The Use of Generation Z Vocabulary and The English Language Proficiency Among Grade 11 Students at Conner Central NHS

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ABSTRACT

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| --- |
| Devlin (2018) asserts that language is undergoing significant transformations across generations, characterized by its dynamic nature, continual evolution through the introduction of new words, alterations in meanings, and the influence of regional slang. Exploring the emergence of Generation Z vocabulary is therefore crucial due to its significant influence and potential effects on intergenerational communication and language proficiency across generations. This study investigates the relationship between familiarity with Gen Z vocabulary and English language proficiency among 151 senior high school students at Conner Central National High School, Ripang, Conner, Apayao, during the school year 2024-2025, with a focus on the eight parts of speech. Proficiency was assessed through a comprehensive evaluation of students' understanding and application of Gen Z vocabulary in various linguistic contexts. Utilizing a descriptive-correlational research design, the study involved learners across three academic tracks: Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS), Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), and Accountancy, Business, and Management (ABM). Sampling methods included Slovin’s formula for HUMSS and total enumeration for STEM and ABM to ensure fairness. Data collection was conducted using a validated researcher-made questionnaire alongside a standardized instrument from Manuel (2022). The findings reveal that there is a significant correlation between the familiarity and use of Generation Z vocabulary and the English language proficiency of Grade 11 students at CCNHS as revealed in a strong positive correlation (r = 0.623, p = 0.005) between Gen Z vocabulary familiarity and English proficiency, as well as a moderate positive correlation (r = 0.459, p = 0.035) between the extent of usage and proficiency. These results imply that students who are more familiar with contemporary slang tend to show stronger English language skills, suggesting that modern language trends positively influence language development. It has a direct implication as well for curriculum design and teaching practices, suggesting that integrating contemporary language trends into formal education can enhance language instruction and bridge generational linguistic gaps. This study contributes to our understanding of the dynamic nature of language and its impact on language learning, providing valuable insights for educators and policymakers seeking to create more responsive and effective language education programs. |

*Keywords: Generation Z vocabulary, English language, English language proficiency, parts of speech*

1. INTRODUCTION

Language constitutes a complex and dynamic communication system that facilitates the expression of thoughts, emotions, and ideas via spoken, written, or signed symbols. This serves as an essential instrument for social interaction, cultural expression, and cognitive development. Language is a dynamic entity that evolves in response to temporal demands. Devlin (2018) asserts that language is undergoing significant transformations across generations, characterized by its dynamic nature, continual evolution through the introduction of new words, alterations in meanings, and the influence of regional slang. Word formation represents a core component of linguistic structure, involving the processes by which new words are generated and assimilated into a language. The processes encompass derivation, compounding, blending, and borrowing, among others. In the Philippines, the lexical formation of Philippine English demonstrates a creative adaptation to contemporary changes. Baklanova (2017) indicated in his study that Modern Tagalog, also known as Filipino, the National Language, is notably proficient in assimilating lexical units from diverse languages in contact. Throughout history, it has incorporated numerous borrowings, mainly from Malay, Sanskrit, Chinese, Arabic, and subsequently, Spanish and English. This indicates the prevalence of word formation, defined by Ungerer (2010) as the process of “creating new words from existing words,” and is occasionally described as the processes associated with altering word forms. Conversely, regarding contemporary Gen Z terminologies, a study by Pascual (2016) evaluated the word formation of sward speak in the Philippines. The findings indicate that the primary motivations for the third gender in creating their own lexicon include the desire for uniqueness, identity establishment, group acceptance, pleasure derivation, and creative expression. Research indicates that homosexuals possess a distinct vocabulary, commonly referred to as "Gay Language," which differentiates them from the mainstream heterosexual community. Cortez (2017) indicates that a significant proportion of millennials utilize gay lingo for communication purposes.

Similarly, Generation Z, born between the mid-1990s and the early 2010s, utilizes a distinct vocabulary that frequently includes slang, abbreviations, and emojis in their everyday communications. The vocabulary of Generation Z includes terms that were not present in previous decades. Additionally, the vocabulary of Gen Z arises from an intriguing interaction of word formation processes. The vocabulary of Generation Z constitutes an internationally recognized language, exhibiting minor variations based on geographical origin. This serves as a means for individuals to articulate their desires and reflect the vibrancy of their lives, akin to the emergence and utilization of sward speak. Similar to gay lingo, Gen Z vocabulary is constructed from a diverse array of sources, a phenomenon referred to as bricolage by Strauss, as noted in the research conducted by Abulog (2023).

The emergence of new terminologies in contemporary society may result in inter-generational challenges, including communication barriers and misinterpretations. Older generations may find it challenging to comprehend contemporary slang utilized by younger individuals, resulting in feelings of disconnection and exclusion among the former group. This indicates that the process of learning English may differ according to generational variations. Polakova (2019) asserts that proficiency in English has emerged as a crucial skill in the contemporary globalized context, with each generation of students exhibiting distinct characteristics shaped by the conditions of their respective eras. According to the study by Maya (2024), the generational differences between Millennials and Gen Z may significantly impact English language learning, as Gen Z has been raised in an era characterized by advancements in communication technology, education, and career development. The manner in which local and foreign language learners acquire and utilize English has undergone notable transformations due to the emergence of digital technology and social media. According to Cooper, as referenced in the study by Debataraja and Daulay (2024), technological advancements and cultural transformations have significantly altered the ways in which individuals learn and engage with language. This illustrates the dynamic nature of the English language in which it continually evolves over time, incorporating new words, phrases, and communication styles.

