

## The Impact of Limited Vocabulary on Writing Skills in GFP Students

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### Abstract

For GFP students, vocabulary is a critical component of writing skills. Expanding one's lexicon holds significant value; however, non-native English-speaking students often encounter numerous difficulties in this pursuit. Generally speaking, students who possess limited language skills tend to underperform academically in various courses related to linguistics, literature, translation, and language proficiency at the university level of education. In particular, this study aims to investigate the problems of GFP students, at the University of Technology and Applied Science, Ibra face with restricted vocabulary in their writing skills. The responses of 100 students who were randomly selected as participants make up the data from two distinct levels (three and four) of the GFP. Questionnaire is the instrument used in this quantitative study to gather data. The findings show that GFP students have a number of challenges when acquiring the vocabulary in writing, such as understanding new word meanings, difficulty putting their ideas and thoughts into written form, unable to produce a large vocabulary that contains many complex words, which gives them more freedom to express themselves than if they had a smaller vocabulary and so forth. The study revealed that vocabulary has a substantial effect on the quality of writing. The research emphasises the need for explicit vocabulary instruction and an all-encompassing strategy to enhance student writing. The study also recommends that GFP English teachers and students work together to find all possible means to facilitate students in enriching their vocabulary.

**Keywords:** GFP (General Foundation Program) students, Limited Vocabulary, Complex Words, Writing Skills.

### 1. Introduction:

Knowledge of vocabulary is essential for the development of language skills and academic success. The goal of the study is to find out what issues GFP students at the University of Technology and Applied Science, Ibra, have when it comes to writing skills and limited vocabulary. Students typically struggle to use vocabulary in English effectively because of a dearth of vocabulary items and an unsuitable learning environment. Research has demonstrated significant connections between vocabulary and writing ability from elementary school through college (Cromley & Azevedo, 2007; National Reading Panel, 2000; Qian, 2002). The scope and profundity of a student's vocabulary influence text comprehension and the acquisition of knowledge across disciplines. However, the relationship between vocabulary and writing development is investigated less frequently. The findings show that students had a variety of issues when it came to using the vocabulary in their writing. Additionally, it offers tactics that should improve vocabulary knowledge and lessen difficulties for students.

Writing is a productive language talent that requires retrieving and employing words to convey meaning actively. Therefore, possessing an expressive vocabulary is necessary for competent writing. As Kellogg (2008) observes, "the translation of ideas into written language depends on the writer's fluency in accessing vocabulary" (p. 1). Writers must make deliberate selections of the most appropriate words and syntax to convey their intended message. A writer's ability to write coherently, precisely, and with a sophisticated style can be hindered by an insufficient vocabulary (Leki & Carson, 1994; McCarthy, 2006). Research looking particularly at second language (L2) writers found vocabulary facility in English has a substantial influence on writing quality (Engber, 1995; Santos, 1988).

Studies have demonstrated that one of the most important aspects of writing clearly is word choice. Improving your vocabulary helps you use the right word, which conveys that you understand and are familiar with the correct and conventional language of a particular discipline. Think of it as a badge. (Charles worth Author Services, 2021). Selecting the right words depends on the writer's ability to use language, the writer's knowledge of the readers, and the writer's good judgment. (Rose B. Coggins, 1986). Low vocabulary knowledge poses severe problems to its learners, which consequently impedes the learning of English language (Alqahtani, 2015). Schmitt (2002) argues that vocabulary plays a vital role in teaching and learning the second language as lexical knowledge is fundamental to communicative effectively.

### **1.1. Problem Statement**

This study examines the effect of a limited vocabulary on the writing abilities of GFP students. It addresses the difficulties students face in acquiring academic vocabulary and investigates whether these limitations hinder their written expression proficiency. In addition, the study intends to investigate the relationship between vocabulary difficulties and writing performance in this particular academic setting.

### **1.2. Research Objectives**

The study attempts to accomplish the following aims:

- Recognise and assess the challenges GFP students face in acquiring academic vocabulary.
- To determine whether a significant correlation exists between vocabulary difficulties and the writing performance of students.
- To determine the extent to which a restricted vocabulary affects the writing skills and outcomes of GFP students.

