal principles which is activated when an individual begins to acquire his L₁ and which facilitates a positive carryover from L₁ to L₂ learning.

Vocabulary. This refers words.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated for testing.

1. The English vocabulary proficiency of the respondents is very competent along sex, language spoken at home, and reading material preference variables.
2. There is no significant difference in the English vocabulary proficiency levels of the respondents along sex, language spoken at home, and reading material preference variables.
3. There is no significant correlation between the English vocabulary proficiency and the general academic performance of the respondents.

METHODOLOGY

Locale and Time of the Study

The study was conducted at the University of Baguio Science High School during the second academic quarter, School Year 2005-2006.

The University of Baguio Science High School, founded in 1963, is the first science high school in the city. At present, it continues to provide secondary education to 414 students with its holistic curriculum.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study were the freshmen of the University of Baguio Science High School SY 2005-2006. There were 4 sections of freshmen, each section having 30 students totaling to 120 freshmen. The researcher took 100 per cent of the population. Two, however were absent during the day of test administration making the actual population of 118. There were 64 female and 54 male respondents.

Instruments of the Study

A. The Personal Data Sheet

The researcher administered a personal data sheet to the respondents to determine the three moderator variables (sex, language spoken at home, and reading material preference) along which the respondents were classified.

B. The Vocabulary Proficiency Test

The researcher used the 40-point vocabulary section of the Michigan Test and an additional 20-point test of similar type adopted from previous studies.

Reliability and Validity of the Instrument

The Michigan Test is a standardized test used by several researchers in testing the English proficiency of subjects. The researcher took only the 40-point vocabulary section since her study involves vocabulary competence only. The additional 20-point test was added to the Michigan Test to ensure a wider and therefore representative of the vocabulary words. The test was used by other researchers like Iloreta (2002) in their query to determine the vocabulary proficiency of their respondents.

As such, the reliability and validity of such instruments were well established.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher completed this study following this procedure:

She personally sought from the University of Baguio Science High School principal the permission to administer the Vocabulary Proficiency Test and the personal data sheet among the freshmen.

She personally administered the Vocabulary Proficiency Test and the personal data sheet.

The score of the respondents were classified and interpreted by using this five-point scale:

49 - 60 = Very Competent

37 - 48 = Competent

25 - 36 = Moderately Competent

13 - 24 = Incompetent

0 - 12 = Very Incompetent

She also got a copy of the general weighted average of the freshmen after the second academic quarter. This, she did, because she had full access to the information.

Finally, she collated, tallied, subjected to statistical tools, and interpreted the data. Hence, the results and the conclusions are rendered authentic.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The data of this research were subjected to statistical tools that allowed interpretation of the raw data.

The researcher used the weighted mean to describe the vocabulary proficiency level of the respondents. This answers the first problem.

The formula runs:

$$\bar{X}_w = \frac{\sum W_i X_i}{\sum W_i}$$

Where:

X = assigned value to the obtained scores of the respondents in the English Vocabulary Proficiency Test

Σ = summation

W = weight of assigned values

To test whether there is a significant difference in the vocabulary proficiency level of the respondents along sex, language spoken, and reading material preference variables, the researcher used Friedman two-way analysis of Variance by Ranks.

The formula runs:

$$F\text{-Computed: } F_r = \frac{MSS_b}{MSS_w}$$

Where:

$$\text{Total Sums of Squares: } TSS = \Sigma X^2 - (\Sigma X)^2$$

Sum of the Squares Between Columns:

$$SS_b = \frac{1}{\text{No. of rows}} \Sigma (\text{sum of each column})^2 - \frac{(\Sigma X)^2}{N}$$

$$\text{Sum of the Squares Within Columns: } SS_w = TSS - SS_b$$

$$\text{Total Degree of Freedom: } df_t = N - 1$$

$$\text{Between Columns Degree of Freedom: } df_b = K - 1$$

$$\text{Within Columns Degree of Freedom: } df_w = df_t - df_b$$

Mean Sum of Squares Between Columns: $MSS_b = \frac{SS_b}{df_b}$

Mean Sum of Squares Within Columns: $MSS_w = \frac{SS_w}{df_w}$

F-computed: $F_r = \frac{MSS_b}{MSS_w}$

Where:

N= the number of samples

F_r = the computed value of F

F_t = the tabular value

K = the number of columns

df = the degree of freedom

To determine the relationship between the respondents' vocabulary proficiency level and their academic performance, the researcher used Pearson's Product Correlation Coefficient. The formula is:

$$r = \frac{n\sum XY - \sum X \sum Y}{\sqrt{[n\sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2][n\sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2]}}$$

Where:

N=number of paired observations

$\sum X$ = sum of values of X

$\sum Y$ = sum of the values of Y

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents data which were gathered, tabulated and subjected to statistical tools and their corresponding interpretations that answer the problems of this study.

English Vocabulary Proficiency Level of the Respondents Along Sex Variable

Table 1 presents the finding that the male freshmen's English vocabulary proficiency level was 3.59 interpreted as competent and that the female freshmen's English vocabulary proficiency level was 3.67 which was slightly higher with the same descriptive interpretation.

Of the 54 male respondents, 4 scored very competent and of the 64 female respondents, 5 scored a very competent English vocabulary proficiency level.