Generation Z, commonly known as "Gen Z," constitutes the demographic cohort born from the mid-1990s to the early 2010s. The vocabulary and communication practices of digital natives are significantly influenced by the technological environment in which they have developed, alongside the social and cultural factors that affect language development. Generation Z, in contrast to earlier generations, has been exposed to the internet and social media from a young age, resulting in distinct linguistic traits and communication styles. The vocabulary of Generation Z illustrates the linguistic evolution associated with technological progress, as well as the social dynamics and changing norms in communication (Degimenci, 2021). The vocabulary of Generation Z is characterized by its fluidity and adaptability. Active users of social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube frequently engage with language that evolves rapidly within online communities. Generation Z's vocabulary is frequently defined by the use of internet slang, abbreviations, acronyms, and newly created terms. The rapid evolution of online communication fosters linguistic innovations that prioritize brevity and creativity. Terms such as "stan," denoting fervent support for an individual or entity, and "simp," referring to a person who exhibits excessive attentiveness or submission to someone they admire, have gained prevalence in the discourse of Generation Z. Research by Rajendran and Yunus (2021) indicate that the flexibility of Generation Z's language is primarily a result of their continuous exposure to diverse and globalized online communities, which shape language through various cultural influences and trends.

The impact of social media on the vocabulary of Generation Z is significant. Social media platforms function as a medium for the rapid introduction and dissemination of new terminology among users, fostering a dynamic environment for linguistic innovation. These platforms enable interactions across geographic boundaries, permitting Generation Z to integrate terms from various languages and dialects into their everyday communication. The findings of a study indicate that social media functions as a global platform for linguistic exchange, resulting in the blending of languages and the emergence of hybrid forms of communication. Terms such as "FOMO" (fear of missing out), "YOLO" (you only live once), and "ghosting" (the act of ceasing communication without explanation), “Gumps” to mean thank you and more others have evolved beyond their online origins to gain widespread recognition in both digital and in-person contexts (Alzatma & Azis et. al, 2021). This phenomenon underscores the influence of technology on Generation Z's communication methods and the evolution of language in alignment with contemporary communication requirements. While these abbreviations may facilitate communication in informal contexts, they pose challenges in formal writing and academic environments. Certain educators have raised concerns that the regular use of informal language may impede Generation Z's capacity to write in more structured and grammatically accurate forms, especially in professional or academic settings where formality is essential (Manogaran & Sulaiman, 2022). These prompts significant inquiries regarding the equilibrium between informal digital communication and the cultivation of formal language competencies (Ali, 2022).

Alongside the use of slang and internet language, Generation Z demonstrates a notable inclination towards visual and multimodal communication. Emojis, GIFs, and stickers have become essential components of modern communication, frequently acting as replacements for words or as enhancements to text-based interactions. Emojis serve to express tone, emotion, or context that may be absent in brief text messages. Munifah et al. (2024) indicate that emojis serve as a visual language that enhances and occasionally substitutes written words, enabling users to convey intricate emotions and concepts swiftly and in a visually appealing way. The emergence of multimodal communication illustrates the evolving characteristics of language in the digital era, wherein text is frequently enhanced by images, videos, and additional media to produce more complex and nuanced forms of expression. Generation Z, familiar with consuming and producing content across various media platforms, finds the integration of visual and textual elements a natural progression in their communication practices.

The influence of Generation Z's vocabulary on English language acquisition and communication abilities is an increasingly pertinent subject for educators and linguists. The incorporation of digital slang and internet language into daily communication may enhance linguistic creativity and engagement. The playful manipulation of language by Generation Z, including the creation of new words and meanings, demonstrates significant linguistic competence and adaptability. This is consistent with the findings of Simanungkalit & Katemba (2024) who assert that language learners exposed to varied linguistic inputs are more inclined to attain advanced language skills. Generation Z's exposure to diverse language forms via digital media may enhance their linguistic agility and capacity to navigate various communication contexts.

Conversely, there are concerns that the informal characteristics of Generation Z's vocabulary may impede the acquisition of formal communication skills, especially in academic and professional contexts. Feng (2023) observes that the frequent use of abbreviations, acronyms, and slang can diminish grammatical accuracy and coherence in written communication. This presents significant challenges in contexts that necessitate formal writing and standard English, including academic essays, business communications, and job applications. Educators have noted that certain students encounter difficulties in shifting from informal digital language to the formal registers required for academic achievement, prompting inquiries into effective strategies for assisting Generation Z in enhancing both informal and formal language skills.

In the United Kingdom, the educational standards in the UK prioritize robust foundational skills in grammar, vocabulary, and composition. There is increasing concern regarding the incorporation of nonstandard linguistic features into students' daily speech and writing (Nurkhamidah, 2020). A study indicated that the use of slang and shorthand in student work has risen by more than 25% over the past five years, with educators expressing challenges in upholding conventional linguistic standards (Arumugam et. Al, 2020). The challenge is especially evident in urban environments, where multiculturalism and digital influences intersect, resulting in distinct dialects that integrate slang from diverse cultures and online subcultures. British educators and linguists contend that although language evolves organically, the rapid incorporation of Gen Z vocabulary and the consequent inclination towards informal speech may diminish students’ understanding of standard English, potentially affecting their academic and professional prospects (Bilonozhko & Syzenko, 2020).

Furthermore, in the United States, American students represent a significant demographic of active users on social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and Twitter, where the vocabulary of Generation Z is prevalent (Jeresano & Carretero, 2022) . Research conducted by the American Educational Research Association indicates that high school students who regularly interact with digital media tend to favor informal language structures, potentially adversely affecting their academic writing. Educators indicate that this transition towards informality occasionally leads to insufficient attention to detail, grammar, and sentence structure in student assignments. Proponents of Gen Z language contend that the internet's influence has cultivated creativity, cultural awareness, and adaptability in students, which are essential qualities in a globalized workforce (Yu, 2020).

