

Vocabulary Development and Word Choices of Grade 8 Students in Padre Garcia Integrated National High School

Aileen A. Bautista¹

1 – Golden Gate Colleges

ayenna684@gmail.com / 0009-0003-7433-5129

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Abstract

Vocabulary development is an essential skill in students' writing proficiency, particularly in shaping clarity, precision, and creativity in language use. With the increasing integration of artificial intelligence (AI) tools in education, understanding their role in supporting vocabulary enhancement has become essential.

This study aimed to assess the vocabulary development and word choices of Grade 8 students, as well as to examine their perceptions of AI writing tools as support for vocabulary and writing improvement. A descriptive research design was employed involving 92 Grade 8 students from Padre Garcia Integrated National High School. Data were gathered using researcher-developed assessment tools measuring vocabulary range, accuracy, appropriateness, and word choice quality, along with a perception survey on AI tool usage. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data.

Results revealed that students' vocabulary development was generally low, while their word choices were rated good in terms of clarity and precision but only fair in creativity. Furthermore, students perceived AI writing tools as helpful for idea generation and improving writing clarity, but moderately challenging for vocabulary enhancement due to limited explanations that hinder learning from errors.

The findings suggest the need for early and targeted vocabulary interventions and the strategic integration of AI tools as guided supplementary resources. Enhancing instructional approaches through structured vocabulary-building activities and reflective writing tasks may promote more balanced language development among learners.

Keywords: *Vocabulary Development, Word Choice, AI Writing Tools*



Introduction

The integration of technology in education has significantly transformed teaching and learning processes, particularly in the development of language skills. Among innovations in the present time, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has proved to be a powerful tool that supports learners in improving writing by providing real-time feedback on grammar, vocabulary, and word choice. In addition, AI writing applications such as Grammarly, QuillBot, and ChatGPT offer alternate expressions and richer vocabulary options, helping them improve their language use. Despite significant progress in these areas, there are challenges associated with overreliance on AI tools resulting in limited learner reflection we need for better outcomes and inadequate levels of guidance fostering long-term habits; together representing a strong case for systematic pre-structured integration of such tools within pedagogy

Recent literature highlights that the use of AI in educational applications focus on private teaching and nurturing deeper thinking and communication skills with quick feedback loops. Language learners benefit from exposure to diverse vocabulary styles and context-sensitive alternatives that collectively facilitate their lexical development and writing skill improvement. However, research suggests that without appropriate pedagogical guidance there is a risk that students will become reliant on outputs generated by AI instead of developing their own linguistic skills. In the Philippine context, the integration of technology is supported by Republic Act No. 10533 and reinforced through DepEd Order No. 21 s. 2019, which advocate for learner-centered and technology-driven instruction. Nevertheless, AI literacy and its application in language learning, particularly in vocabulary development and word choice, remain underexplored in many schools.

In the Division of Batangas, efforts to enhance English instruction through digital innovation are evident; however, classroom observations reveal that many Grade 8 students continue to struggle with limited vocabulary and ineffective word choices in writing tasks. This challenge is more pronounced at Padre Garcia Integrated National High School, where students demonstrate difficulty in expressing ideas with clarity, precision, and creativity. While AI writing tools are accessible to learners, their use is often unguided, resulting in missed opportunities for meaningful vocabulary development. This gap underscores the need to examine how AI tools can be systematically utilized to support language learning.

This study investigates the role of AI writing tools in enhancing the vocabulary development and word choices of Grade 8 students at Padre Garcia Integrated National High School. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of vocabulary development of Grade 8 students in terms of:
 - 1.1 range,
 - 1.2 accuracy, and



- 1.3 appropriateness of vocabulary?
2. What is the quality of word choices of Grade 8 students in terms of:
 - 2.1 clarity,
 - 2.2 precision, and
 - 2.3 creativity?
3. How do Grade 8 students develop vocabulary and word choices through AI writing tools?
4. What challenges do students encounter in using AI writing tools for vocabulary enhancement and word selection?
5. What enhanced supplementary materials may be proposed based on the findings?