Majority of both sexes showed a competent proficiency level.

Meanwhile, 26 percent of the male population or 14 males and 31 percent of the female population or 20 females showed a moderately proficient level.

Under incompetent proficiency level, there were 6 or 11 percent of the males and 3 or 5 percent of the females.

None of the respondents manifested a very incompetent proficiency level.

The male respondents with 3.59 and the female respondents with 3.67,

Table 1. English Vocabulary Proficiency Levels Along Sex Variable

SEX	Very competent (4.51-5.00)	Competent (3.51-4.5)	Moderately competent (2.51-3.5)	Incompetent (1.51-2.50)	Very Incompetent (1.0-1.50)	Wtd Mean
Males	4	30	14	6	0	3.59
Females	5	36	20	3	0	3.67

were interpreted competent. Hence, the hypothesis that the respondents' vocabulary proficiency level is very competent, is rejected.

Various researchers, Alparo (1997), for example, revealed in their study that vocabulary, as a component of English proficiency, is an area of difficulty.

Alsiyang (1997) concluded that along vocabulary, her subjects showed an incompetent proficiency level.

The respondents of the studies by As-il (1997), Iloreta (2002) and Lopez (1986) showed a fairly satisfactory level of competence.

On the other hand, Bautista (1995) concluded that along vocabulary, her respondents showed a very good proficiency level.

It may be assumed that since English is a second language among Filipinos (and not a foreign language as it is to other non-native speakers), they should be very competent in vocabulary. But there are other surrounding factors that determine the vocabulary proficiency of the students which may be beyond classroom influences.

English Vocabulary Proficiency
Level of the Respondents Along
Language Spoken Variable

Table 2. The English Vocabulary Proficiency Level Along Language Spoken Variable

Language	Very competent (4.51-5.00)	Competent (3.51-4.5)	Moderately competent (2.51-3.5)	Incompetent (1.51-2.50)	Very Incompetent (1.0-1.5)	Wtd. Mean
Tagalog	6	57	21	2	0	3.78
Ilokano	0	4	9	2	0	3.13
English	3	5	0	0	0	4.38
Korean	0	1	1	5	0	2.43
French	0	0	1	0	0	3.00
Punjabi	0	0	1	0	0	3.00

Table 2 summarizes the vocabulary proficiency levels of the respondents according to language spoken at home variable.

The Tagalogs, who made up 73% of the population, averaged 3.78 described as competent. Details show that 6 of them were very competent, 21 faired moderately competent and 2 scored incompetent.

Of the 15 Ilokano speakers, 9 of them faired moderately competent; 4 faired competent; and 2 scored under incompetent proficiency level totaling to a 3.13 average interpreted as moderately competent.

Of the 7 English-speaking respondents, 3 were very competent and the rest averaging 4.38 interpreted as competent.

Meanwhile, the Koreans averaged 2.43 interpreted as incompetent. This proficiency level was attributed to the incompetent proficiency level of 5 of the 7 Koreans.

With the varied and lower general vocabulary proficiency level of the respondents according to their linguistic group, the hypothesis that the vocabulary proficiency level of the respondents along language spoken variable is very competent, is therefore rejected.

English Vocabulary Proficiency
Level of the Respondents Along
Reading Material Preference

Table 3 presents, according to reading material preference, the respondents' English vocabulary proficiency level.

In a multiple response survey questionnaire, English newspapers and magazines appear to be the most read by the respondents. Sixty-nine respondents who preferred English newspapers and magazines scored 3.67 weighted average interpreted as moderately competent.

Meanwhile, computer-generated reading materials came next to English newspaper and magazines. Sixty-one readers of these materials averaged a 3.72 English vocabulary proficiency level which was competent.

English textbooks readers manifested competent English vocabulary proficiency with a 3.55 weighted average.

English pocketbooks appeared to be the least preferred with only 40 readers who revealed the highest weighted average but with the same descriptive proficiency level that is competent.

Table 3. English vocabulary proficiency level along reading material preference

Reading Material Preference	Very Competent (4.51-5.00)	Competent (3.51-4.50)	Moderately competent (2.51-3.5)	Incompetent (1.51-2.50)	Very Incompetent (1.00-1.50)	Wtd. Mean
Computer-generated English Reading Material	7	33	18	3	0	3.72
English Pocketbooks	5	29	6	0	0	3.98
English Textbooks	4	30	18	6	0	3.55
English Newspapers and Magazines	3	41	24	1	0	3.67

With the respondents' competent vocabulary proficiency along all the reading material preferences, the hypothesis that the respondents' vocabulary proficiency level along all the reading material preferences is very competent is rejected.

Significance Level of the Difference in the Vocabulary Proficiency Levels of the Respondents Along Sex Variable

Table 4 points out the significance level in the proficiency levels of the respondents along sex variable.

The observed value, 7.60, was lower than the tabular value of 9.488. This indicated that there was no significant difference in the English vocabulary proficiency levels of the male and female freshmen of the University of Baguio Science High School. Thus, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference

Table 4. Significance Level in the Difference in the Proficiency Levels of the Respondents Along Sex Variable

SEX	Very competent (4.51-5.00)	Competent (3.51-4.50)	Moderately competent (2.51-3.50)	Incompetent (1.51-2.50)	Very Incompetent (1.00-1.50)	Wtd. Mean
Males	4	30	14	6	0	3.59
Females	5	36	20	3	0	3.67

$X^2_{.05}=9.488$

Fr=7.60

-Not Significant

in the English vocabulary proficiency levels of the respondents along sex variable is accepted.