### **1.3. Research Questions**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of limited vocabulary on writing skills among GFP students. It examines their vocabulary acquisition challenges and whether insufficient vocabulary ranges impede their written expression. The paper addresses the following research questions:

- How difficult is it for GFP students to acquire academic vocabulary?
- Is there a correlation between vocabulary difficulties and writing proficiency?
- Does a limited vocabulary impact students' writing skills and writing outcomes significantly?

This study seeks to illuminate the vocabulary requirements of student writers in this context. The findings may serve as a guide for encouraging their vocabulary and writing growth.

## 2. Literature Review:

Research shows that vocabulary knowledge is broad, deep, and fluent (Qian, 2002). The quantity of words a learner knows is often determined using vocabulary size tests. A learner's vocabulary varies from basic recognition to complex understandings that allow flexible use (Qian, 1999). Fluency entails automatic vocabulary access during language processing. These language traits develop progressively through meaningful word use.

Read (2000) synthesised second language vocabulary acquisition research. He found that incidental learning via contextualised input and reinforcement of partially known words drive vocabulary acquisition. Frequent exposure to novel words in various situations aids word learning. However, Read stressed the need of deliberate vocabulary learning through rehearsal and association. Academic vocabulary development requires deliberate word acquisition.

Multiple studies show L2 student writers struggle with vocabulary. Leki and Carson (1994) found that even proficient L2 authors struggled with vocabulary. Text analysis revealed incorrect wording, word repetition, imprecise choices, excessive use of ambiguous terminology (e.g., thing, things), and a dependence on basic grammatical patterns that may have been caused by a lack of vocabulary in the articles. Engber (1995) found that even advanced university L2 authors had vocabulary issues. Lexical difficulties included poor word choice, redundancy, and vocabulary command.

Santos (1988) investigated L2 students' lexical knowledge and writing quality. The academic vocabulary test examined receptive and productive knowledge. She found that vocabulary scope and depth influenced writing proficiency using regression analysis. Students with wider vocabulary wrote lengthier, more syntactically diverse compositions. Zareva (2005) found links between vocabulary and writing complexity, correctness, and structure.

Coxhead & Byrd (2007), Folse (2004), and Walters & Bozkurt (2009) all stress the importance of specific vocabulary education for L2 writers to satisfy academic standards. Pre-teaching vocabulary from source materials, prioritising academically useful words, using tools to learn and monitor new words, and exercising new vocabulary in speech and writing are advised. Incidental vocabulary learning from literature remains common. The present study investigates if GFP student writers struggle with language to guide teaching techniques. The relationship between vocabulary and writing is examined using numerous ways.

## 3. Research Methodology:

The research was conducted among a sample of 100 college students, comprising both male and female participants. This group was selected due to their accessibility and willingness to participate in the study.

The data for this report was gathered from a variety of sources, including the library, online research, and a survey. The online search proved to be particularly fruitful, as numerous web pages on the topic were available, including articles and e-books. All of the information collected was carefully analysed and utilized in the report's introduction.

Questionnaire-The survey was conducted using a questionnaire that consisted of 10 questions related to the research topic. The questionnaire included four Multiple-Choice questions, four

True/False questions, and two Open-Ended questions. Respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire during their free time, and there were no issues with comprehension or completion. Once the questionnaires were collected, the data was tallied and converted into percentages. This information was then presented in the form of bar graphs and pie charts for easy visualization and analysis.

*Analysis of writing* - A group of volunteers were selected and their writing samples were gathered and scrutinized for lexical features such as diversity, complexity, and suitable application.

*Experimental study* - The participants also completed a brief writing task under two controlled conditions. In the limited vocabulary condition, they were deprived of all reference materials. In the vocabulary-rich condition, they were permitted to utilise dictionaries and thesauruses.

*The actions taken* - Participants were given the questionnaire to quantify vocabulary learning and writing issues. Using a smaller group of volunteers, authentic writing samples, such as course essays, were collected. Multiple raters evaluated the texts based on their lexical sophistication, usage, coherence, and other qualities. In the final step, these students completed a brief writing assignment according to specific instructions under conditions of limited versus abundant vocabulary. The constrained assignment revealed the direct effects of vocabulary accessibility on writing outcomes.