Moreover, in the Philippines, it exhibits one of the highest global social media engagement rates, particularly among the youth, who are central to this digital trend (Paulina & Ernawati, 2022). English, as a second language in the Philippines, is taught alongside Filipino, and proficiency in English is highly valued for academic and professional advancement. Nonetheless, the widespread impact of Gen Z vocabulary, characterized by the integration of English with Filipino slang and internet-derived terminology, has elicited apprehension among educators. Studies show that Filipino students who regularly engage with social media and digital platforms often adopt informal linguistic patterns that may diverge from conventional academic standards (Xiuwen & Razali, 2021). A survey conducted indicated that 65% of senior high school students reported using slang and informal expressions in academic tasks, which they attributed to their regular online communication practices (Khirzani et. Al, 2023). The integration of languages and vocabularies has initiated a discourse regarding the potential long-term impacts on English proficiency in Filipino students. Educators express concern regarding the erosion of formal English skills; however, there is acknowledgment of the cultural significance and localized adaptation of Gen Z vocabulary, which frequently mirrors the distinct linguistic environment of the Philippines (Singh & Hashim, 2020). As a result, educational institutions in the Philippines are investigating methods to promote formal language proficiency while recognizing the linguistic creativity inherent in the vocabulary of Gen Z, which influences the communication styles of Filipino students (Akmal et. al, 2022).

The Basic Education Research Agenda is a framework within the Philippine educational system that seeks to improve students' mastery of language skills in both written and spoken forms. This agenda emphasizes the development of comprehensive communication abilities, ensuring that SHS students are proficient in the academic language needed for success in their specialized tracks, such as STEM, humanities, business, or technical-vocational courses. Language proficiency under this agenda is not only about grammar and vocabulary but also about critical thinking, effective expression, and understanding the context of communication in both academic and real-life settings (Maqbool et. Al, 2020). Language proficiency is essential for effective communication and is vital for achieving this objective. The Basic Education Research Agenda emphasizes the necessity of upholding stringent standards in language instruction, while also acknowledging the requirement for adaptive teaching strategies that consider contemporary linguistic trends.

English language proficiency denotes an individual's capability to utilize the English language accurately and effectively for communication, encompassing both written and spoken modalities (Racolţa-Paina & Irini, 2021). This concept includes various skills such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking, which are crucial for effective communication in English. The significance of proficiency in the English language has increased markedly in recent decades, influenced by globalization and the rising prevalence of English as the medium for international communication. Erwani, Romi, Sawithy et.al (2022) state that English has emerged as the global language for business, science, and education, with approximately 1.75 billion regular users. The extensive utilization of English has generated a demand for proficiency in various professions and industries. Achieving high levels of English language proficiency is a considerable challenge for many learners, especially for those for whom English is a second language. Various factors influence proficiency acquisition, including the learner's age, motivation, language exposure, and the quality of instruction received. The work of some researchers indicate that younger learners generally achieve language proficiency more readily, attributed to their enhanced cognitive flexibility and the plasticity of their developing brains

Furthermore, the English language possesses a substantial and continuously developing vocabulary, with new terms and expressions being regularly introduced as a result of technological progress, cultural changes, and globalization. The widespread use of acronyms, abbreviations and slang terms, often employed in texting and social media are increasingly being integrated into Gen Z’s daily communication. As a result, the impact of Gen Z’s vocabulary on formal language skills has raised concerns, particularly when students are expected to demonstrate proficiency in English for academic purposes, where clarity and formal language are crucial. Research on language proficiency suggests that while digital communication fosters fluency in informal, conversational forms of language, it may come at the expense of academic language development. For instance, studies have shown that students who frequently engage in texting or online communication with peers often struggle with formal writing tasks that require adherence to academic conventions (Mehrvarz et. Al, 2021). In a certain study of secondary school students, it was reported that there is a negative correlation between frequent use of informal digital language and performance in formal English writing tasks. These students were more likely to use informal language structures and slang in their academic writing, which ultimately hindered their ability to communicate effectively in formal contexts (Carraro & Trinder, 2021). Such findings highlight the challenge of reconciling the informal vocabulary used in everyday digital interactions with the formal language required for academic success.

The current body of literature regarding the impact of Gen Z vocabulary on language acquisition is growing. Nonetheless, there is a notable deficiency in studies that focus on the distinct context of Filipino learners, particularly in rural areas like Conner Central NHS. The importance of this gap is highlighted by the distinct interplay of local dialects, English, and digital slang among students, which may affect their language proficiency in ways that have yet to be thoroughly examined.

Conner Central NHS, similar to numerous schools in the province of Apayao, accommodates a varied student demographic whose communication behaviors are significantly shaped by digital technologies and social media. Given that Gen Z constitutes the primary demographic in this school, it is essential to comprehend their distinctive language use, which is marked by internet slang and digital abbreviations, to effectively address language proficiency challenges. Additionally, a persistent issue exists within the school concerning the disparity between the informal language utilized by students and the formal language necessary for academic achievement. Numerous students, despite their competence in contemporary, informal communication methods, encounter challenges in acquiring academic language, which is essential for composing assignments, conducting research projects, and performing in examinations. The disparity between Gen Z vocabulary and the formal language standards mandated in Senior High School presents a significant issue that impacts students' academic performance and their readiness for higher education or professional pursuits. The vocabulary of Generation Z is frequently utilized in formal classroom environments. Educators across all disciplines, particularly those teaching English, must comprehend generational differences and student learning preferences to foster effective learning environments. Debataraja and Daulay (2024) emphasized the significance of Generation Z vocabulary on English language learning and communication skills, noting that students entering junior high school should master the fundamentals of English. This proficiency is essential for their success in senior high school. The acquisition of speaking skills in English is contingent upon the mastery of vocabulary. The inquiry persists: could the vocabulary of Generation Z contribute to the gradual decline in English language proficiency or the subpar performance of students in English? In this premise, Generation Z vocabulary is examined in terms of its familiarity and usage among students and its potential impact on their English language proficiency.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Generally, the study aimed to evaluate the impact of Generation Z vocabulary on the English language proficiency among senior high school learners at Conner Central National High School along the eight (8) parts of speech.