Parallel to this result is Alsiyang's (1997) finding that along gender variable, the males did just as well as the female respondents.

As a further support to this is Bautista's (1995) finding that gender rendered no effect on the English proficiency (of which vocabulary knowledge is a component) of her student-teacher respondents.

Moreover, Tiorisio (1998) also concluded in her research that one cannot say that the females are more linguistically proficient than males or vice versa.

On the contrary, Lopez (1986) revealed that his female respondents performed better than the males in a communication competence test in English.

Tiorisio (1998), citing Rubin's study, maintained that girls surpass boys in verbal ability hence, females usually express themselves in words more readily and skillfully than boys.

Similarly, Dacanay (2000) revealed in her study that gender affected her respondents' comprehension of non-verbal materials which include graphs,

flowcharts, diagrams, and tables. Accordingly, females performed better than their male counterparts.

In agreement to the previous author, Calos (1999) found out that her female subjects performed better than their male counterparts in vocabulary competence.

Moreover, Galangco (1988) disclosed that female teachers had a higher English proficiency than the male teachers.

Naiden, as cited by Tiorisio, furthered the assertion that boys, at every age, are inferior to girls in size of vocabulary. This claim is further strengthened by researchers' reports that boys usually outnumber girls in remedial reading classes.

It is frequently asserted that individual difference in learning may be attributed in part to sex. There are myriad studies aiming to determine whether or not the sexes differ in general intelligence but have not yielded consistent findings. Sometimes, statistically significant differences favor the girls; sometimes, they favor the boys. The significant difference usually is usually attributed to the size of samples used. Mean differences between the two sexes are small and seem to be largely a function of a particular test used, the nature of the items, and the age of the subjects. With reduced sex biases in the I.Q. test, the differences may be attributed to the different experiences of the sexes.

Significance Level of the Difference in the
Vocabulary Proficiency Levels of the
Respondents Along Language Spoken Variable

Table 5. Significance Level of Difference in the Vocabulary Proficiency Levels of the Respondents Along Language Spoken Variable

Language	Very competent (4.51-5.00)	Competent (3.51-4.50)	Moderately competent (2.51-3.50)	Incompetent (1.51-2.50)	Very Incompetent (1.00-1.50)	Wtd. Mean
Tagalog	6	57	21	2	0	3.78
Ilokano	0	4	9	2	0	3.13
English	3	5	0	0	0	4.38
Korean	0	1	1	5	0	2.43
French	0	0	1	0	0	3.00
Punjabi	0	0	1	0	0	3.00

$X^2_{.05}=9.488$

Fr=8.10

Not significant

Table 5 presents the significance level in the proficiency levels of the respondents along language spoken at home variable.

The observed value, 8.10, at .05 significance level was lower than the tabular value, 9.488. This indicated that there was no significant difference in the English vocabulary proficiency levels of the respondents along language spoken variable. With this, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the vocabulary proficiency levels of the respondents along the language spoken variable is accepted.

It may be observed that the Koreans, Ilokanos, and the lone French and Punjabi speakers averaged far below the other linguistic groups but their population is too small as compared to the Tagalogs. Hence, the difference in the

mean does not render a significant difference in the proficiency level of the respondents.

Alsiyang's (1997) research on communicative proficiency with respect to the dialect spoken shows that there is no significant difference in the communicative proficiency level of her respondents exists.

Hufana's investigation (1980) on the errors of freshmen agricultural students who belonged to six linguistic groups – Ilocano, Pangasinan, Ibaloi, Ifugao, Benguet Kankana-eyes, and Bontoc Kankana-eyes show the same result that the first language of her respondents did not project any significant relationship with the type of errors her respondents made.

Corpuz (1987) also concluded that there is no significant relationship in the level of communicative competence in written communication of the University of Baguio student teachers along L₁ variable.

On the contrary, Wui concluded in her research that the dialect which her respondents spoke has a significant bearing on their written communicative proficiency.

Similarly, Rayos (1982) found out that along English vocabulary, students who spoke English at home performed significantly better than those who use only the vernacular.

International Language Researcher Galasso (2002) concluded in his

research that there is a definite L₁ (first language) interference in L₂ (second language) learning. Particularly, he reported that the nature of L₂ errors are not just random errors taken from the myriad of possible L₁-L₂ mismatch constructs made available by UG (Universal Grammar), but rather, such errors, indeed, tend to be strategically derived from the speaker's native L₁ parameter settings. In a stronger and simpler version, the L₂ learners fell back to the L₁ rules when they were constrained by L₂'s different structures.

Significance Level of the Difference in the Vocabulary Proficiency Levels of the Respondents Along Reading Material Preferences

Table 6 points out the level of significance of the proficiency levels of the respondents according to the reading material preference.

The observed value of 14.95 was greater than the table value, 9.488, at a significance level of .05. Hence, the hypothesis that the English vocabulary proficiency levels of the respondents along reading material preference variable do not differ significantly, is rejected.

