

NETIZENS' STRATEGIES IN LEARNING VOCABULARIES FROM THE CONTEXT OF PREFERRED SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

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ABSTRACT

People of different ages may acquire new words from various online sources each day in this digital age. Since Facebook seems to be the most widely-used social media platform, the researchers investigated netizens' preferred social media posts and their strategies in learning new vocabulary. This Quantitative Descriptive Survey research was participated in by two hundred thirty (**230**) netizens composed of one-hundred twenty-eight (128) students, sixty-two (62) public school teachers, nine (9) government employees (outside teaching), nine (9) private school teachers, nine (9) unemployed individuals, five (5) employed in a private sector, five (5) self-employed, two (2) housewives(homemakers), and *one (1) OFW*. The study used a closed-ended researcher-made survey questionnaire that contained questions about their most preferred social media posts and their strategies to learn new words. It used frequency and percentage in dealing with numeric data; this study found that netizens prefer to read posts of professionals, like teachers and celebrities. They prefer to read status/posts in English and learn new English words. The strategies they apply involve copying (writing) the status on their notes, emphasizing the new word/s learned. The respondents also memorize the new words learned (Bottom-Up), share status using the new vocabulary in their context/s (Top-Down), join in the conversation on Facebook or face-to-face with friends and colleagues using the new words learned (Interactive). The study concluded that even professionals and adults are interested in learning new words each day. The researchers encourage teachers to use online platforms like Facebook to introduce new vocabulary/words. Posting educational messages would help promote new vocabulary learning. As much as possible, their status should be in the target language.

Keywords: bottom-up, interactive, social media platform, top-down, vocabulary learning

Introduction

Communication is one of the soft skills to be developed among learners. Also, communication skills are innate to a person. Aside from emotional and interpersonal skills, communication skills are inherent and not teachable (Contessa, 2022). However, it requires other skills, including vocabulary knowledge, to make it effective. Vocabulary is an integral aspect of literacy teaching and refers to the knowledge of words, including their structure, use, meanings, and links to other words (Victoria, 2021). Proficient speakers are confident of their structure and have a rich vocabulary readily available when they speak. Several lessons in the curriculum across levels focus on grammar and structure but little on vocabulary learning. Some students were unable

to develop their strategies in learning vocabulary, which is why they find it difficult to express themselves and their ideas in situations that require them to. Considering these scenarios, it is not about their lack of confidence but because they lack the vocabulary to support their ideas, especially when required to speak English. The words needed in communication are a piece of basic knowledge. The more relevant words the language learners know, the better for them. Vocabulary, as well as grammar and pronunciation for all language learners, is one of the elements of language considered necessary for language mastery.

Ghalebi et al. (2020) posit that vocabulary learning strategies can be considered part of general learning strategies in second language acquisition. Vocabulary learning strategies are part of language learning strategies, which are part of general learning strategies. In the context of this statement, vocabulary is a language itself. The definition of vocabulary learning strategies comes from language learning strategies. Vocabulary learning strategies are actions students choose to help them understand and remember vocabulary items obtained through language learning experiences (Susanto, Halim, & Nuwrun, 2019). This idea correlates with Oxford and Crookall (n.d) claim that vocabulary is not explicitly taught in most language classes, and students are expected to "pick up" vocabulary on their own without any guidance. Courses on reading, writing, speaking, listening, grammar, and culture are standard in L2 programs, but few vocabulary courses exist. Many instances of so-called vocabulary instruction involve merely giving students lists of words to memorize or providing limited practice opportunities, with no further assistance to the often- overwhelmed learner. Learners' independent learning of new vocabularies is associated with the idea that people start learning new vocabulary words from subscriptions to "word of the day" feeds from different web platforms Bangayan- Manera (2020).. These digital platforms could be social networking sites, websites, apps, email, and the like.

This study did not limit its investigation on the vocabulary learning strategies applied by students but those engaged in learning new words from social media posts, particularly from Facebook. Likewise, it did not limit the learning of new words in English but also in Tagalog, Filipino, and other languages preferred by the respondents. The authors claim that there is no particular stage when vocabulary learning should stop; vocabulary learning should continue as long as new words come out.