Specifically, the study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of:

1.1 age;

1.2 sex;

1.3 strand, and,

1.4 Language/dialect used at home

2. What is the level of familiarity among senior high school learners with Generation Z vocabulary?

3. What is the extent of the use of Gen Z vocabulary among senior high school learners at Conner Central NHS?

4. What is the level of English language proficiency among senior high school learners at Conner Central NHS along the eight (8) parts of speech?

5. Is there a significant difference in the levels of familiarity and extent of use of Gen Z vocabulary and English language proficiency when grouped according to profile?

6. Is there a significant relationship between the level of familiarity and extent of use of Generation Z vocabulary and English language proficiency on the use of the eight (8) parts of speech among senior high school learners?

**2.1 Hypothesis**

1. There is no significant difference in the levels of familiarity and extent of use of Gen Z vocabulary and English language proficiency when grouped according to profile?

2. There is no significant relationship between the level of familiarity and extent of use of Generation Z vocabulary and English language proficiency on the use of the eight (8) parts of speech among senior high school learners?

3. METHODOLOGY

**3.1. Research Design**

This study used a descriptive-correlational research design to evaluate the impact of Generation Z vocabulary on the English language proficiency of senior high school learners at Conner Central National High School. The descriptive aspect focused on profiling respondents and determining their level of familiarity and use of Gen Z vocabulary, while the correlational aspect examined the relationship between the use of Gen Z vocabulary and English language proficiency.

**3.2. Locale of the Study**

The study was conducted at Conner Central National High School (CCNHS) during the school year 2024-2025.

The school is located in Ripang, Conner, Apayao. It is the Central Secondary School of Northern Conner District.

**3.3. Respondents of the Study**

The respondents of the study were the grade 11 learners from the three strands of the academic tracks namely, Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS), Accountancy, Business and Management (ABM) and, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) for the school year 2024-2025 at Conner Central National High School (CCNHS). The study utilized total enumeration as the sampling method for STEM and ABM group to ensure fairness and eliminate bias, thereby including all the students from the identified two strands as respondents since these two strands combined only has a total of 49 learners. This method guarantees that all eligible Grade 11 STEM and ABM learners have an equal opportunity to participate, resulting in a more comprehensive and representative data set. Whereas, to get the target desired sample size from the Grade 11 HUMSS, stratified random sampling using the Slovin’s Formula/ Krejcie-Morgan Formula was employed to ensure statistical reliability.

**3.4. Research Instrumentation**

The researcher utilized a questionnaire as a method for data collection. The questionnaire focused on evaluating the level of familiarity with Gen Z vocabulary, extent of use of Generation Z vocabulary and English language proficiency among grade 11 learners. The questionnaire comprises four (4) sections, Parts I-III was a researcher-made questionnaire while the Part IV was a standardized proficiency test lifted from the study of Manuel (2022). Part I will elicit data on profile variables. Part II will collect data regarding the level of familiarity with Generation Z vocabulary among senior high school learners. Part III will obtain data on extent of use of Generation Z vocabulary among senior high school students. Part IV will examine the level of English Language Proficiency among senior high school learners at Conner Central NHS along the eight (8) parts of speech.

The Gen Z vocabulary is a researcher-made questionnaire that underwent content validity test and face validity test in which it was certified that it is acceptable with respect to the content, consistency, and the objectives of the research. Furthermore, pilot testing was conducted wherein the result of the survey was then subjected to the Cronbach’s Alpha using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to assess reliability. The Cronbach’s Alpha Test employed by 15 Grade-11 students of CCNHS for all items was 0.733, hence the questionnaire is considered reliable.

For the English language proficiency, the test was adopted from Manuel [47] on his study, English Language Proficiency of Senior High School Students. Specifically, the test determines the students’ proficiency level on the eight (8) parts of speech.

The researcher distributed the questionnaires to the respondents. The researchers instructed the respondents to read each statement thoroughly and provide their answers. Subsequently, the required data was collected, and the researcher interpreted and analyzed the data to address all research questions.

**3.5. Data Gathering Procedure**

In order to facilitate the collection of data, the researcher first wrote a letter of approval to the Dean of the Graduate School of the college to ask for permission to conduct the study. He then secured permission from the Schools Division Superintendent to allow the conduct of the study. The researcher also asked permission from the principal or school head of the selected school in the locale. The researcher as well secured a written consent to Jomel Manuel seeking his approval or permission to utilize his instrument used in the conduct of his study entitled English Language Proficiency among Senior High School students. [47] Lastly, the researcher secured written consent from each participant of the study. Once approved, the researcher facilitated, monitored closely the administration of the questionnaire. Furthermore, the researcher retrieved all the questionnaires on the agreed time to ensure the data gathering was in its utmost effective process.

**3.6. Data Analysis**

The data gathered in the study were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics to appropriately address the research problems and test the hypotheses. Descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage were employed to summarize the demographic profile of the respondents, including their age, sex, academic strand, and language or dialect spoken at home.

To assess the level of familiarity with Generation Z vocabulary, the mean and standard deviation were computed from responses to a Likert-scale questionnaire that uses degrees of agreement as response options. Although the items are phrased using agreement scales, the interpretation is aligned with the construct of familiarity. In this study, familiarity is inferred based on the degree of agreement to statements that reflect recognition, understanding, and contextual awareness of Gen Z vocabulary.

The scales are shown in the tables below.

**Table 1. Level of Familiarity of Gen Z Vocabulary**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| SCALE | MEAN RANGE | DESCRIPTION |
| 5 | 4.20 - 5.00 | Strongly Agree (Very high familiarity) |
| 4 | 3.40 – 4.19 | Agree (High Familiarity) |
| 3 | 2.60 – 3.39 | Neutral (Either high or low familiarity) |
| 2 | 1.80 – 2.59 | Disagree (Low familiarity) |
| 1 | 1.00 – 1.79 | Strongly Disagree (Very low familiarity) |

Similarly, to determine the extent of use of Generation Z vocabulary, mean and standard deviation were calculated using the same agreement-based Likert scale. While the questionnaire does not directly ask for frequency in numerical terms, the extent of use was inferred through behavioral indicators described in the statements.