It is then fair to say that readers of pocketbook manifest an advantage over readers of computer-generated reading materials, English newspapers and magazines and English textbooks.

Favorable to the preceding finding, Corpuz (1987) reported that there is observed significant difference in his respondents' level of communicative competence with regard to mass media exposure.

Table 6. Significance Level of Difference in the Proficiency Level Along Reading Material Preference

Reading Material Preference	Very Competent (4.51-5.00)	Competent (3.51-4.50)	Moderately competent (2.51-3.50)	Incompetent (1.51-2.50)	Very Incompetent (1.00-1.50)	Wtd Mean
Computer-generated English Reading Material	7	33	18	3	0	3.72
English Pocketbooks	5	29	6	0	0	3.98
English Textbooks	4	30	18	6	0	3.55
English Newspapers and Magazines	3	41	24	1	0	3.67
$X^2_{.05}=9.488$ $F_r=14.95$ *Significant						

Similarly, Calos (1989) strengthened the findings of Corpuz when she concluded that exposure to mass media plays a significant role in communicative competence. This is supported by the fact that the students who were exposed to mass media performed significantly better both in their vocabulary and linguistic competence.

In like manner, Lubrica (1986) attested to the favorable effects of mass media to vocabulary development among learners when she concluded that exposure to mass media in Filipino can increase the knowledge of students in words. Considering this finding, one can assume that exposure to English mass media can also facilitate the acquisition of English vocabulary among students.

Moreover, Al-Saghayer (2001) postulated that computer applications also have the potential to increase the depth of word knowledge of students. Many students develop vocabulary independently and sometimes even unconsciously.

He added that computer-generated vocabulary words create mental images in the learners, thus, words become easier to remember.

Groot (2003) conducted a computer-assisted Second language vocabulary acquisition and found out that students master target language vocabulary with Computer-Assisted Second Language Vocabulary Acquisition or CAVOCA. Consequently, he proposed that CAVOCA is a good alternative for slow unintentional word learning.

Likewise, Hayashi's (1999) research on second language acquisition was very affirmative that the more exposed the L₂ learners are to English reading materials, the greater their improvement in reading ability and vocabulary knowledge than their less exposed counterparts.

The most convincing evidence for the benefits of extensive reading comes from what has come to be known as "book flood" studies Elly (1983) which looked at the effects of extensive reading on English language proficiency to be overwhelmingly positive.

Wakely (2004) also asserts in his article that for initial stages, the textbooks and teachers normally ensure that a basic vocabulary is acquired in the classroom and related homework study. For the intermediate learners, readers with modified vocabulary load and with accompanying explanations, notes and pictures are useful. For the more advanced learner, the best help comes from the unmodified texts with notes and glosses in the first language and second

language to help in the different passages. There is a debate on to whether literary works are best, since fiction has a high type-token ratio and therefore, presents new words in abundance.

Contrary to the result of this study are findings of other researchers. Bautista (1995), for example, revealed that exposure to different forms of media bears no impact in the English proficiency level of her respondents.

An American-based Filipino teacher, Crisostomo (1997) concluded that exposure to media did not significantly affect the English proficiency of his 515 respondents.

The Relationship Between the Respondents' English Vocabulary Proficiency Level and their General Academic Performance

Using the Pearson's Product Correlation Coefficient, the researcher established the relationship between the two major variables of this study.

The observed value, 0.55094, at 0.5 level of significance, was higher than the tabular value 0.1946. This indicated that there was a significant and positive correlation between the respondents' English vocabulary proficiency level and their general academic performance. Thus, the hypothesis that there is no significant correlation between the two variables is rejected.

Directly parallel to this finding is the result of the recent study of Adebayo (2004). Using a multiple regression analysis, Adebayo found out that the vocabulary score of some college students on the NDRT (a re-admission

test) is a significant predictor of academic achievement and that other variables such as age and gender did not predict academic success of the students.

A strong suggestion that shares this finding comes from Becker (1977), who, after a lengthy research, concluded that a relationship exists between vocabulary knowledge and academic achievement.

Congruent to Becker's suggestion is Foorman's (1986) conclusion that word identification is a reflection of accessibility to text.

Years later, researchers such as Simmons and Kameenui (1998) reported that learning, as a language-based activity, is fundamentally and profoundly dependent on vocabulary knowledge.

In affirmation, Chall, Jacobs and Baldwin (1987) asserted that between low and high academic achieving students, the vocabulary difference is estimated to be approximately 5000 words.

As a further support to the foregoing conclusions, Hirsch Jr., as cited by Wolf (2003) presented a compelling argument that the primary reason children fall behind is a huge vocabulary deficit.

In the frontiers of reading, Anderson and Freebody (1981), literacy experts, share the belief that vocabulary knowledge and the ability to comprehend text are inextricably linked – that the breadth and depth of a student's vocabulary is a key predictor of his or her ability to understand a wide

range of texts. According to them, this fact is true for both native English speakers and non-native speakers.

The report of the National Reading Panel (2000), for example, concluded that the importance of vocabulary knowledge has long been recognized in the development of reading skills. As early as 1924, researchers noted the growth in reading power relies on continuous growth in word knowledge.