Guided by these research questions, the study aims to assess students' vocabulary development and word choice, examine the role and challenges of AI writing tools in language learning, and develop supplementary instructional materials that support the responsible and effective integration of AI in English instruction.

2. Materials and Methods

Research Design

Quantitative descriptive research was used in this study to analyze vocabulary development and word selection by eighth-grade students as well as their attitudes towards the use of AI in writing assistance programs. Descriptive research enables one to conduct a scientific investigation of variables through measurement without their manipulation; hence, descriptive research is appropriate for identifying the current state of vocabulary development among learners.

Participants

The participants of the study were 92 Grade 8 students enrolled at Padre Garcia Integrated National High School. A complete enumeration sampling technique was utilized, as all students handled by the researcher were included in the study. The respondents were selected based on their accessibility and relevance to the research objectives, particularly in assessing vocabulary development and exposure to AI writing tools.

Research Instrument

Data were collected using a researcher-developed questionnaire designed to assess



students' vocabulary development in terms of range, accuracy, and appropriateness, as well as the quality of word choices in terms of clarity, precision, and creativity. The instrument also included items measuring students' perceptions and challenges in using AI writing tools.

The questionnaire underwent content validation by three experts in English language teaching, educational measurement, and educational technology. Revisions were made based on their feedback to ensure clarity, relevance, and alignment with the Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs). The instrument utilized a four-point Likert scale with corresponding verbal interpretations ranging from very low to very high.

Data Collection Procedure

Prior to data collection, approval to conduct the study was secured from the school head, and informed consent was obtained from the parents and participants. The validated questionnaire was administered during regular class hours under the supervision of the researcher to ensure consistency in instructions and testing conditions.

The survey was conducted to determine the baseline level of students' vocabulary development and word choice, as well as their perceptions and challenges in using AI writing tools. Completed questionnaires were immediately retrieved, checked for completeness, and organized for data processing. Ethical standards, including confidentiality and voluntary participation, were strictly observed throughout the procedure.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistical tools were used to analyze the data. Frequency and percentage distribution were employed to describe the respondents' profiles and responses to specific items. Weighted mean was used to determine the level of vocabulary development, word choice quality, and perceptions of AI writing tools. Ranking was applied to identify the most common challenges encountered by students. These statistical techniques provided a comprehensive summary and interpretation of the data in relation to the research objectives.

3. Results

Section 1: Vocabulary Development of Grade 8 Students

This study identified the level of vocabulary of Grade 8 students in terms of range of vocabulary, accuracy of vocabulary and appropriateness of vocabulary.

Table 1

Level of Vocabulary Development of Grade 8 students in terms of Range of Vocabulary

	WM	VI	Rank
1. I can understand a wide variety of English words when reading different types of texts.	1.45	VL	10
2. I can use different words to express the same idea when writing.	2.02	L	2
3. I can recognize both common and less familiar English words during classroom activities.	1.93	L	3
4. I can choose appropriate words from a broad vocabulary when answering questions in English.	1.58	L	9
5. I can easily learn and remember new English words introduced in lessons.	2.38	L	1
6. I can identify the meaning of unfamiliar words by using context clues.	1.96	L	3
7. I can correctly use newly learned vocabulary in my written outputs.	1.89	L	5
8. I can distinguish between basic and advanced vocabulary words.	1.54	L	8
9. I can apply a wide range of vocabulary when speaking in English during class discussions.	1.57	L	6
10. I can understand and use vocabulary from different subject areas (e.g., science, literature, social studies).	1.56	L	7
Composite Mean	1.79	L	

Legend: *VH-Very High*

H-High

L-Low

VL -Very Low

Results revealed that the overall vocabulary development of Grade 8 students was generally low across the three dimensions: range ($M = 1.79$), accuracy ($M = 2.02$), and appropriateness ($M = 2.10$). Among these, vocabulary appropriateness obtained the highest mean, although still within the low level, indicating that students had limited ability to use words suitable to context, audience, and purpose.