Methodology

This study is quantitative in nature. Particularly, the Descriptive Survey design tried to find out the strategies applied by netizens in learning new vocabulary through preferred social media posts. The said research design specifically dwelled on the profile of the participants as to status, age, and sex; on their preferred social media posts; on the language, they prefer to learn new vocabulary and their strategies in learning new vocabulary. The words/vocabularies learned by the respondents from their preferred social media posts were not studied and specified in this research. In gathering pertinent data, the researchers used an online survey questionnaire. The survey questionnaire underwent Content and Expert Validity before floating it to the target participants. The researchers sent it to the netizens through a google form, but before they answered, the researchers explained and assured them of the confidentiality of the process. They were not, however, forced to answer the questionnaire. The said questionnaire was composed of three (3) parts. The first part deals with the profile of the participants; the second part is about the preferred

social media status/post. At the same time, the third includes the strategies applied by three netizens in learning new words in English and words in the locality that are not yet familiar to them. The researchers employed the frequency and percentage to get this study's numeric data in statistical tools. For conclusive results, two hundred thirty (230) netizens in different statuses participated in this research, but most were students. Since this study employed Convenience Sampling, the gathered findings are only limited to the sample of the target population.

Results and Discussion

The following are the yielded results of the study.

1. Profile of the respondents

1.1 Sex of the respondents

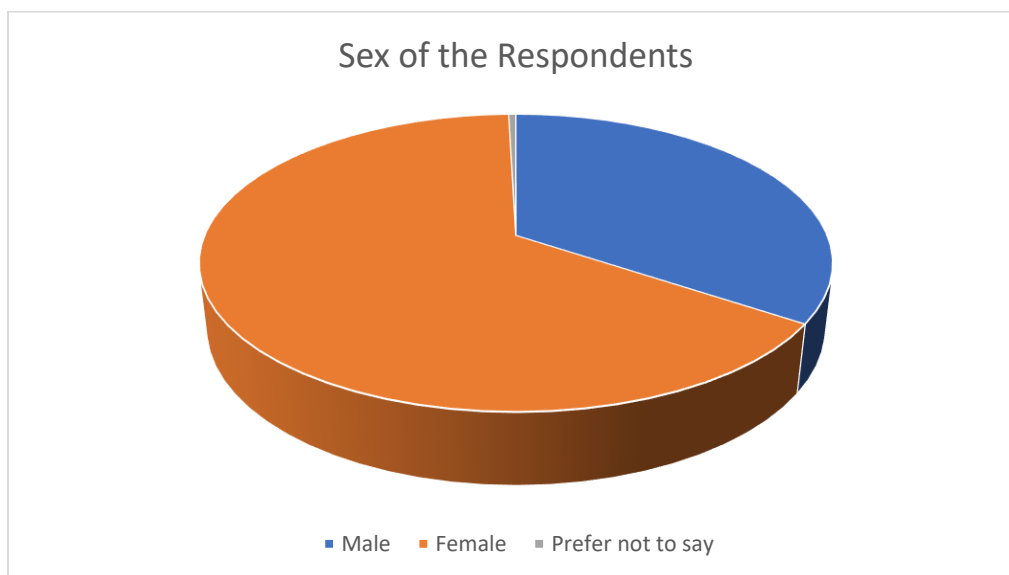


Figure 1.1 Sex of the respondents: It could be noted from the figure that more females at 150 (67%) participated in this study than males at 79 (33%). However, one (1) did not disclose his/her sex.

Social media comes in many interrelated forms such as blogs, forums, podcasts, photo sharing, social bookmarking, widgets, video, to name a few. Although social media is often associated with young people Bangayan-Manera, Vecaldo & Saquing (2020), it has attracted both men and women from different ages, educational levels, cultures, amongst others, from all over the world. Gender norms may influence the preference for a particular use of social media Bujala (2012) suggests that men are likely to have more time for social networks because of gender expectations and roles. In other words, the societal expectations and norms tend to favor men over

women who are expected to take care of the private sphere while men take care of the public sphere, which the social network incorporates. Bangayan-Manera (2019) aver those societal expectations favor men. However, they argued that more women are using social media than men. Further, Antonio (2021) suggest that women outnumbered men for most social networking sites except for LinkedIn. A 2009 Pew Internet Research report showed that women outnumbered men on social media platforms (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010 in Idemudia et al., 2017).