Linguist Smith, (1995) summarized his studies on vocabulary and learning. He said that effective vocabulary instruction develops the relationship between words and concepts. Concepts are the basic units of thought and belief and words are the labels for these thoughts and beliefs. If the concept is a familiar one, then the word that corresponds to this underlying knowledge will be understood, remembered, and used. Concepts grow and develop through experiences and through examining those experiences, concretely and through reading and writing. This in turn leads to learning and using more labels — words.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This study aimed to identify the relationship between the English vocabulary proficiency level and the academic performance of the freshmen of the University of Baguio Science High School. It also sought to determine the English vocabulary proficiency levels of the respondents along the identified variables: sex, language spoken at home.

The male and the female respondents showed a competent English vocabulary proficiency level, as to the sex variable.

Along the language spoken at home variable, respondents who speak Tagalog and English showed a competent proficiency level. The Ilokanos and the lone Punjabi and French speakers performed moderately competent. Koreans manifested an incompetent proficiency level.

All the respondents in all kinds of reading material fared generally competent but differ significantly.

There is no significant difference in the English vocabulary proficiency levels of the respondents along sex and language spoken variables. Reading material preference variable, on the other hand, bears a difference in the respondents' proficiency level. The readers of pocketbook manifest an advantage over readers of computer-generated reading materials, English newspapers and magazines and English textbooks.

It was revealed that there is a significant and positive correlation between the respondents' English vocabulary proficiency levels and their academic performance. The higher the English vocabulary proficiency level of a respondent, the better his academic performance.

Findings

The following findings are the answers to the problems of this study:

1. a. The English vocabulary proficiency level of the University of Baguio Science High School along the variable sex is competent.
 - b. The respondents who speak Tagalog and English showed a competent English vocabulary proficiency. The Ilokanos manifested a moderately competent proficiency level. The Koreans showed an incompetent vocabulary proficiency level and the lone Punjabi and French speaking students fared moderately competent along language spoken variable.
 - c. The readers of English pocketbooks, computer-generated reading materials, English newspapers and magazines and English textbooks manifested a competent English vocabulary proficiency.
2. There is no significant difference in the English vocabulary proficiency levels of the respondents along sex and language spoken variables. On the other hand, there exists a significant difference in the English proficiency levels of the respondents along the reading material preference variable.

3. A significant and positive correlation exists between the respondents' English vocabulary proficiency level and their general academic performance.

Conclusions

The following conclusions are based on the findings of the study:

1. The English vocabulary proficiency levels of the University of Baguio Science High School freshmen is competent.
2. Sex and language spoken at home variables do not account for the difference in the respondents' English vocabulary proficiency levels but reading material preference variable does.
3. The English vocabulary proficiency level of the University of Baguio Science High School freshmen is a good predictor of general academic performance. The higher the English vocabulary proficiency level of the respondent is, the better his academic performance.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are forwarded:

1. Wide and independent reading should be encouraged among learners until it becomes a habit. Through wide and independent reading, students come in contact with vocabulary that rarely occurs in spoken language, but that is much more likely to be encountered in printed language. Vocabulary used in oral communication such as television or adult conversation is

extremely restricted. Through wide reading, learners gain a sense of the context in which each new and unfamiliar word is used. Fiction works such as pocketbooks offer a wider scope of vocabulary.

2. It is most appropriate for every language teacher or reader to develop “a-word-a-day” routine wherein there is a focus on an interesting and challenging word. The words should be introduced and discussed and students should be encouraged to look for them and use them in and out of school. As a tool, a vocabulary notebook is most fitting and therefore recommended.
3. Teachers and even parents should teach children as early as possible the proper use of dictionaries, thesauruses, and other reference works. Exploring dictionary entries can be one important and effective component of understanding a word deeply.
4. There should be a more teacher-directed and curriculum-directed classroom activities to fostering vocabulary. If education is going to have a serious function, then it must do its best to ensure good vocabulary knowledge among learners. Vocabulary development should not simply be left to chance.
5. Schools should offer a wide variety of reading materials – especially those that are highly relevant to the age and interest of children. Fiction

works, which, more likely use unfamiliar words offer better chance of vocabulary development.

6. Not all learners, kids – most especially are alike, but educators could do more to bridge the vocabulary knowledge difference between high and low academic performing learners by devising tools for vocabulary development which are both interesting and challenging.
7. There is a need for teachers to create language situations where students are constrained with the need to know a lot of words. As such, language learners' extrinsic motivation may shift to intrinsic motivation.
8. Since learners show genuine interest in computer-generated reading materials, school administrators ought to provide students sufficient access to the Internet.
9. Teachers themselves should be interested in words. A language teacher is most appropriately a "linguaphile."
10. Further researches on vocabulary development is encouraged especially on what and which vocabulary teaching strategies are most effective.

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Appendices A

THE INSTRUMENT

A. Personal Data Sheet

I. Personal Information

Name: _____ Sex: Female
 Male

Language Spoken at Home: (Please check one.)

- English
 Tagalog
 Ilokano
 Ibaloi
 Kankana-ey
 _____ (Others, please specify.)

Reading Material Preferences

Please check the reading materials you prefer to read.