## 4. Results and Discussion:

### 4.1 Survey Findings

#### Discussion

1.The biggest challenge students in GFP face while acquiring new academic vocabulary.

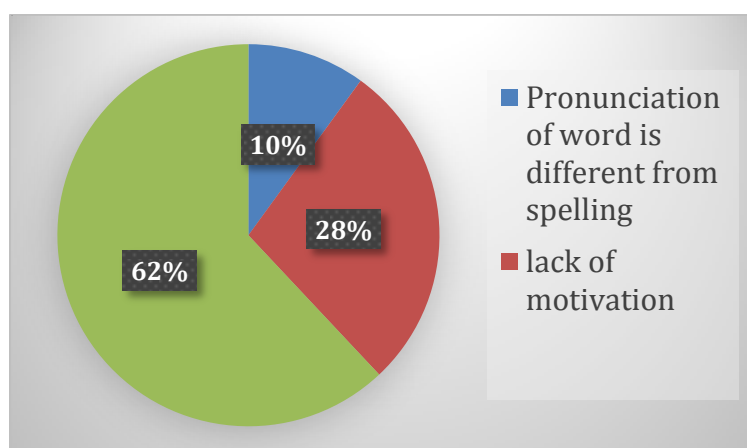


Fig 1. Biggest challenge students face in GFP

The majority of participants, accounting for 62%, expressed their concern over the low retention power of GFP students when it comes to acquiring new academic vocabulary. On the other hand, 28% of the respondents identified lack of motivation as the biggest challenge, while 10% pointed out the difficulty in pronouncing words with different spellings.

2.According to you, the best technique that is effective in introducing vocabulary.

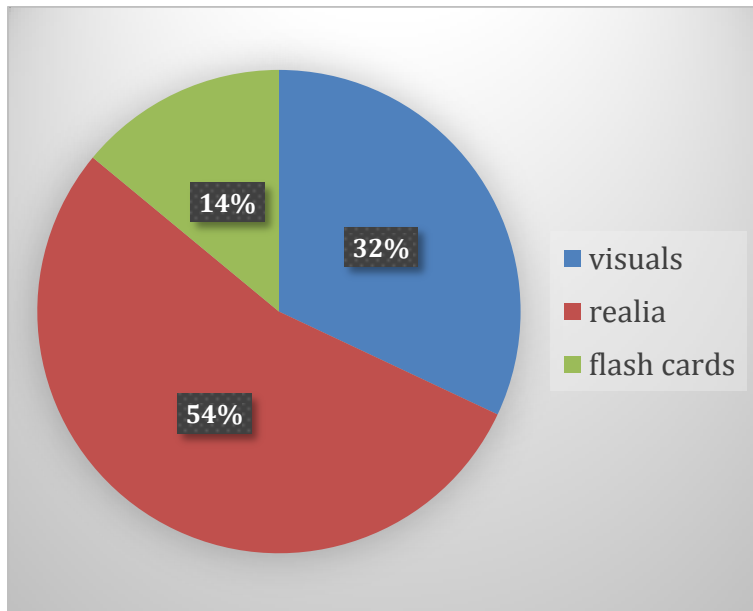


Fig 2. Best technique to introduce vocabulary

Realia was the preferred technique for introducing vocabulary, according to 54% of the respondents. Visuals were favoured by 32% of the participants, while 14% expressed a preference for flash cards.