1.2 Age of the respondents

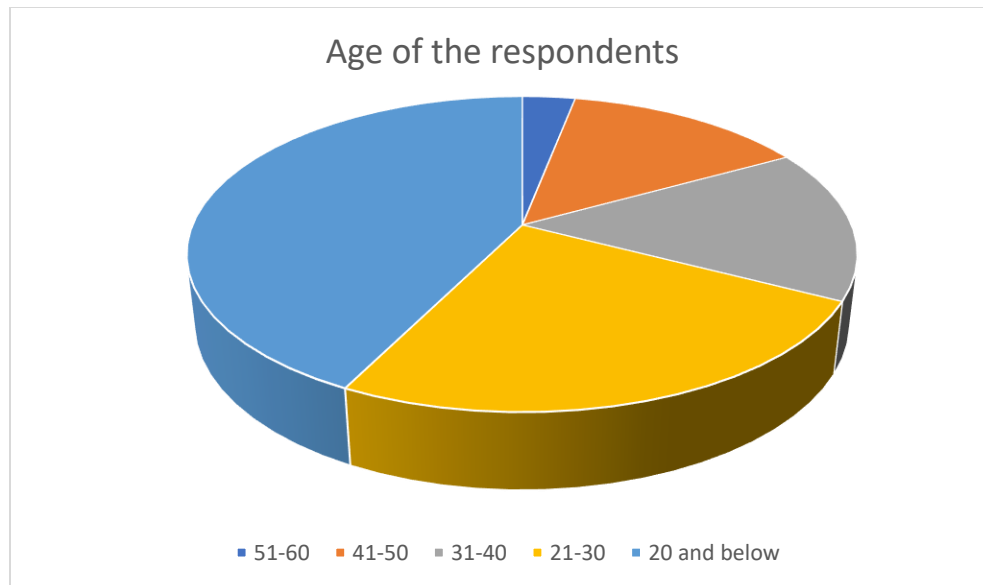


Figure 2. Age of the respondents

Figure 2 suggests that the two-hundred thirty (230) netizens who participated in this research came from different age groups, but the majority (44%) belong to the 20 and below age range. These findings state that most of them were approximately 18-21 years old, followed by 21-30 years old. It could also be noted from the data that the least number of participants are in their early 50's to old age.

1.3 Status of the respondents

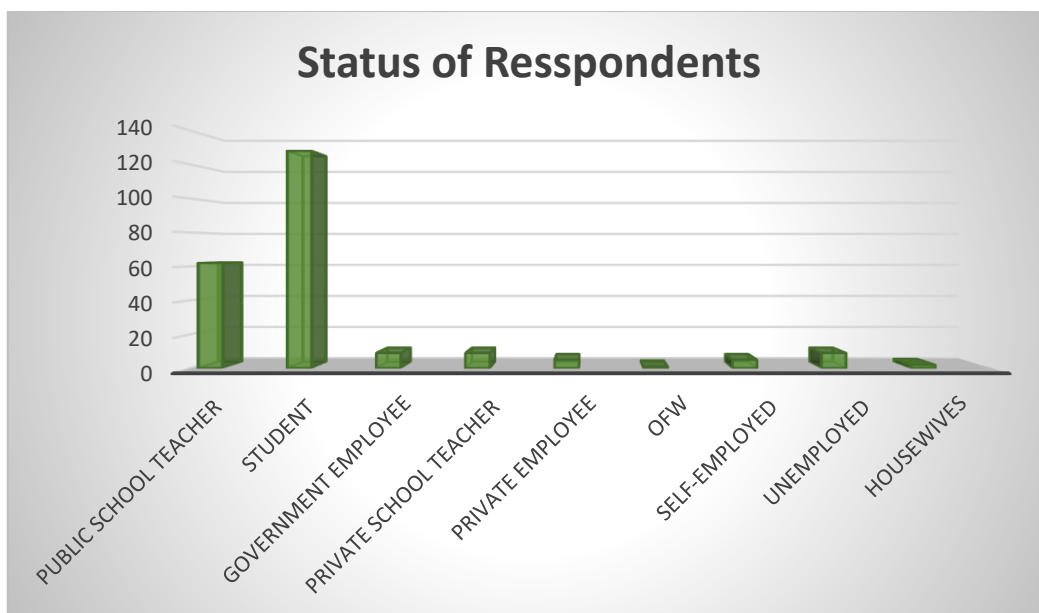


Figure 3. Status of respondents

It could be noted from Figure 3 that most of those who participated in this study were students (55.7%), followed by public school teachers (26.9%). There were other government employees (3.9%), private school teachers (3.9%), private employees (2%) and some unemployed netizens (3.9%), self-employed (2%), housewives (2%), and an OFW (0.43%) who responded to the online survey questionnaire sent by the researchers. This finding further suggests that both students and teachers are eager to learn new vocabulary. Vocabulary learning is an essential component of their day-to-day routine as teachers to be able to have something new to introduce to their learners. On the other hand, students are also encouraged to learn new words to be added to their word bank to be more competent and proficient, especially in English. If students develop their vocabulary as autonomous learners, they must learn strategies. Interest in such learning strategies has continued to grow for decades, ever since communicative language teaching (CLT) began gaining popularity in the 1970s and 1980s. Historically, learners were assumed to pick up vocabulary incidentally due to input exposure rather than necessarily, through explicit instruction Ventura-Cauilan (2022). Although some teachers may think that vocabulary learning is easy, learning new vocabulary items has always been challenging. Students who do not have sufficient vocabularies or word-learning strategies continue to struggle throughout their educational careers, which leads to a cycle of frustration and continued failure Clemente (2019). Furthermore, the vocabulary level of an individual is viewed as a means of unlocking or closing access to information and often illustrates whether a person is considered educated Eijansantos, Alieto, Emmanuel., Pasoc, & Bangayan-Manera (2021).