**Table 2. Extent of Use of Gen Z Vocabulary**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| SCALE | MEAN RANGE | DESCRIPTION |
| 5 | 4.20 - 5.00 | Strongly Agree (Very frequent) |
| 4 | 3.40 – 4.19 | Agree (Frequent) |
| 3 | 2.60 – 3.39 | Neutral (Either) |
| 2 | 1.80 – 2.59 | Disagree (Seldom) |
| 1 | 1.00 – 1.79 | Strongly Disagree (Never) |

The scale below was used to determine the English Language Proficiency of respondents on the eight (8) parts of speech. Moreover, the scale was adapted from the study of Manuel’s English Language Proficiency among Senior High School students.

**Table 3. Proficiency Level for the whole Test in Eight Parts of Speech**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Score Intervals | Proficiency Level | Descriptive Value |
| 32.01 - 40.00 | Very Proficient User of English | Very High |
| 24.01 - 32.00 | Proficient User of English | High |
| 16.01 - 24.00 | Fair User of English | Moderate |
| 8.01 - 16.00 | Modest User of English | Low |
| 1.00 - 8.00 | Limited User of English | Very Low |

T test/ANOVA was used to determine if there is a significant difference in the level of familiarity and extent of use of Gen Z vocabulary and English language proficiency when analyzed according to profile.

Pearson r-moment correlation was employed to determine the significant relationship between variables.

**Table 4. Relationship between variables**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| INTERVAL COEFFICIENT | STRENGTH OF RELATIONSHIP | SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL | INTERPRETATION |
| 0.800 – 1.000 | Very Strong |  | Not Significant (NS) |
| 0.600 – 0.799 | Strong |  | Significant (S) |
| 0.400 – 0.599 | Moderate |  | Very Significant (VS) |
| 0.200 – 0.399 | Weak |  | Highly Significant (HS) |
| 0.000 – 0.199 | Very Weak |  |  |

4. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

**Table 5. Profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, strand and language/dialect used at home**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Profile | Frequency | Percentage |
| Age |  |  |
| 15 to 17 years old | 137 | 90.73 |
| 18 years old and above | 14 | 9.27 |
| Total | **151** | **100** |
| Sex |  |  |
| Male | 83 | 54.97 |
| Female | 68 | 45.03 |
| Total | **151** | **100** |
| Strand |  |  |
| STEM | 35 | 23.18 |
| HUMSS | 101 | 66.89 |
| ABM | 15 | 9.93 |
| Total | **151** | **100** |
| Language/dialect used at home | **Frequency** | **Rank** |
| English | 4 | 8 |
| Tagalog | 5 | 7 |
| Ilocano | 43 | 2 |
| Itawes | 6 | 6 |
| Malaueg | 60 | 1 |
| Ibanag | 2 | 11 |
| Kalinga | 10 | 5 |
| Ibaloi | 14 | 4 |
| Isneg | 34 | 3 |
| Kankana-ey | 3 | 9.5 |
| Others | 3 | 9.5 |

Table 5 shows the frequency, percentage and rank distribution of senior high school learners at Conner Central National High School. In age profile, the majority of the respondents (90.73%) are aged 15 to 17 years old, with only 9.27% being 18 years old and above. This indicates that most of the Grade 11 students are in the typical age range for their academic level. This implies that their age are in a prime stage for language acquisition and shaping communication habits.

In sex profile, 54.97% are male and 45.03% are female. The slight dominance of male students suggests a nearly balanced gender distribution in the study. This balance allows for a more inclusive perspective on how both male and female students engage with Generation Z vocabulary and their English language proficiency. It may also help identify whether certain language trends or proficiencies are more prevalent in one sex than the other.

The majority of the respondents belong to the HUMSS strand (66.89%), followed by STEM (23.18%) and ABM (9.93%). Since HUMSS focuses on language, social studies, and humanities, the strong representation from this strand could suggest a potentially higher familiarity with modern vocabulary trends and deeper engagement with English language use. This distribution also provides an opportunity to examine whether strand specialization influences language proficiency or vocabulary usage, particularly among HUMSS students who may be more exposed to discourse and communication studies.

Malaueg is the most commonly spoken language at home (Rank 1), followed by Ilocano (Rank 2), and Isneg (Rank 3). English ranks 8th, indicating that the majority of students speak local dialects in their homes. This suggests that English may not be the primary language of daily communication, potentially influencing the students’ proficiency. The dominance of local languages at home could pose challenges in practicing English fluency, yet it also highlights the rich linguistic diversity among the students, which may impact how Generation Z vocabulary is understood and integrated into their speech.

**Table 6. Level of Familiarity with Generation Z Vocabulary Among Senior High School Learners**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Level of Familiarity with Generation Z Vocabulary | Mean | DI |
| 1. I often encounter new slang terms in social media posts or videos that I understand immediately. | 3.41 | Agree |
| 1. I feel confident using popular Gen Z vocabulary when chatting online with my friends. | 3.45 | Agree |
| 1. I frequently encounter new words or phrases on social media platforms that I don't fully understand. | 3.38 | Agree |
| 1. I use Generation Z vocabulary to communicate with people in my age group in an informal setting. | 3.51 | Agree |
| 1. I am familiar with trending abbreviations such as "SMH" (Shaking My Head) and "TBH" (To Be Honest). | 3.66 | Agree |
| 1. I often see memes or videos on social media that feature words or phrases unique to Gen Z. | 3.73 | Agree |
| 1. I feel comfortable using Generation Z vocabulary in both casual conversations and online posts. | 3.48 | Agree |
| 1. I notice that my peers and I use Gen Z vocabulary during group discussions or social events. | 3.10 | Neutral |
| 1. I often learn new Gen Z vocabulary from online influencers or celebrities. | 3.49 | Agree |
| 1. I recognize that the language I use online differs from the language I use in school assignments. | 3.65 | Agree |
| 1. I can easily explain the meaning of Gen Z slang terms to someone who isn't familiar with them. | 3.19 | Neutral |
| 1. I use Gen Z expressions to add humor or emphasis to my conversations on social media. | 3.27 | Neutral |
| 1. I find it easy to understand memes, even if they use unfamiliar Gen Z vocabulary. | 3.36 | Neutral |
| 1. I have encountered Gen Z vocabulary in advertisements, and I can recognize its meaning. | 3.53 | Agree |
| 1. I sometimes use Generation Z vocabulary in my academic work, but I am careful to adjust when needed for formal writing. | 3.77 | Agree |
| OVERALL MEAN | **3.46** | **Agree** |