3. The most frequently used technique to drill, memorize and retain vocabulary in integrated learning.

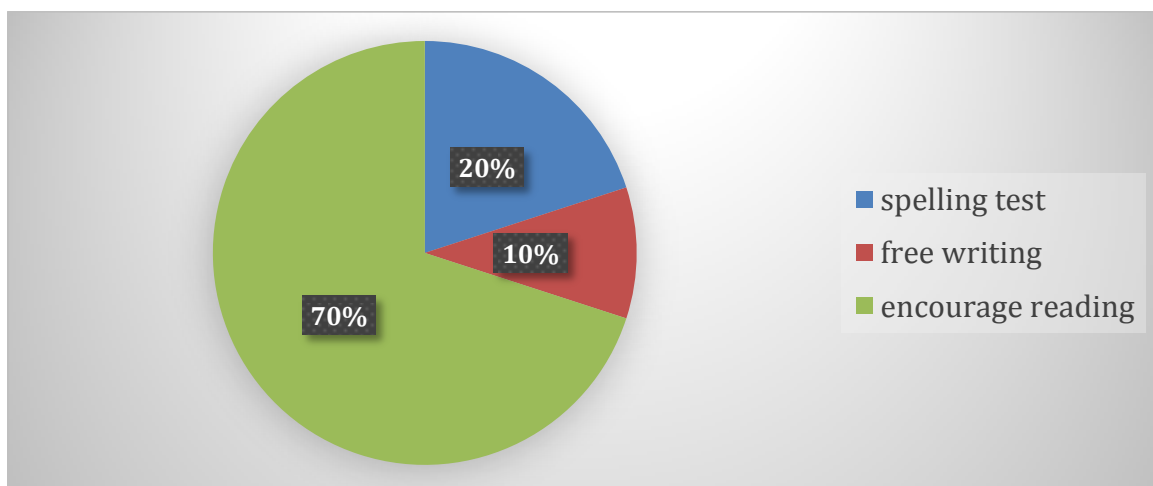


Fig 3. Frequently used technique to learn vocabulary

According to the survey, the majority of participants, accounting for 70%, believe that promoting reading is the most commonly employed method for practicing, memorizing, and

retaining vocabulary in integrated learning. A smaller percentage, 20%, expressed a preference for spelling tests, while 10% indicated that they favoured free writing.

4.The influence of google translation on learners' acquisition of new vocabulary.

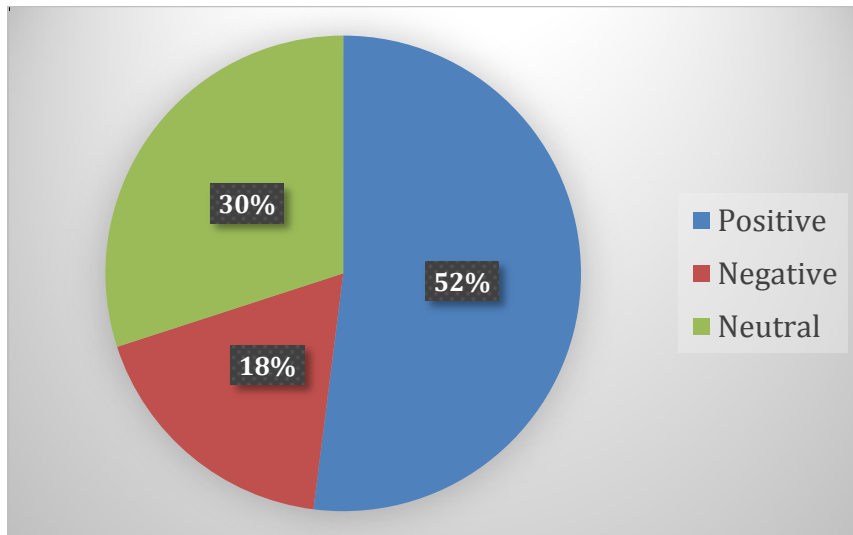


Fig 4. Influence of google translation in learning new vocabulary

According to the survey results, the impact of Google translation on learners' acquisition of new vocabulary was perceived as positive by 52% of the respondents. On the other hand, 30% of the participants considered it to be neutral, while 18% expressed a negative view.

5.Review and recycling of vocabulary helps students to improve the writing skill.