2. Preferred Facebook posts where netizens learn new vocabulary

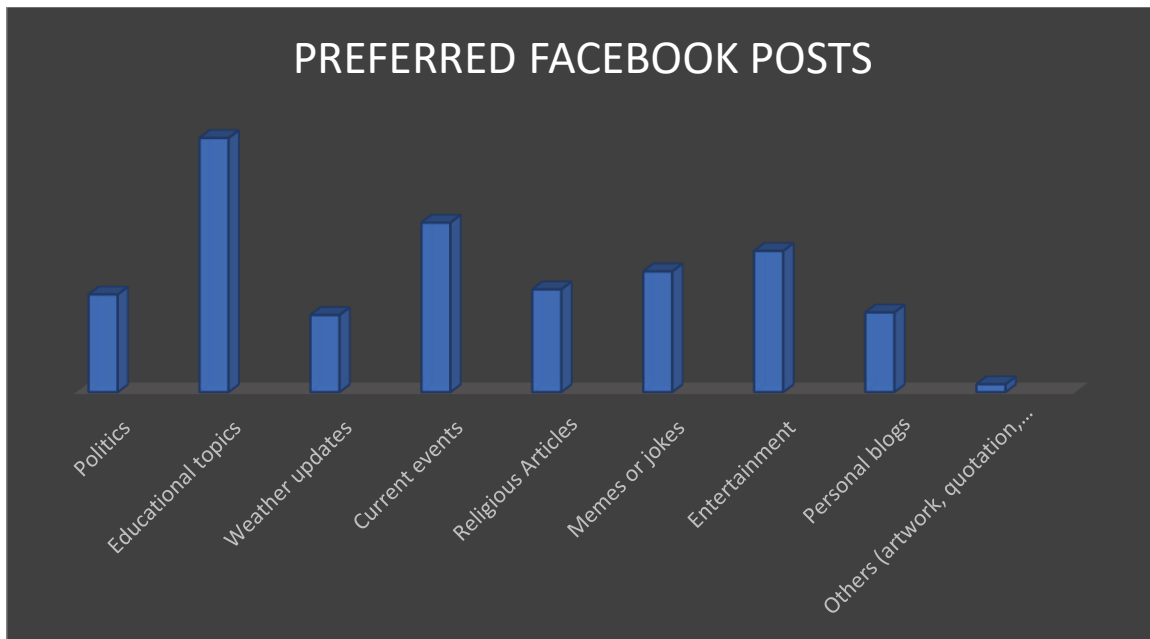


Figure 4. Preferred Facebook posts

The figure displays the preferred Facebook posts of the 230 netizens who participated in this study. The data suggest that, although they read posts about politics, entertainment, religion, and jokes, still the majority of them prefer posts about educational issues or topics and current events.