In terms of range, students demonstrated difficulty understanding and using a wide variety of words, particularly in reading different types of texts, which obtained the lowest rating

($M = 1.45$). However, they showed relatively better performance in learning and remembering new words ($M = 2.38$).

For accuracy, learners exhibited challenges in correctly identifying meanings using context clues and applying newly learned words appropriately. Although some awareness of formal and informal word use was observed, overall accuracy remained low, indicating limited mastery of precise vocabulary use.

Table 2

Level of Vocabulary Development of Grade 8 students in terms of Accuracy of Vocabulary

	WM	VI	Rank
1. I can correctly identify the meaning of most unfamiliar words based on context clues.	3.16	VL	10
2. I am able to choose words that accurately express my intended ideas in writing.	2.22	L	2
3. I rarely confuse words that have similar spellings or pronunciations (e.g., their/there, accept/except).	2.71	L	3
4. I can use newly learned vocabulary words correctly in sentences.	1.52	L	9
5. I can distinguish between formal and informal word choices and use them appropriately.	1.64	L	1
6. I consistently spell vocabulary words accurately in my written outputs.	2.01	L	3
7. I understand the different meanings of words with multiple definitions and use them correctly.	1.84	L	5
8. I can identify and correct vocabulary errors in my own writing.	1.41	L	8
9. I can select the most suitable word from several synonyms to match the context.	2.12	L	6
10. I can avoid using vague or general words when more precise vocabulary is available.	1.59	L	7
Composite Mean	2.02	L	

Legend: *VH-Very High*

H-High

L-Low

VL -Very



Regarding appropriateness, students showed slight strength in adjusting word choice based on formality ($M = 2.59$), but struggled in recognizing awkward or incorrect word usage ($M = 1.49$). These findings suggest the need for structured and contextualized vocabulary instruction to improve students' lexical competence.

Table 3
Level of Vocabulary Development of Grade 8 students in terms of Appropriateness of Vocabulary

	WM	VI	Rank
1. I can choose words that correctly match the meaning I want to express in my sentences.	2.45	L	3
2. I can identify when a word is inappropriate or does not fit the context of a sentence.	2.33	L	4
3. I can adjust my word choice depending on whether the situation is formal or informal.	2.59	H	1
4. I can select vocabulary that is suitable for the topic I am writing or talking about.	2.05	L	6
5. I can replace simple or common words with more suitable and accurate vocabulary when needed.	2.46	L	2
6. I avoid using unfamiliar words when I am not sure of their correct meaning or usage.	2.02	L	7
7. I can select words that clearly express my ideas without causing confusion.	1.84	L	8
8. I can recognize when my word choices make a sentence sound awkward or incorrect.	1.49	L	10
9. I can use appropriate descriptive words that help my message become clearer.	2.11	L	5
10. I can choose vocabulary that fits my audience, whether classmates, teachers, or other readers.	1.65	L	9
Composite Mean	2.10	L	

Legend: *VH-Very High*

H-High

L-Low

VL -Very Low



Section 2: Quality of Word Choices

The quality of students' word choices was found to be generally good in clarity ($M = 2.50$) and precision ($M = 2.61$), but only fair in creativity ($M = 2.05$). In terms of clarity, students were able to organize ideas effectively ($M = 2.96$), which contributed to understandable writing. However, they encountered difficulty selecting words that precisely conveyed intended meaning ($M = 2.09$).

Table 4

Level of Vocabulary Development of Grade 8 students in terms of Clarity of Expression

	WM	VI	Rank
1. I select words that clearly convey my intended meaning.	2.09	F	10
2. I use precise and appropriate vocabulary in my writing.	2.18	F	2
3. My choice of words makes my sentences easy to understand.	2.27	F	3
4. I avoid using vague or ambiguous words in my writing.	2.59	G	9
5. I organize my ideas in a way that enhances clarity of expression.	2.96	G	1
6. I demonstrate creativity in selecting words to express my ideas.	2.86	G	3
7. I adjust my word choice depending on the topic or audience.	2.63	G	5
8. I effectively use transition words to connect my ideas clearly.	2.49	F	8
9. I avoid redundancy or unnecessary repetition of words.	2.43	F	6
10. My word choices reflect a strong understanding of the meaning of words.	2.51	G	7
Composite Mean	2.50	G	

Legend: *E-Excellent*
F-Fair

G-Good
P-Poor

For precision, students demonstrated the ability to choose words that made their message understandable ($M = 3.02$) and to describe ideas specifically ($M = 2.90$). Nonetheless, they



struggled to express tone and emotion accurately ($M = 2.09$), indicating limitations in nuanced vocabulary use.