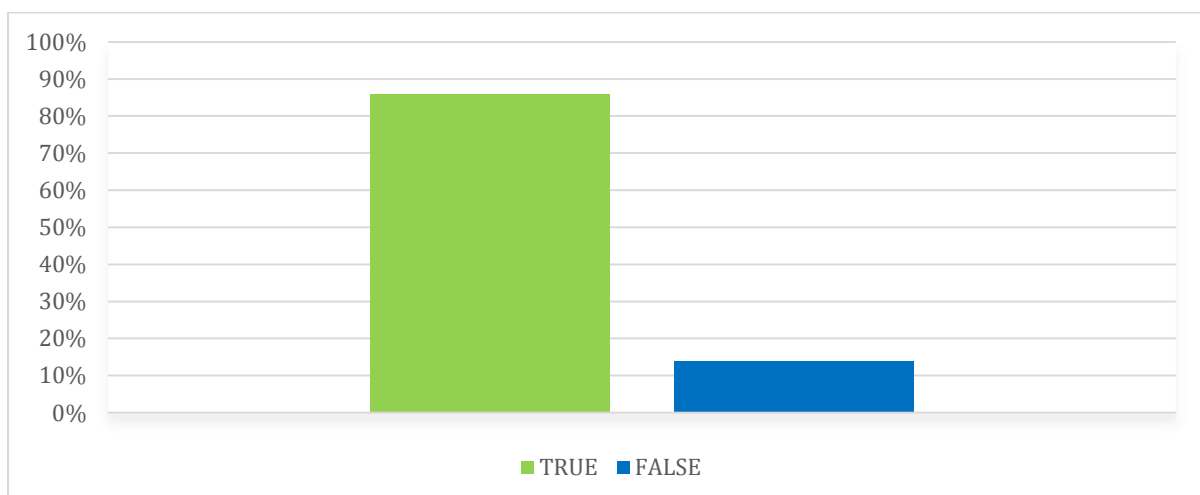


Fig 5. Review and recycling of vocabulary

According to the survey results, a majority of the participants (86%) agreed with the statement that practicing vocabulary through review and recycling can enhance students'

writing abilities. However, a minority of respondents held the opposing view that the statement was inaccurate.

6.Students fail to choose correct vocabulary in writing due to the insufficient vocabulary range.

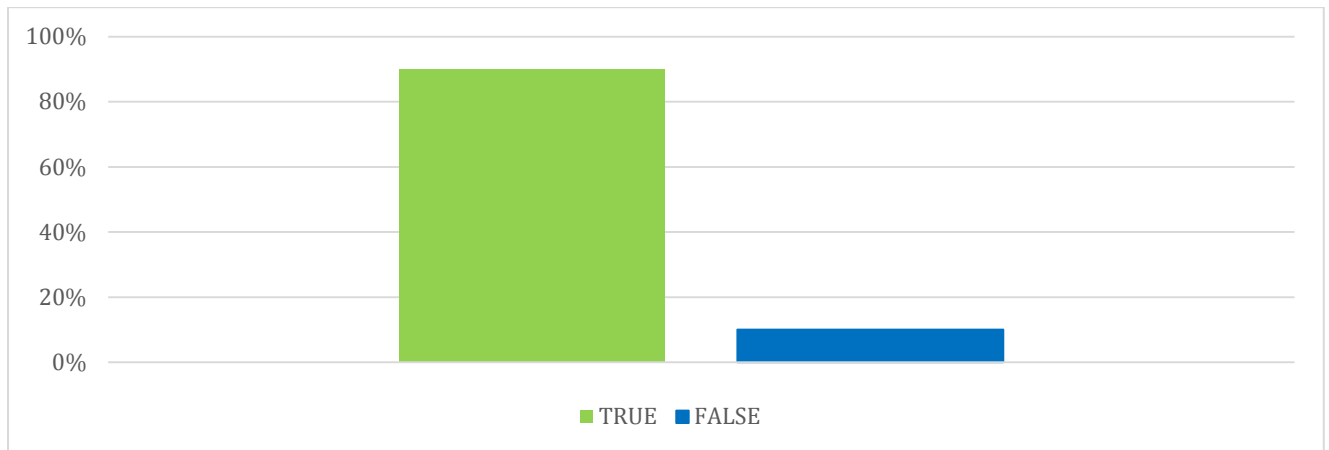


Fig 6. Insufficient vocabulary range impedes writing

The majority of participants (90%) agreed with the assertion that students struggle to select appropriate vocabulary in their writing due to a limited range of vocabulary. Conversely, 10% of respondents disagreed with this statement.

7.Vocabulary is crucial for students to develop the writing skill.

