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ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMMUNICATION: SOCIAL MEDIA, MORPHOLOGICAL AWARENESS, AND VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE

Annie A. Parmis

Izliah Carmelle P. Cerna

Florence Alipar

Department of Liberal Arts and Behavioral Sciences
Visayas State University, Baybay City, Leyte Philippines
gravoso.annie@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to find out the English language communication with regard to social media, morphological awareness, and vocabulary knowledge of the eighty (80) Grade 11 STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) strand students at the Visayas State University (VSU). The first set of data was gathered from the first forty (40) respondents through a survey questionnaire adopted from Silver Emerald International School and Emmanuel (2014). It is called "Effects of Social Media on English Proficiency Questionnaire (ESMEPQ)". The second set of data was gathered from the remaining forty (40) respondents through a test on morphological awareness adopted from Chang et al (2005) and a test on vocabulary knowledge adopted from Nation (2001). The research adopted the descriptive survey method design. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Pearson chi-square correlation was used to test if there is a significant relationship between students' level of morphological awareness and their level of vocabulary knowledge. Results showed that majority of the Grade 11 students enrolled in STEM strand agreed that social media affects their English vocabulary. Also, 57.50% of them agreed that social media changes the way people communicate and share information; its language style influences the students' writing skills; and it can help them improve their English language competence and performance. The study suggests that students be responsible enough in using the social media and observe how social media platforms can affect their English language communication. On the other hand, results showed that 40% of the respondents have "outstanding" level of morphological awareness, 38% "excellent", 20% "very good", and 2% "good". For their level of vocabulary knowledge, 58% of them are "outstanding", 20% "excellent", and 22% "very good". However, results revealed that there is no significant relationship between the students' level of morphological awareness and their level of vocabulary knowledge. Some aspects of morphological awareness may not contribute to vocabulary learning. The study recommends that students must both develop their morphological awareness and vocabulary knowledge to help them enhance their English language communication.

KEYWORDS: English language communication, social media, morphological awareness, vocabulary knowledge

INTRODUCTION

The advancement of technology has influenced the ways by which people communicate with each other. The World Wide Web became public on August 6, 1991 (Bryant, 2011). It was a significant history in the internet. Thus, with the advancement of technology the World Wide Web has, it made its way to the limelight of giving tons of advantages by creating connections all around the world. For this reason, it paved way to the creation of social network. Social network has become a necessity in today's era. Social media and mobile phones play an integral role in how teens meet and interact with their friends and families (Lenhart, 2015). Moreover, teens become dependent on these mobile phones on communicating with their loved ones through the use of messaging applications (apps) and other platforms. Social networking sites have been proven to be perfect platforms of communications (Kavita, 2009). With all these technological advancements, the English language remains as the major means of

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communication that people use. It continues to be a very potent medium that allows people to express their thoughts and ideas. Meanwhile, morphology is one of the often-overlooked building blocks for reading fluency, reading comprehension and spelling (Apel and Lauraence, 2011). Morphological awareness is the recognition, or understanding and use of word parts that carry significance but is often overlooked in the learning process. It is a skill that helps students read and spell. It is explicitly thinking about the smallest units of meaning in language which are called morphemes. The units include roots that must have prefix or suffix added to become a word. Vocabulary is generally defined as the knowledge of words and word meanings (Butler et al, 2010). It is something that expands and deepens over time. More specifically, one uses vocabulary to refer to the kind of words that students must know to read increasingly demanding texts with comprehension (Kamil and Hiebert, 2005). Vocabulary serves a critical role in content-area textbooks such as English, Social Studies, Mathematics, and Sciences. Students who struggle with vocabulary are presented with obstacles that may have a negative impact on comprehension within context and content areas (Glende, 2013). Vocabulary knowledge refers to the quantity or number of words which learners know at a particular level of language proficiency (Kezhen, 2015). In fact, the bigger the individual's vocabulary size, the higher the general language proficiency (Zimmerman, 2005). A relationship exists between social media usage and the English competence and performance of the students (Kay, 2014). Thus, the main focus of this study is on English language communication with regard to social media, morphological awareness, and vocabulary knowledge.

OBJECTIVES

This research was on English language communication with regard to social media, morphological awareness, and vocabulary knowledge of Grade 11 STEM strand students at VSU. Specifically, it aimed to:

1. Determine the students' level of understanding regarding social media and English language communication;
2. Determine the students' level of morphological awareness and their vocabulary knowledge; and
3. Determine the relationship between the students' level of morphological awareness and their level of vocabulary knowledge.

Theoretical Framework of the Study

This study adopted Katz's (1970) Use and Gratification Theory which explains that people are responsible for choosing a particular media to meet its needs and allow one to use knowledge, relaxation, social interactions, diversion or escape. That media in turn competes with other information sources for viewers' gratification (Katz et al, 1974). Therefore, the English language communication proficiency of students is a result of the competition between social media network participation and learning how to communicate through the English language. This implies that the amount of time invested participating on social media could affect the time allocated for studies by students and this could affect their learning outcomes of the English language as a result. Vygotsky's (1978) theoretical work on Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) described the distance between the students' actual developmental level and potential level with direct instruction or peer collaboration. This theory suggests that as students' experiences with words grow, it becomes easier for them to learn new words. Stanovich's (1986) Theory of the Matthew Effect also applies to students with limited vocabularies. It postulated that students who do not read well do not read, leading to a deficit of vocabulary building opportunities (Freebody and Anderson, 1983). Consequently, students' oral and written vocabularies suffer. Essentially, when students have limited word experiences, they will have limited vocabularies.

METHODOLOGY

This study followed a descriptive survey research method. Respondents of the study were composed of eighty (80) Grade 11 STEM strand students. The first forty (40) participants answered a survey questionnaire adopted from Silver Emerald International School and Emmanuel (2014) called Effects of Social Media on English Proficiency Questionnaire (ESMEPQ). The remaining forty (40) respondents took a test on morphological awareness adopted from Chang et al (2005) and another one for vocabulary knowledge adopted from Nation (2001). Data were

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analyzed using descriptive statistics. Pearson Chi-square correlation was used to test if there is a significant relationship between students' level of morphological awareness and their level of vocabulary knowledge.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Among the first forty (40) participants, results showed that majority of them agreed that social media affects their English language communication. Furthermore, 57.50% of them agreed that social media changes the way people communicate and share information; its language style influences the students' writing skills; and it can help them improve their English language competence and performance. Moreover, the respondents were found uncertain on statements "Social media contributed to mass failure of students in English language and other English-related courses or subjects" and "Social media encourages examination malpractices in schools". On the other hand, among the forty (40) remaining participants, 40% of them have an "outstanding" level of morphological awareness, 38% "excellent", 20% "very good", and 2% "good". For the respondents' level of vocabulary knowledge, 58% of them are "outstanding", 20% "excellent", and 22% "very good". However, findings revealed that there is no significant relationship between the respondents' level of morphological awareness and their level of vocabulary knowledge. Results further showed that some aspects of morphological awareness may not contribute to vocabulary learning.

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CONCLUSION

The study has come to conclude that social media is one great factor and influence on the students' English language communication, and that the students' vocabulary foundations (morphological awareness and vocabulary knowledge) depend on the students' background knowledge and some situational factors. The study suggests that students be responsible enough in social media and observe how social media platforms can affect their English language communication. Also, they have to read more and expose themselves more to improve their vocabulary knowledge.

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