Table 6 reveals that Grade 11 students at Conner Central National High School have a high level of familiarity with Generation Z vocabulary, as reflected by the overall mean of 3.46, interpreted as "Agree." This suggests that most learners frequently encounter, understand, and confidently use Gen Z slang, particularly in informal settings like social media and peer interactions. Notably high means, such as item 15 (3.77), indicate that students are aware of the contextual appropriateness of Gen Z language, distinguishing between casual and academic use. However, lower mean scores for items 8 (3.10), 11 (3.19), and 12 (3.27) show that not all learners consistently apply or explain Gen Z vocabulary in varied contexts. The implication of these findings is that while students are linguistically adaptive and socially attuned, there is room for enhancing their metalinguistic awareness and ability to translate informal language skills into academic or cross-generational communication. These results highlight the value of integrating digital literacy and sociolinguistic competence in the curriculum to help students navigate both informal and formal registers of English effectively.

**Table 7. Extent of Gen Z Vocabulary Use Among Senior High Learners at Conner Central NHS**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Extent of Gen Z Vocabulary Use | Mean | DI |
| I understand the meaning of popular Generation Z slang terms used on social media. | 3.72 | Agree |
| I understand the context in which Generation Z vocabulary is used in conversations with my peers. | 3.50 | Agree |
| I regularly use Generation Z vocabulary when communicating with friends online. | 3.65 | Agree |
| I feel confident in my ability to define common Generation Z slang terms. | 3.42 | Agree |
| I am aware of how Generation Z vocabulary changes rapidly over time. | 3.47 | Agree |
| I often encounter Generation Z vocabulary in the content I watch or read. | 3.52 | Agree |
| I can easily identify the meaning of new slang terms that emerge among my peer group. | 3.19 | Neutral |
| I use Generation Z vocabulary to express myself in a way that feels current and trendy. | 3.38 | Neutral |
| I recognize Generation Z vocabulary in music, videos, and other forms of entertainment. | 3.27 | Neutral |
| I am comfortable using Generation Z vocabulary in casual conversations. | 3.49 | Agree |
| I know how Generation Z vocabulary differs from traditional slang or older generations’ language. | 3.57 | Agree |
| I frequently hear Generation Z vocabulary being used by influencers and content creators online. | 3.50 | Agree |
| I can explain the meaning of popular Generation Z slang to others who may not be familiar with it. | 3.42 | Agree |
| I adapt my language to include Generation Z vocabulary when communicating with younger people. | 3.45 | Agree |
| I notice that Generation Z vocabulary is widely used among my classmates and friends. | 3.70 | Agree |
| OVERALL MEAN | **3.48** | **Agree** |

Table 7 reveals that Grade 11 students at Conner Central National High School generally agree with the use and understanding of Generation Z vocabulary, as indicated by the overall mean of 3.48. This suggests a moderate to high level of familiarity and engagement with Gen Z slang in their everyday communication, especially in online and peer interactions. Notably, statements such as “I understand the meaning of popular Generation Z slang terms” (mean = 3.72) and “I notice that Generation Z vocabulary is widely used among my classmates and friends” (mean = 3.70) reflect a strong presence and social acceptance of this language trend. However, the relatively lower means in items like “I use Generation Z vocabulary to express myself in a way that feels current and trendy” (mean = 3.38) and “I can easily identify the meaning of new slang terms” (mean = 3.19) suggest that while students are exposed to and understand much of the vocabulary, their active usage and adaptability may still be developing. The implication is that educators can recognize this linguistic trend as a valuable engagement tool while also emphasizing critical language awareness and communication skills. Integrating Gen Z vocabulary into discussions about language evolution and media literacy may help students reflect on identity, cultural trends, and effective communication while upholding values such as adaptability, openness to change, and respect for diverse expressions.

**Table 8. English Language Proficiency Levels of Senior High School Learners at Conner Central NHS Across the Eight Parts of Speech**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Score Intervals  (40 points) | Frequency | Proficiency Level | Descriptive Value |
| 32.01 – 40.00 | 0 | Very Proficient User of English | Very High |
| 24.01 – 32.00 | 3 | Proficient User of English | High |
| 16.01 – 24.00 | 52 | Fair User of English | Moderate |
| 8.01 – 16.00 | 72 | Modest User of English | Low |
| 1.00 – 8.00 | 24 | Limited User of English | Very Low |
| Overall Mean Score = 14.31 | | **Modest User of English** | **Low** |

Table 8 reveals that the majority of Grade 11 students at Conner Central National High School fall under the "Modest User of English" category, with 72 students scoring between 8.01 and 16.00, and an overall mean score of 14.31. This indicates a generally low level of English language proficiency among the learners, particularly in their understanding and usage of the eight parts of speech. Only 3 students demonstrated high proficiency, while none reached the "Very High" proficiency level. The implication of these findings is significant, as it suggests the need for targeted interventions and enhanced instructional strategies to improve students' grasp of English grammar. These results highlight the importance of incorporating relevant and engaging learning materials—such as Generation Z vocabulary—into the curriculum to potentially bridge the gap between everyday language use and academic English.

