

Research Article

Students' Vocabulary Knowledge and Level of Performance on PHILIRI Screening Test

¹John Wilson A. Brucal, ²Ann Krissabelle T. Quilaton, ³Jamaica R. Tampucaao

¹San Pascual Senior High School 1, ²Our Lady of Caysasay Academy, ³Buhaynasapa National high School

Email: ¹johnwilson.brucal@deped.gov.ph; ²aktquilaton@gmail.com;
³jamaica.tampucaao@deped.gov.ph

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Abstract: The competency on the vocabulary knowledge of language is vital in learning a new concept. It is also important for learning to read, speak, write and listen. It, too, is the core of the language. Students' vocabulary is their passport to understanding and interpreting a wide range of text. The aim of this research paper is to determine the level of vocabulary knowledge of the Grade 7-Sampaguita (A) students of Buhaynasapa National High School in relation to their level of performance on Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (PhilIRI) screening test. It is revealed that the level student' vocabulary knowledge relative to synonym, antonym, verbal classification and context clues and their level of performance in PhilIRI screening test have no significant relationship with each other. This could be because of the other factors and determinants of reading comprehension such as gender, age, reading goals and topic familiarity.

Keywords: Reading, Vocabulary, Context Clues.

Introduction

The competency on the vocabulary knowledge of language is vital in learning a new concept. It is also important for learning to read, speak, write and listen. It, too, is the core of the language. Students' vocabulary is their passport to understanding and interpreting a wide range of text. Vocabulary knowledge is a sine qua non companion of reading comprehension. According to Sedita (2005), the vocabulary knowledge is crucial in reading comprehension and determining how well students are in comprehending the texts. Inadequate vocabulary would affect students' reading skill.

Moreover, vocabulary help and guide us in pronouncing, reading and gasping the idea from our reading, so we will understand. Vocabulary knowledge is needed to comprehend what we are reading as reading helps us to expand and develop our vocabulary knowledge. Reading as one of the macro-skills in language learning is considered very essential in getting information. Moreover, reading comprehension is a great predictor to academic success. The ability to read and comprehend is essential skill for students to master. With this, through DepEd order no. 014, s. 2018 or Policy Guidelines on the Administration of the Revised Philippine Informal Reading Inventory, the Department of Education (DepEd) supports Every Child a Reader Program, which aims to make every Filipino child a reader and a writer at his/her grade level. Thus, the Revise Informal Reading Inventory (PhilIRI) assessment were administered to learners in public schools nationwide effective School Year 2018-2019. As the initial stage of PhilIRI, students took Screening Test, a 20-item reading comprehension test which aim to identify students who need further testing. Flojo (2007) as cited by Marual (2014) highlighted that based on the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory, determined the strengths and weaknesses of students. The study revealed that learners should be

guided to be more aware of their level of achievement as well as specific strengths and weaknesses in reading.

In this regard, the researchers aimed to determine the correlation of the level of students' vocabulary knowledge relative to synonym, antonym, verbal classification and context clues with their performance in PhilIRI screening test. PhilIRI screening test is a 20-item test that tells teachers whether students are reading at, above or below their grade levels. If the raw score is equal to or above 14, this would mean that there is no need for student to undergo further testing and there is no need for reading remediation. Otherwise, if the raw score is below 14, student undergoes further assessment which is the stage 2, Administration of the PhilIRI Graded Passages. As PhilIRI screening test were administered to the students of Grade 7-Sampaguita (A) of Buhaynasapa National High School, it was determined that only one students passed the test. This means that almost 100 percent of the student had difficulty in reading comprehension. The researcher looked at vocabulary as a factor on the low performance of students in comprehension as reflected on the results of PhilIRI Screening test. This is because of the belief that vocabulary and reading comprehension has strong relation. In addition, it was observed by one of the researchers that most of the students from this section ask the translation and meaning of word whenever they encountered it in a text or they wanted to use it on a sentence. Consequently, this current study could give light to the teachers on what intervention to give to students to improve the reading comprehension of the students.

Materials and methods

The study made use of the descriptive method of research and test as the main data gathering instrument. Frequency distribution, mean, ranking and Pearson r-correlation were the statistical tools used in quantifying the data gathered. Respondents of the study were the 45 students of Grade 7-Sampaguita (A) of Buhaynasapa National High School, San Juan, Batangas.

Results and Discussion

The following presentations are the results of the researchers' careful analysis on the responses of the students who participated on this research.