- Computer-generated English articles (All sorts of reading texts.)
 English pocketbooks (novels)
 English textbooks (all textbooks in any subject using the English language)
 English newspapers and magazines

B. English Vocabulary Proficiency Test

PART II OF THE MICHIGAN ENGLISH
PROFICIENCY TEST VOCABULARY

- A. There are two types of vocabulary items in this test. In the first type you are given a sentence followed by four words and phrases. You are to find the word or phrase that is closest in meaning to the underlined word or words in the sentences and that could be used in the sentence without changing its meaning greatly.

Example

1. It's too windy to go for a stroll
 - a. swim
 - b. sail

- c. drive
- d. walk

The word “walk” means about the word “stroll” in this sentence. The sentence, “It’s windy 2to go for a stroll.” To show that “d”, “walk” is the correct answer, blacken or shade the box that corresponds to you answer.

B. In the other type of item you are given a sentence with one word omitted and a list of four words. You are to find the word that would best complete the sentence.

Example:

1. Because of the storm and rough winds, it would be foolish to go out sailing today in a small _____.
 - a. automobile
 - b. house
 - c. boat
 - d. beast

The word “boat” fits best the sentence so that it reads, “Because of the storm and rough waves, it would be foolish to go out today in a small boat.” To show that “c” is the correct answer, encircle the letter.

1. One hundred thousand people wanted to go to the football game but the stadium had seats for only fifty thousand people.
 - a. attendants
 - b. victims
 - c. bullies
 - d. spectators
2. Peaches are plentiful this year.
 - a. pleasant
 - b. very sweet
 - c. in large supply
 - d. in full baskets
3. He bet money on every horse race and every baseball game even though his wife did not want him to _____.
 - a. propel
 - b. gamble
 - c. exploit
 - d. endow
4. Harris was never able to do the work by himself because Mary would always _____.
 - a. defer
 - b. interfere
 - c. dispense
 - d. discontent
5. When food is scarce, people try to hoard large quantity of it.
 - a. eat up
 - b. grow up
 - c. store up
 - d. sell
6. David is married to Mary; he is her _____.
 - a. plasma
 - b. span
 - c. anathema
 - d. spouse
7. He rejected all the plans that were given to him.
 - a. changed
 - b. like
 - c. thought about
 - d. refused
8. John did not have to write the composition if he didn’t want to; it was _____.
 - a. optional
 - b. eligible
 - c. reorganized
 - d. unseemly

9. Their performances are always outstanding.
 a. outside b. crowded c. very good d. understood
10. Jenny's dress became too small after she washed it because it _____.
 a. shrank b. slumped c. _____ d. stalled
11. If you moisten this, it will work better.
 a. dry b. wet c. fix d. change
12. You told me that Jack will arrive tomorrow, but I am not certain that he will. Can you give me some _____?
 a. prescription b. agreement c. assurance d. insurance
13. He is hardly awake.
 a. completely b. scarcely c. already d. never
14. They need something to lure the fish.
 a. cook b. clean c. attract d. find
15. This farm breeds some of the best race horses in the country.
 a. raises b. sells c. owns d. races
16. He was asked to leave school because of his bad behavior.
 a. credit b. character c. health d. actions
17. Blend the ingredients carefully.
 a. cook b. study c. mix d. bake
18. I am going to hire someone to prune the trees.
 a. dig up b. pick the fruit from c. plant d. cut some branches
19. Bees live in a _____.
 a. hindrance b. hive c. sty d. stable
20. He is very stubborn.
 a. short b. strange c. hard to change d. young
21. A spider spins a _____ that looks like lace.
 a. web b. yarn c. thicket d. fare
22. The policeman wouldn't take the money when Chester tried to ____ him.
 a. gripe b. bribe c. grief d. bridle
23. Aside from his salary, he has little money.
 a. even with b. because c. compared to d. except for
24. Stones used for building houses usually come from _____.
 a. dales d. bumps c. mines d. quarries
25. He is revising the plans for the building.
 a. changing b. seeing c. painting d. learning
26. You should overlook his faults.
 a. correct b. watch c. find d. not notice
27. We could hear the dog gnawing on the bone.
 a. biting on b. fighting over c. barking at d. begging for
28. John wishes to lease a house.
 a. rent b. build c. move d. sell

29. I need something to quench the fire.
 a. start b. put out c. feed d. cook on
30. If the work here were important, I would help you do it, but I won't help because it is so _____.
 a. trivial b. reliable c. sleepy d. sad
31. Bill was very drowsy.
 a. drunk b. angry c. sleepy d. sad
32. I have not been able to ascertain the fact.
 a. talk about b. discover c. follow d. consider
33. It has not rained for forty days, so there will not be much water to drink until the end of the _____.
 a. sponge b. drought c. draft d. spout
34. Allene is sick, but she will be able to go to the Christmas party next week because her illness is _____.
 a. affable b. affluent c. temporary d. temporal
35. I don't relish the thought of going to work early.
 a. enjoy b. understand c. draft d. spout
36. We must revoke the grant given to the school.
 a. increase b. talk back c. watch d. credit
37. He barely made it on time.
 a. alone b. never c. just d. seldom
38. Mary seems rather subdued today.
 a. silly b. quiet c. angry d. early
39. His remarks were flattering.
 a. interesting b. stupid c. easy to understand d. full of praise
40. He was fettered and unable to stand up.
 a. frightened b. sick c. chained d. feathered

B. Read the paragraph below, after which, pick out from the option the correct meaning of the underlined word in the paragraph.