**Table 9. Comparison of Gen Z Vocabulary Familiarity Across Different Demographic Profiles**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Profile | Mean | SD | t-value/f-value | p-value | Decision at 0.05 |
| Age | | | | |  |
| 15 to 17 years old | 3.50 | 0.59 | 1.01 | 0.314 | Accept Ho |
| 18 years old and above | 3.33 | 0.73 |
| Sex | | | | | |
| Male | 3.50 | 0.66 | 0.39 | 0.696 | Accept Ho |
| Female | 3.46 | 0.54 |
| Strand | | | | | |
| STEM | 3.52 | 0.58 | 0.23 | 0.799 | Accept Ho |
| HUMSS | 3.56 | 0.59 |
| ABM | 3.46 | 0.62 |
| Language/dialect used at home | | | | | |
| English | 3.41 | 0.57 | 0.47 | 0.892 | Accept Ho |
| Tagalog | 3.59 | 0.93 |
| Ilocano | 3.48 | 0.42 |
| Itawes | 3.44 | 1.16 |
| Malaueg | 3.46 | 0.53 |
| Ibanag | 3.73 | 0.35 |
| Kalinga | 3.43 | 0.58 |
| Ibaloi | 3.56 | 0.56 |
| Isneg | 3.52 | 0.82 |
| Kankana-ey | 2.91 | 0.14 |
| Others | 3.87 | 1.04 |

Table 9 reveal no statistically significant differences in Gen Z vocabulary familiarity across various demographic profiles, as all p-values are greater than the significance level of 0.05, leading to the acceptance of the null hypothesis in each case. Specifically, students aged 15 to 17 (M = 3.50, SD = 0.59) and those aged 18 and above (M = 3.33, SD = 0.73) show similar levels of familiarity (t = 1.01, p = 0.314). Male students (M = 3.50, SD = 0.66) and female students (M = 3.46, SD = 0.54) likewise demonstrate comparable familiarity (t = 0.39, p = 0.696). Across strands, STEM (M = 3.52), HUMSS (M = 3.56), and ABM (M = 3.46) students also show no significant variation (f = 0.23, p = 0.799). Among home languages, familiarity ranges from Kankana-ey (M = 2.91, SD = 0.14) to "Others" (M = 3.87, SD = 1.04), yet no significant differences are found (f = 0.47, p = 0.892). These results imply that the use and familiarity with Gen Z vocabulary among Grade 11 students at Conner Central National High School is generally consistent, regardless of age, sex, strand, or language spoken at home. This suggests that exposure to Gen Z language may be widespread and uniform across different student backgrounds, possibly due to common access to social media and digital platforms where such vocabulary is frequently used.

**Table 10. Comparison of Extent of Use of Gen Z vocabulary Across Different Demographic Profiles**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Profile | Mean | SD | t-value/f-value | p-value | Decision at 0.05 |
| Age | | | | |  |
| 15 to 17 years old | 3.50 | 0.64 | 0.41 | 0.680 | Accept Ho |
| 18 years old and above | 3.43 | 0.56 |
| Sex | | | | | |
| Male | 3.45 | 0.65 | -0.92 | 0.358 | Accept Ho |
| Female | 3.55 | 0.61 |
| Strand | | | | | |
| STEM | 3.52 | 0.76 | 0.06 | 0942 | Accept Ho |
| HUMSS | 3.53 | 0.61 |
| ABM | 3.48 | 0.60 |
| Language/dialect used at home | | | | | |
| English | 3.58 | 0.98 | 1.25 | 0.272 | Accept Ho |
| Tagalog | 3.39 | 1.15 |
| Ilocano | 3.35 | 0.57 |
| Itawes | 3.52 | 0.87 |
| Malaueg | 3.51 | 0.56 |
| Ibanag | 3.80 | 0.07 |
| Kalinga | 3.66 | 0.40 |
| Ibaloi | 3.73 | 0.53 |
| Isneg | 3.59 | 0.73 |
| Kankana-ey | 2.73 | 0.66 |
| Others | 4.00 | 0.28 |

Table 10 show that there is no significant difference in the extent of Generation Z vocabulary use among Grade 11 students at Conner Central National High School when grouped according to age (t=0.41, p=0.680), sex (t=-0.92, p=0.358), strand (f=0.06, p=0.942), and language/dialect used at home (f=1.25, p=0.272), as all p-values are greater than the significance level of 0.05, leading to the acceptance of the null hypothesis (Ho) in all cases. Specifically, students aged 15 to 17 (M=3.50, SD=0.64) and those 18 and above (M=3.43, SD=0.56) showed very similar usage levels, and both males (M=3.45, SD=0.65) and females (M=3.55, SD=0.61) likewise demonstrated comparable vocabulary use. Across academic strands, STEM (M=3.52), HUMSS (M=3.53), and ABM (M=3.48) students reported nearly identical mean scores. Meanwhile, despite slight variations among home languages, from the lowest mean (Kankana-ey, M=2.73) to the highest (Others, M=4.00), no statistically significant difference was found. This suggests that the use of Gen Z vocabulary is widespread and relatively uniform across different demographic groups, implying that exposure to popular culture, social media, and peer interaction may have a more unifying influence on language use than traditional demographic divisions among these students.