Table 1. Level of Students' Vocabulary Knowledge relative to Synonym

| Levels | F | % | Rank |
|-------------------------------------|----------|----------|-------------|
| Outstanding (90 & Above) | 2 | 4.4 | 3 |
| Very Satisfactory (85–89) | 0 | 0 | 4.5 |
| Satisfactory (80–84) | 11 | 24.4 | 2 |
| Fairly Satisfactory (75–79) | 0 | 0 | 4.5 |
| Did Not Meet Expectation (Below 74) | 32 | 71.1 | 1 |
| Total | 45 | 100 | |

Table 1 shows the level of students' vocabulary knowledge relative to synonym. Out of 45 Grade 7 students, 2 or 4.4 percent had an outstanding performance on items under synonym while 11 or 24.4 percent had a satisfactory performance. Outstanding level and satisfactory level ranked third and second, respectively. Most of the Grade 7-Sampaguita (A) students, that is 32 or 71.1 percent had been categorized on Did Not Meet Expectation Level, which ranked first among the other levels.

The result showed the biggest number of respondents belonged to the Did Not Meet Expectation level. One possible reason is that the students lack background on the given words. Most of the students consulted a thesaurus whenever they need to know the synonym of a word.

This result is in line to the findings of Rohmatillah (2017) where it was found out that the students found difficulties in choosing the appropriate meaning of the words.

Table 2. Level of Students' Vocabulary Knowledge relative to Antonym

| Levels | F | % | Rank |
|-------------------------------------|----------|----------|-------------|
| Outstanding (90 & Above) | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Very Satisfactory (85–89) | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Satisfactory (80–84) | 2 | 4.4 | 2 |
| Fairly Satisfactory (75–79) | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Did Not Meet Expectation (Below 74) | 43 | 95.6 | 1 |
| Total | 45 | 100 | |

As shown on Table 2, the findings reveal that 43 out of 45 grade 7 students are on the Did Not Meet Expectation level. Their transmuted grades were below 74. They got the 95.6 percent of the total performance of students on items relative to antonym. So to speak, the Did Not Meet Expectation level got the highest number of respondents. This is followed by the those who have satisfactory level on items on antonym. On this level, 2 students or 4.4 percent received the transmuted grades of 80-84.

It is clearly shown that the great percentage of the class got very low scores on antonym. This could be because most of the students could not examine the root, suffixes and prefixes to find the best option.

This result could be supported by what Widhiarso (2016) mentioned that responding to an antonym test requires more complex cognitive process than responding to a synonym test because antonym items have a broader range of possible answers, test takers must have good vocabulary, comprehension, and reasoning skills to solve them.

Table 3. Level of Students' Vocabulary Knowledge relative to Verbal Classification

| Levels | F | % | Rank |
|-------------------------------------|----------|----------|-------------|
| Outstanding (90 & Above) | 1 | 2.2 | 3 |
| Very Satisfactory (85–89) | 0 | 0 | 4.5 |
| Satisfactory (80–84) | 3 | 6.7 | 2 |
| Fairly Satisfactory (75–79) | 0 | 0 | 4.5 |
| Did Not Meet Expectation (Below 74) | 41 | 91.1 | 1 |
| Total | 45 | 100 | |

The results on Table 3 reveal the level of students' vocabulary knowledge relative to verbal classification. Out of 45 Grade 7 students, only 1 or 2.2 percent were on outstanding level. The sole respondent gained the transmuted grades of 90 and above. This ranked third among the levels of the students. Moreover, it can be seen that 5.7 percent or 3 students fell under satisfactory level. Those are the respondents who received the transmuted grade of 80-84 in verbal classification test. It is also indicated in the table that the biggest number of respondents received the transmuted grades of 74 and below. They comprised the 91.1 percent of the respondents. This means that there are 41 students who fell under the Did Not Meet Expectation level.

Table 4. Level of Students' Vocabulary Knowledge relative to Context Clues

| Levels | F | % | Rank |
|-------------------------------------|----------|----------|-------------|
| Outstanding (90 & Above) | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Very Satisfactory (85–89) | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Satisfactory (80–84) | 4 | 8.9 | 2 |
| Fairly Satisfactory (75–79) | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Did Not Meet Expectation (Below 74) | 41 | 91.1 | 1 |
| Total | 45 | 100 | |

Table 4 presents the level of students' vocabulary knowledge relative to context clues. From the table, it can be seen that 4 out of 45 respondents from Grade 7-Sampaguita have transmuted grades ranging from 80-84. This comprised the 8.9 percent of the respondents which ranked the second among the other levels. On the other hand, there are 41 who fell under the Did Not Meet Expectation level which is on the rank 1. Their transmuted grades were below 74. This suggest that students were not able to find and analyze the relation of the other words in the sentence or paragraph to know the meaning of the word. This result is comparable to the finding of Rohmatilla (2017) that students experienced difficulty on using the word based on the context.