Possibilities abound in the ocean. In addition to hundreds of varieties of fish, some kinds of sea weeds can be eaten, or planktons could be easily be nurtured and harvested as a crop. So far, though, this floating mass of microscopic plants and animals is considered pretty much inedible. It's nutritious enough, containing many proteins, vitamins and minerals that humans need for survival, but so far, no one has been able to figure out how to disguise its awful taste.

- _____41. abound
 a. few b. do not exist c. many d. kind of mineral

- _____42. planktons
a. tiny sea life b. wood-like plant c. game fish d. kind of mineral
- _____43. nurtured
a. discovered b. raised c. examined d. washed
- _____44. microscopic
a. too enormous b. very small c. fascinating d. easy to catch
- _____45. inedible
a. not fit to eat b. nourishing c. popular d. hard to grow

C. Read the sentences and pick out the synonym of the underlined word.

- _____46. Starfish are the best-known members of invertebrate phylum echenodermata.
a. famous b. unpopular c. biggest d. expensive
- _____47. The verdict given by the judge is just.
a. punishment b. decision c. evaluation d. suggestion
- _____48. The son of the murdered man is in a vindictive spirit.
a. quarrelsome b. angry c. revengeful d. rage
- _____49. Vultures are enormous birds that live mainly a scavengers or carrion.
a. tiny b. big c. scary d. cruel
- _____50. How could people afford to spend so much on cosmetics when thousands of people are living in penury?
a. wealth b. generosity c. poverty d. simplicity

C. Read each sentence and choose the antonym of the underlined word.

- _____51. Melancholic movies make her cry.
a. interesting b. joyful c. sad d. long
- _____52. Not all hounds abhor foxes.
a. hate b. love c. bite d. befriend
- _____53. The statements given were purely ambiguous.
a. clear b. vague c. short d. provoking
- _____54. The statistics report was accurate.
a. erroneous b. exact c. false d. true
- _____55. The jaguar is a wild cat found in South Africa.
a. cruel b. tame c. wide d. frightful

D. Choose the letter of the word that means the same as the item.

- _____56. Illustrious
a. odd b. concealed c. famous d. industrious

- _____57. Discreet
a. careful b. careless c. brief d. secretive
- _____58. Flunk
a. fail b. suffer c. mourn d. succeed
- _____59. Meritorious
a. infamous b. learned c. ambitious d. praiseworthy
- _____60. Tranquility
a. humility b. courage c. antiquity d. serenity



Appendices B

English Vocabulary Score and the General Academic Performance of the Respondents

NO.	NAME OF STUDENTS	Eng. Voc Prof Score	General Academic Performance (Weighted Ave.)
		60 – perfect score	99 – highest possible grade
MALES			
1	ABALOS, Amaranth	39	88.46
2	ABRATIQUE, Banoar R.	46	97.03
3	ACOSTA, Anna Jane	33	89.31
4	ACOSTA, Louise Ann B.	36	94.83
5	ALMORA, Ivana Rae G.	48	93.77
6	AMON Gabriel Angelo P.	40	84.00
7	BALTAZAR, Sofia	37	94.00
8	BANASAN, Kenneth	40	84.63
9	BANDONG, Diana	30	91.43
10	BARIWAN, Hannah B.	40	90.37
11	BATENGA, Marie	46	95.63
12	BAUTISTA, Jeanine	43	91.51
13	BAYLON, Marianne Sophia C.	47	93.00
14	BERNABE, Chelsea	40	91.57
15	BIDDIC, Jefflynne Valerie B.	31	90.46
16	BILLIONES, Chrisann	48	98.03
17	BITAGA, Marjorie	32	89.23
18	BLANDO, Martin E.	42	84.80
19	BOLIMA, Haoji S.	32	87.06
20	BOTENGAN, Daryl P.	34	84.97
21	BUCAOTO, Charisse P.	41	94.49
22	CACHERO, Cesar	46	89.40
23	CALINAO, Elizabeth	40	85.89
24	CALUB, Marc Jan D.	45	95.34
25	CANLAS, Jinky Grace E.	51	93.71
26	CARREON, Benjamin M. Jr.	26	85.86
27	CHAE, Roy	13	85.29
28	CHUNGALAO, Rufino Jim H.	50	84.23
29	COLTE, Melody	24	91.77
30	COOPER, Colvin	35	86.46