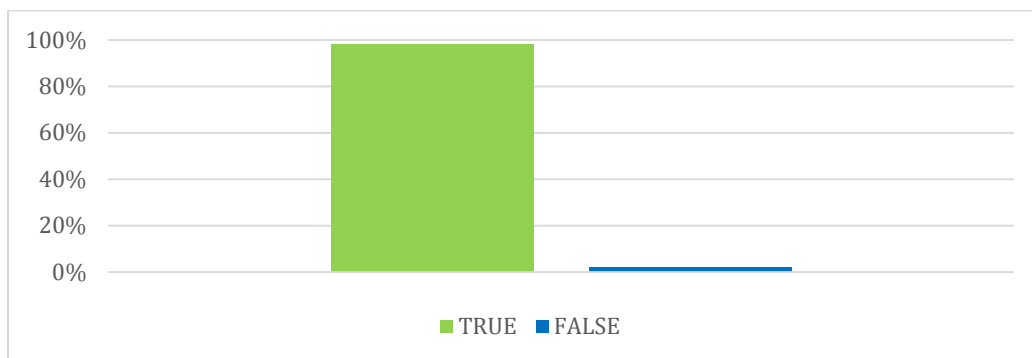


Fig 7. Vocabulary is crucial for writing skill

According to the survey results, the overwhelming majority of respondents, specifically 98%, agreed with the statement that vocabulary plays a vital role in the development of students' writing skills. In contrast, a mere 2% of the participants expressed their disagreement with this statement.

8. Students should learn too many words in a day to develop their vocabulary.

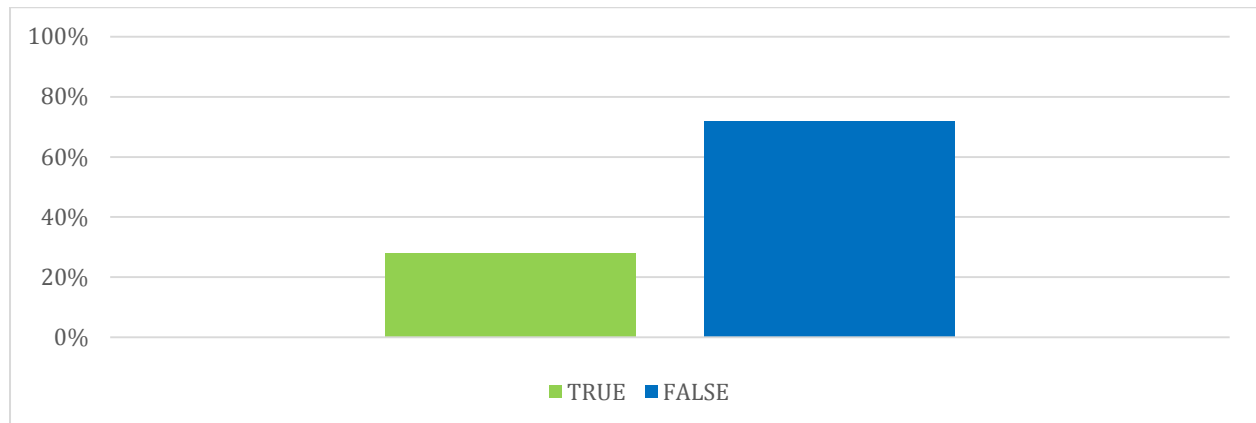


Fig 8. Learn too many words to develop vocabulary

The majority of participants (72%) expressed the view that the assertion suggesting students should learn an excessive number of words in a day to enhance their vocabulary was inaccurate. However, 28% of respondents agreed with the statement's validity.

9. The majority of survey participants expressed the view that possessing a strong vocabulary enhances the ability to create more engaging sentences. This is supported by the following reasons:

- Capture the attentions of the readers
- Expressiveness
- Contextual Appropriateness
- Precision and Clarity
- Variety and Creativity

10. The respondents indicated a preference for specific methods to enhance their vocabulary,

as outlined below:

- Use of dictionary to learn new words.
- Maintaining a vocabulary journal or vocabulary log
- Spelling test
- Spelling games and competitions

## 4.2 Discussion

This comprehensive study used survey method to understand L2 student writers' lexical challenges in the academic GFP programme. While the original survey gave a broad overview of students' attitudes, insightful conversations revealed more specific experiences. Text analysis and the experimental study also confirmed student writing's vocabulary issues.