Table 5. Level of Students' Vocabulary Knowledge

| Levels | F | % | Rank |
|-------------------------------------|----------|----------|-------------|
| Outstanding (90 & Above) | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Very Satisfactory (85-89) | 1 | 2.2 | 2 |
| Satisfactory (80-84) | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Fairly Satisfactory (75-79) | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Did Not Meet Expectation (Below 74) | 44 | 97.8 | 1 |
| Total | 45 | 100 | |

Table 5 shows the level of students of vocabulary knowledge in totality of the four parts of test, namely, synonym, antonym, verbal classification and context clues. As presented, 1 respondent out of 45 received the transmuted grades of 85-89. This revealed that 2.2 percent of the respondents were on the very satisfactory level which ranked the second among the other levels. Furthermore, 97.8 percent of the respondents were on the Did Not Meet the Expectation level. This means that 44 respondents received the transmuted grades of 74 and below. The result is similar to the findings of Furqon (2013) that the students' vocabulary knowledge in the study were not good enough and lot of students were included into poor category. Moreover, Altalhab (2016) had concluded on his study that vocabulary knowledge is influenced by a range of factors such as teaching techniques, the prescribed textbook, participants' beliefs and attitudes, learners' interests, cultural values and learners' level of competence in English.

Research Question 2:

What is the level of students' performance on the PhilIRI screening test?

Table 6. Level of Students' Performance on the PhilIRI Screening Test

| Levels | F | % | Rank |
|-------------------------------------|----------|----------|-------------|
| Outstanding (90 & Above) | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Very Satisfactory (85- 89) | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Satisfactory (80-84) | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Fairly Satisfactory (75-79) | 1 | 2.2 | 2 |
| Did Not Meet Expectation (Below 74) | 44 | 97.8 | 1 |
| Total | 45 | 100 | |

Table 6 shows the level of students' performance on the Philippine Individual Inventory (PhilIRI) screening test. It should be noticed that there is only 1 respondent who was in the Fairly Satisfactory level, which corresponds to 2.2 percent of the respondents. On this level, the transmuted grades ranged from 75 to 79. This level ranked second. It is also presented that 44 out of 45 respondents received the transmuted grades of 74 and below. This 97.8 percent of the respondents were on the Did Not Meet Expectation level which ranked first. As reflected on the table, it may be gleaned that the class exhibits very low comprehension on the passages given on the PhilIRI screening test. With this, 44 students were identified as students who need more assistance in performing reading task. This also indicated that students are reading below their grade level. Furthermore, these 44 students were good in oral reading and word recognition but found difficulty in comprehending the text. This

supports the finding of Applegate (2007) that one third of their fluent and “strong” readers struggled mightily with comprehension at their current level.

Research Question 3: Is there a significant relationship between students’ vocabulary knowledge and their level of performance on PhilIRI screening test?

Table 7. Relationship between Students’ Vocabulary Knowledge relative to Synonym and their Level of Performance on PhilIRI Screening Test

| Variables | Mean | r | Verbal Interpretation | p - value | Decision | VI |
|---------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------------------------------|-----------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Performance on PhilIRI Screening Test | 47.56 | 0.127 | Very Low Positive Correlation | .407 | Failed to Reject Ho | Not Significant |
| Synonym | 57.78 | | | | | |
| df = 43; $\alpha = 0.05$ | | | | | | |

Table 7 displays the correlation between students’ vocabulary knowledge relative to synonym and their level of performance on PhilIRI screening test. As shown on the table, the students’ performance on PhilIRI screening test and synonym got the means of 47.46 and 57.78, respectively. Furthermore, the r-value of 0.127, which is interpreted as very low positive correlation, with the p-value of 0.407 which is higher than 0.05 indicates that the null hypothesis is not rejected. This means that there is no significant relationship between students’ vocabulary knowledge relative to synonym and their level of performance on PhilIRI screening test.

Table 8. Relationship between Students’ Vocabulary Knowledge relative to Antonym and their Level of Performance on PhilIRI Screening Test

| Variables | Mean | r | Verbal Interpretation | p - value | Decision | VI |
|---------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------------------------------|-----------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Performance on PhilIRI Screening Test | 47.56 | 0.151 | Very Low Positive Correlation | .321 | Failed to Reject Ho | Not Significant |
| Antonym | 28.89 | | | | | |
| df = 43; $\alpha = 0.05$ | | | | | | |

Table 8 presents the correlation between Students’ Vocabulary Knowledge relative to Antonym and their Level of Performance on PhilIRI Screening Test. From the table above, it is noticeable that the mean of 28.89 in antonym test is quite lower than that of 47.56 in performance on PhilIRI screening test. Moreover, the r-value of 0.151 indicates the very low positive correlation between students’ vocabulary knowledge relative to antonym and their level of performance on PhilIRI screening test. The p-value of .321 which is greater than 0.05 indicates that the null hypothesis is not rejected. This means that there is no significant relationship between students’ vocabulary knowledge relative to antonym and their level of performance on PhilIRI Screening Test.