31	DE DIOS, Mark	41	85.09
32	DE FIESTA, Ian Gabriel M.	42	88.23
33	DEGAY, Kyla Mae Luise	39	90.29
34	DEL ROSARIO, Julia Noemi P.	39	92.20
35	DHO, Jin Sung	18	93.80
36	DIATOR, Cedric T.	34	85.66
37	DIOQUINO, Paolo Luis S.	48	92.06
38	DOMINGUEZ, Roge Carla S.	36	89.34
39	DONATO, Inna Camille C.	30	95.89
40	DUMAWING, Hardy P.	31	89.83
41	ESTACIO, Sarah	27	90.51
42	FERNANDEZ, Rufus M.	31	85.06
43	FORONDA, Nicole C.	51	94.23
44	FRIAS, Samantha Paige M.	38	87.26
45	GAERLAN, Avery Joshua C.	51	87.03
46	GAVIOLA, Thea Caryl	40	89.14
47	GENOVE, Ruel E.	35	87.97
48	GOMEZ, Megan	22	87.66
49	GUTAY, Shemmy	41	92.83
50	JEOUNG, Ean-A	36	92.43
51	JIMENEZ, Veja Jenina	46	93.51
52	KIM, Ji-woo (kevin)	23	85.51
53	KIM, Sang Yun (simon)	20	86.77
54	KONG, Un-Chel (eric)	26	83.91
55	LIBAN, Michelangelo D.	38	88.91
56	LICERALDE, Karen P.	43	90.77
57	LICERALDE, Van Reynald	43	96.66
58	LUNES, Jesrei M.	38	88.06
59	MACAY, John Jefferson E	41	89.71
60	MALLARI, Meghan G.	39	91.11
61	MALONES, Mark Christian L.	43	91.11
62	MALONG, Amberleigh B.	39	91.40
63	MANALO, Tiffany	38	89.31
64	MARIANO, Jordi Arrayne C.	36	90.51
65	MARTINEZ, Amber Ruth L.	43	92.09
66	MARTINEZ, Roxiella	31	90.83
67	MARZAN, Raymond Jordan	48	91.97
68	MENDOZA, German	40	89.57
69	MOLINA, Romar P.	38	93.63
70	MORAN, Nilo Angelo G.	52	91.77
71	NAVARRO, Marico Gabrielle B.	46	96.14
72	NIDOY, Krizzia	32	91.97

73	NISPEROS, Janet Claire	25	90.17
74	NONES, Nikki N.	44	91.34
75	OCHOA, Patricia G.	43	89.09
76	ODSEY, Ronjasen	33	86.91
77	PALMA, Raquel	33	93.77
78	PANTALEON, Joaquin Adrian M.	45	89.29
79	PARIÑAL, Jezreel Philip L.	47	88.31
80	PATAUEG, Ian Marlo D>	28	86.80
81	PATNAAN, Walford M.	26	86.57
82	PATROCINIO, Yvette	52	95.17
83	PERALTA, Alissa Lora V.	46	91.91
84	PEREZ, Raiza	34	88.14
85	PUNJABI, Avinash	38	87.91
86	REFUERZO, Vann Raphael	37	87.63
87	REGACHO, Cassandra Gaile G.	46	94.17
88	RIBAYA, Sofia Marice D.	46	89.54
89	RICO, Precious	28	88.60
90	RODRIGUERA, Eduard Angelo Q.	45	95.46
91	RODRIGUEZ, Tristan Jaiko G.	30	89.83
92	RUIZ, Raiza Loren Grace	30	92.60
93	SALAZAR, Julles Adrian S.	39	89.74
94	SANCHEZ, Kenneth Paul M.	39	85.14
95	SANTONIL, Princess P.	42	91.83
96	SANTOS, Flora Mae M.	52	97.57
97	SAPIGAO, Jenicka G.	37	94.89
98	SINGALAWA, Gene	39	90.57
99	SINGH, Gurmeen	30	85.91
100	SINGSON, Krizza D.	39	94.80
101	SOMERA, Derrick	41	84.74
102	SONG, Min Hye	41	94.91
103	SORIANO, Mharge Danielle A.	35	90.14
104	SURTIDA, Janel Aira M.	45	91.77
105	TACAY, Gerlyn Mae B.	23	91.34
106	TACULOG, Wilbur	30	86.80
107	TANDOC, Gayle	48	93.54
108	TANDOC, Mikko	41	86.51
109	TIBALDO, Inah	36	90.60
110	TORRES, Luisito	49	94.60

111	TUAZON, Kenn	39	86.26
112	UY, Oliver Dwyne P.	46	90.34
113	VALENCERINA, Cheryl Beaf Franz L.	37	91.17
114	VERIDIANO, Raiza Nerissa B.	40	91.17
115	VILLA, Frances	35	87.94
116	YAGYAGEN, Shieldera Lynn L.	40	92.77
117	YAP, Jeanil I.	34	91.77
118	YNIGUEZ, Adrianne Aniana B.	49	91.66



BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Born a farmer's daughter in a geographically remote sitio of Taba-ao, Kapangan exactly ten years before the 1990 earthquake, the researcher grew up with kids whose bare feet trustingly ran the rough-and-gentle sloped Kapangan mountains.

She had her first year of primary education at Ubod Barrio School, Taba-ao and graduated at Taba-ao Elementary School.

She finished her secondary education at Saint Theresita's High School in her town.

Very much aware of her family's financial predicaments, she sought for college scholarships of which she was granted – the Commission on Higher Education Scholarship and the Cruz Scholarship. In June 1997, she enrolled Bachelor of Secondary Education Major in English at Saint Louis University, Baguio City and in April 2001, she graduated cum laude.

Right after graduation, she taught at Benguet Vocational School for a semester. On October 20, she was hired at San Jose High School as a classroom teacher and as a school paper adviser. She would have stayed there longer but her adventurous spirit drove her to explore farther and further. In June 2003, she was hired at Lorma Colleges Special Science High School. Not long after, she realized she needed to come home.

In June 2004, she taught as a contractual teacher at Saint Louis University. On August 20 of the same year, she was hired at the University of Baguio Science High School where she is still teaching at present.