The data sources showed that inadequate vocabulary has a major impact on student's writing skills. Students clearly identified terminology as a learning obstacle that limits their writing. This makes vocabulary a significant aspect and potential barrier for student writers. These L2 learners may benefit greatly from explicit vocabulary instruction, especially in understanding university-level academic language. The vocabulary they have limits the efficiency of their writing.

Lexical skills can be developed with targeted vocabulary tactics. Students might learn academic jargon and writing-related terms from teachers. Allowing vocabulary resources in writing assignments helps compensate for inadequacies. In addition, specific modelling and hands-on practising with sophisticated oral and written language are also helpful. A long-term method can expand and enrich students' vocabulary. Reading widely exposes you to words used in a variety of fields, which is one of the best ways to learn new words. When searching for a word in a dictionary, it's a good idea to look up its etymology as well as its definition. This will aid in both improving the memory of the word and assisting the students in determining the meaning of other, as-yet-unknown words that share the same root. After using the dictionary to look up new terms, make a note of each one in a journal. That way, all of the new vocabulary will be in one convenient area.

This study has limitations despite its insights. The sample represents students from one institution, which may limit its application to other education situations. The real vocabulary needs of academic writing need scrutiny. However, this research examines the intricate relationship between language and writing from many perspectives. The research emphasises the importance of vocabulary in L2 writing development and recommends prioritising vocabulary in pedagogy.

## 5. Conclusion:

This study examines the vocabulary-learning difficulties encountered by students in the General Foundation Program at the English Language Center, using a questionnaire and analysis of writing essays. The findings confirm that learners at the university level face challenges in pronouncing new words, spelling new words, using new words correctly, identifying grammatical structures of words, guessing meanings from context, and retaining vocabulary. Consequently, this research asserts that GFP students have a limited 'word repository,' which significantly impacts their writing ability and communication skills. To address these issues, the study proposes teaching-learning strategies that can help students overcome these vocabulary-learning problems.

However, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study, as it solely focuses on the problems faced by students in learning English vocabulary. Future research should explore the underlying reasons behind these difficulties. Additionally, further studies could investigate teachers' perspectives on instructional methods used in language classrooms and the challenges they encounter in teaching vocabulary.

## 6. Recommendations:

The study recommends that GFP English teachers and students collaborate to explore all possible avenues for enhancing students' vocabulary skills. The aim of this study is to raise awareness among students about the importance of vocabulary learning and motivate them to overcome their difficulties by implementing the strategies suggested below:

- Provide writing prompts that specifically focus on using a variety of words. This prompts creativity and prompts individuals to experiment with their writing.
- Cultivate a habit of regular reading encompassing a wide array of materials, including books, articles, and essays. Exposing oneself to a diverse range of vocabulary in different contexts aids in the development of a more extensive lexicon.
- Educate students or writers on the effective utilization of a thesaurus. This invaluable tool enables them to discover synonyms and expand their vocabulary by presenting alternative words with similar meanings.
- Infuse word games and puzzles into learning activities to enhance engagement. Activities such as Scrabble, crossword puzzles, and word searches can transform the process of acquiring new words into an enjoyable and interactive experience.
- Place emphasis on learning words within their contextual framework rather than in isolation. Comprehension and retention are enhanced when individuals understand how a word is employed within a sentence or paragraph.
- Foster the practice of maintaining a vocabulary journal. Whenever individuals encounter a new word, challenge them to record the word, its definition, and utilize it in a sentence. This practice reinforces active learning and retention.
- Introduce a daily routine centered around a "word of the day." Engage participants in discussions regarding the word's meaning, pronunciation, and encourage them to incorporate it into their conversations or writing throughout the day.
- Harness the power of technology tools, such as language learning apps, vocabulary-building apps, and online resources, to create interactive and engaging learning experiences. These tools can facilitate the acquisition and exploration of new words.
- Design progressive learning modules that gradually introduce vocabulary at higher CEFR levels as student's advance. This ensures a steady and structured progression, allowing students to build upon their existing vocabulary in a systematic manner. Furthermore, integrate CEFR-aligned vocabulary with other language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Also, encourage students to use the learned words in real-life application of vocabulary as in discussions, presentations, and written assignments, promoting practical application and retention.

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