Table 9. Relationship between Students’ Vocabulary Knowledge relative to Verbal Classification and their Level of Performance on PhilIRI Screening Test

| Variables | Mean | r | Verbal Interpretation | p - value | Decision | VI |
|---------------------------------------|-------|--------|-------------------------------|-----------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Performance on PhilIRI Screening Test | 47.56 | -0.054 | Very Low Negative Correlation | .726 | Failed to Reject Ho | Not Significant |
| Verbal Classification | 39.11 | | | | | |
| df = 43; $\alpha = 0.05$ | | | | | | |

As shown in Table 9, the mean of students' performance on PhilIRI screening test and verbal classification is 47.56 as compared to the mean of the verbal classification which is 39.11. The Pearson r-value of -0.054 indicates the very low negative correlation of the performance on PhilIRI screening test and the verbal classification. Furthermore, the p-value of .726 which is greater than 0.05 indicates that the null hypothesis is not rejected. Hence, there is no significant relationship between the students' performance on PhilIRI screening test and verbal classification.

Table 10 presents the Relationship between Students' Vocabulary Knowledge relative to Context Clues and their Level of Performance on PhilIRI Screening Test.

Table 10. Relationship between Students' Vocabulary Knowledge relative to Context Clues and their Level of Performance on PhilIRI Screening Test

| Variables | Mean | r | Verbal Interpretation | p - value | Decision | VI |
|---------------------------------------|-------|---------|-------------------------------|-----------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Performance on PhilIRI Screening Test | 47.56 | - 0.089 | Very Low Negative Correlation | .559 | Failed to Reject Ho | Not Significant |
| Context Clues | 46.22 | | | | | |
| df = 43; $\alpha = 0.05$ | | | | | | |

As indicated on Table 10, the mean of the performance on PhilIRI screening test is 47.56 as compared to the mean of 46.22 on context clues. The r-value of -0.089 shows the very low negative correlation of performance on PhilIRI screening test and the level of vocabulary knowledge relative to context clues. Likewise, the p-value of .559 which is greater than 0.05 indicates that the null hypothesis is not rejected. Thus, the relationship between the PhilIRI screening test and the level of vocabulary knowledge relative to context clues is not significant. This result is similar to the study of Mirza (2017) where it was found out that that definition and context clues which are expected to be used to help the respondents in comprehending the text used the study do not necessary to be applied since they do not influence the students' reading comprehension of anecdote text significantly.

Table 11. Relationship between Students' Vocabulary Knowledge and their Level of Performance on PhilIRI Screening Test

| Variables | Mean | r | Verbal Interpretation | p - value | Decision | VI |
|---------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------------------------------|-----------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Performance on PhilIRI Screening Test | 47.56 | 0.096 | Very Low Positive Correlation | .531 | Failed to Reject Ho | Not Significant |
| Vocabulary Knowledge | 42.56 | | | | | |
| df = 43; $\alpha = 0.05$ | | | | | | |

Table 11 shows the correlation of the level of students' vocabulary knowledge and their level of performance on PhilIRI screening Test. The mean of performance on PhilIRI screening test is 47.56 as compared to the mean of 42.56 on the level of vocabulary knowledge. The table also depicts that there is a very low positive correlation between the level of students' vocabulary knowledge and their level of performance on PhilIRI screening test. The p-value of .531 which is greater than 0.05 indicates that the null hypothesis is not rejected. Consequently, there is no significant relationship between the level of students' vocabulary knowledge and their level of performance on PhilIRI screening test. Student's vocabulary knowledge did not affect the comprehension of the students on the passages on the screening test. One possible reason is that a reader can read the text again when he/she forgets or tries to get detailed information. This is supported by Willis (2008) who states that by reading, someone can find the information he/she needs with specific information.

In relation to this findings, Nagy (2005) mentioned that not all vocabulary instruction increases reading comprehension and one does not need to know every word in a text to understand it. This corroborates with the conclusion of Gungor (2016) that vocabulary size is not the only factor affecting reading comprehension and that the other factors and determinants of reading comprehension include gender, age, reading goals, and topic familiarity.

Conclusions and Recommendations

It was recommended that the teachers would develop and provide classroom activities and teaching methods that would uplift and improve vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension. It was also recommended that the students should be exposed to materials in reading like books, articles and short reading selections.

Conflicts of interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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