3. Preferred Language used by netizens in learning new vocabulary

Figure 5. Preferred language by the respondents

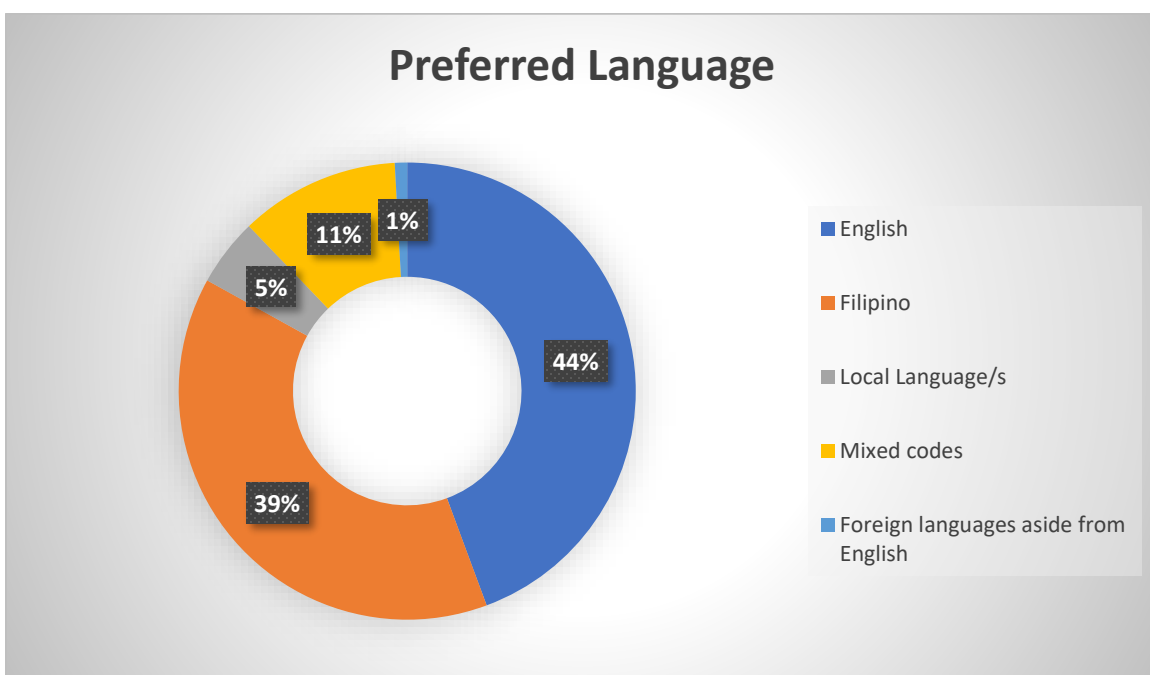


Figure 5 shows data on the preferred language by the netizens where they could learn new vocabulary from Facebook posts. As shown, most of the respondents (44%) prefer to read and learn new vocabulary in the English language, and a significant number (39%) prefer to read and learn new words in Filipino. Some want to read and learn in mixed codes, local languages, and foreign languages. Since most of the participants are students and teachers, they need to learn new vocabulary as part of their roles continuously. Teachers need to have something new each day to be shared with their learners, while students should learn new words to have enough vocabulary in their word bank, which they could readily retrieve when situations require them.

4. Influencers in learning new vocabulary

When asked about whose posts they acquire more vocabulary, their responses were ranked as follows: 1. Teachers; 2. Celebrities (vloggers and media influencers); 3. Friends and colleagues; 4. Family member/s; 5. Religious workers; and 6. Politicians

The finding of the study correlates with the claim of Chan et al. (2019) that teachers are the key social agents or influencers for learners' commitment towards Language education and even in learning other things or subjects.

5. Strategies (self-initiated) applied by netizens in learning vocabulary from Facebook posts

Based on the analysis of participants' responses on the strategies they applied, the researchers categorized them as Bottom-Up, Top-Down, and Interactive. As to Bottom-Up, the respondents extract and write new words from the posts, capture screen, write the whole text, and then underline or highlight the new words learned. Then, they often look for the meaning in the dictionary if they do not have a chance to ask the owner of what the word/s mean/s. When it comes to the Top-Down strategies, they start to share or post status using the new vocabulary in their contexts. Concerning Interactive strategies, the respondents said they could already exchange ideas online or through the comment or chat sections/boxes or face-to-face interaction with friends and peers using the new words learned. The respondents agreed that there is always a new word for them to add to their word bank through reading Facebook posts, and they find it very helpful, especially those in the English language.

Conclusion

With all the results and findings presented, the study found out that netizens not only use Facebook posts for pleasure or information. Similarly, they learn new words from others' posts. Thus, the respondents employ vocabulary learning through their chosen social media posts. The researchers concluded that learning vocabulary is not limited to a specific age group or status with the respondents from different age groups and statuses. Anyone willing to learn new words can apply the best possible strategy or strategies they think could help them succeed in this activity.

Recommendations



Based on the findings and formulated conclusion, the researchers propose the following recommendations:

1. Since teachers and celebrities are the ones who influence the netizens in learning new words, they are encouraged to share various Facebook posts which feature much new vocabulary for readers to learn and use in their contexts;
2. Netizens are encouraged to learn new words from what they read on Facebook posts. Aside from being critical to what information they get; they also should continuously learn new vocabulary that appears on others' status;
3. Teachers and students should continuously read and acquire new words from Facebook posts as a requirement of their roles and dialogues and communication with other people around them;
4. Future studies may be conducted to validate the present study's findings further.
5. Since findings are limited to the sample of respondents, future researchers may consider a larger study scale.

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