**Table 11. Comparison of English Language Proficiency on the Eight Parts of Speech Across Different Demographic Profiles**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Profile | Mean | SD | t-value/f-value | p-value | Decision at 0.05 |
| Age | | | | |  |
| 15 to 17 years old | 14.78 | 5.39 | 3.44 | <.001 | Reject Ho |
| 18 years old and above | 9.71 | 3.43 |
| Sex | | | | | |
| Male | 13.76 | 5.13 | -1.38 | 0.169 | Accept Ho |
| Female | 14.99 | 5.75 |
| Strand | | | | | |
| STEM | 20.03 | 3.16 | 61.89 | <.001 | Reject Ho |
| HUMSS | 15.87 | 4.22 |
| ABM | 12.10 | 4.66 |
| Language/dialect used at home | | | | | |
| English | 19.05 | 3.12 | 1.32 | 0.598 | Accept Ho |
| Tagalog | 16.71 | 6.18 |
| Ilocano | 17.08 | 5.44 |
| Itawes | 11.00 | 0.23 |
| Malaueg | 13.73 | 5.46 |
| Ibanag | 18.00 | 0.35 |
| Kalinga | 15.67 | 6.53 |
| Ibaloi | 11.33 | 2.99 |
| Isneg | 11.36 | 4.14 |
| Kankana-ey | 17.67 | 4.51 |
| Others | 15.50 | 4.96 |

Table 11 shows the comparison of English language proficiency across different demographic profiles among Grade 11 students at Conner Central National High School reveals significant disparities. Age-wise, students aged 15 to 17 years old (M=14.78, SD=5.39) performed significantly better than those 18 and above (M=9.71, SD=3.43), as indicated by a t-value of 3.44 and a p-value of <.001, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. In terms of sex, no significant difference was found between males (M=13.76, SD=5.13) and females (M=14.99, SD=5.75), with a p-value of 0.169, thus accepting the null hypothesis. Among the academic strands, STEM students (M=20.03, SD=3.16) outperformed those in HUMSS (M=15.87, SD=4.22) and ABM (M=12.10, SD=4.66), with a highly significant f-value of 61.89 and a p-value of <.001, suggesting academic specialization influences proficiency. Regarding language spoken at home, although English speakers (M=19.05, SD=3.12) showed higher proficiency, the differences among the various dialect groups were not statistically significant (p=0.598). These findings imply that age and academic track significantly affect English language proficiency, while sex and home language do not, highlighting the importance of early intervention and strand-specific support to enhance students' mastery of English, particularly in the use of the eight parts of speech.

**Table 12. Relationship Between Familiarity and Use of Generation Z Vocabulary and English Language Proficiency Across the Eight Parts of Speech Among Senior High School Learners**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Variables | R-value | Relationship Level | p-value | Interpretation |
| Level of Familiarity with Generation Z Vocabulary  &  English Language Proficiency Level on the Eight (8) Parts of Speech | 0.623 | Strong  Positive | 0.005 | Very Significant |
| Extent Use of Generation Z Vocabulary  &  English Language Proficiency Level on the Eight (8) Parts of Speech | 0.459 | Moderate Positive | 0.035 | Significant |

The results of the study suggest a significant relationship between the familiarity and use of Generation Z vocabulary and the English language proficiency level across the eight parts of speech among Grade 11 students at Conner Central National High School. A strong positive correlation (r = 0.623, p = 0.005) indicates that students who are more familiar with Generation Z vocabulary tend to exhibit higher English language proficiency, highlighting the potential influence of contemporary language trends on language skills. Furthermore, the moderate positive correlation (r = 0.459, p = 0.035) between the extent of Generation Z vocabulary use and English language proficiency suggests that while the use of such vocabulary positively impacts language proficiency, the effect is less pronounced. These findings imply that incorporating Generation Z vocabulary into learning materials may enhance students' language skills, but its influence may vary depending on the frequency and context of use. Therefore, educators should consider balancing the use of contemporary vocabulary with traditional language development strategies to optimize English proficiency among students.

5. conclusion

The age, gender, and strand distribution of students at Conner Central National High School provide a diverse context for examining Generation Z vocabulary usage and English language proficiency. While local dialects are the primary languages spoken at home, the emphasis of the HUMSS strand on language and communication may contribute to a higher familiarity with Generation Z vocabulary and potentially greater English language proficiency. The dominance of local languages at home may, however, pose challenges for fluency in English, highlighting the need for further support in developing language skills in a bilingual or multilingual environment.

Grade 11 students at Conner Central National High School possess strong familiarity with Generation Z vocabulary, effectively using it in casual communication. Nevertheless, their ability to adapt this knowledge across diverse contexts remains an area for growth. This underscores the importance of enhancing students' metalinguistic skills and promoting digital literacy and sociolinguistic competence within the curriculum, helping them navigate both informal and formal uses of the English language more effectively.

Generation Z vocabulary plays a significant role in the linguistic environment of Grade 11 students at Conner Central National High School. Their strong understanding and recognition of Gen Z terms suggest a natural integration of this language trend into their social interactions. However, their cautious use and adaptability imply a balanced approach between embracing modern expressions and maintaining traditional communication skills.

Grade 11 students at Conner Central National High School need targeted support to enhance their English language proficiency. Incorporating engaging and relatable materials, such as Generation Z vocabulary, into the teaching process may serve as an effective strategy to bridge the gap between students' everyday language and academic English, ultimately improving their grasp of essential grammar concepts.

Familiarity with Generation Z vocabulary among Grade 11 students is widespread and consistent across various demographic backgrounds, likely due to the common influence of social media and digital platforms. The use of Generation Z vocabulary among Grade 11 students transcends demographic differences, suggesting that shared access to popular culture and peer interaction plays a stronger role than traditional social categories. English language proficiency among Grade 11 students is influenced by age and academic specialization, highlighting the need for targeted academic support, while factors like sex and home language have no notable impact.

Incorporating Generation Z vocabulary into educational materials can support language learning by enhancing English proficiency. However, educators should be mindful of balancing the use of contemporary vocabulary with traditional language development methods, as the impact varies depending on the familiarity and context of use. A thoughtful integration of modern language trends alongside established educational strategies may offer the best approach for improving language skills among students.

Consent:

I affirm that the respondents voluntarily agreed and secured written consent to participate after being fully informed about the purpose, nature, and potential implications of the study. Their responses have been collected with utmost respect for their privacy and confidentiality, in accordance with ethical research guidelines.

Ethical approval:

The study was conducted with the approval and in accordance with the standards of the college. The research followed all applicable ethical guidelines, ensuring respect for the respondents' privacy and confidentiality.

DISCLAIMER (Artificial intelligence)

I hereby declare that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc.) and text-to-image generators have been used during the writing or editing of this manuscript.

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