Table 5

Level of Vocabulary Development of Grade 8 students in terms of Precision in conveying ideas

	WM	VI	Rank
1. I choose words that clearly express my intended meaning in my sentences.	2.62	G	10
2. I select specific words that accurately describe my ideas.	2.90	G	2
3. I avoid using vague or general words when conveying my thoughts.	2.67	G	3
4. I can express complex ideas using precise vocabulary.	2.76	G	9
5. I choose words that help the reader easily understand my message.	3.02	G	1
6. I am able to select words that reflect the exact tone or emotion I want to convey.	2.09	F	3
7. I revise my word choices to make my writing clearer and more accurate.	2.18	F	5
8. I avoid using filler words that do not add meaning to my sentences.	2.27	F	8
9. I select words that make my writing more interesting and informative.	2.59	G	6
10. I am confident that my word choices convey my ideas effectively to others.	2.96	G	7
Composite Mean	2.61	G	

Legend: E-Excellent

G-Good

F-Fair

P-Poor

In contrast, creativity in language use received the lowest ratings. While students could adjust vocabulary based on audience and topic ($M = 3.16$), they had difficulty experimenting with new or unique words and expressing ideas imaginatively, as reflected in low ratings in combining words creatively and refining word choices.

Table 6

Level of Vocabulary Development of Grade 8 students in terms of Precision in conveying ideas

	WM	VI	Rank
1. I carefully choose words that clearly convey my ideas.	2.38	F	3
2. I use precise words that make my writing more interesting and creative.	1.96	F	5
3. I avoid using vague or overused words in my sentences.	1.89	F	6
4. I can select words that express my thoughts exactly the way I want.	1.54	F	9
5. I experiment with new or unique words to make my writing more engaging.	1.57	F	8
6. I can combine words creatively to express complex ideas effectively.	1.58	F	7
7. I can adjust my word choice depending on the topic or audience.	3.16	G	1
8. I revise my sentences to improve clarity and originality in word use.	2.22	F	4
9. I am confident that my word choices make my writing more vivid and imaginative.	2.71	G	2
10. I can identify and correct words that do not accurately convey my intended meaning.	1.52	F	10
Composite Mean	2.05	F	

Legend: *E-Excellent*

G-Good

F-Fair

P-Poor

Section 3: Perceptions on the Use of AI Writing Tools

This section presents the results and discussion on the participants' perceptions regarding the use of AI writing tools in enhancing their vocabulary and improving their word choices.

Table 7

Perception on the Use of AI Writing Tools in Developing their Vocabulary and Word Choices

	WM	VI	Rank
1. The interactive and game-like features of AI writing tools make learning new vocabulary more engaging and effective.	3.25	A	10
2. Using AI tools helps me overcome writer's block and generate ideas, but it has limited effect on improving my vocabulary.	3.54	A	2
3. Over-relying on AI writing tools might reduce my exposure to a wider variety of words and limit my ability to use diverse vocabulary.	3.01	A	3
4. AI writing tools improve the clarity and organization of my writing, but they contribute little to enhancing my word choice and fluency.	3.14	A	9
5. AI writing tools are more effective in developing my vocabulary when teachers guide and integrate their use in writing activities.	3.13	A	1
6. AI writing tools introduce me to new words and synonyms that I would not normally think of on my own.	3.14	A	3
7. Frequent use of AI writing tools helps me remember and correctly use newly learned words in my writing.	3.38	A	5
8. AI writing tools encourage me to experiment with different word choices to make my writing more expressive.	3.47	A	8
9. Using AI writing tools allows me to identify and correct my repetitive or limited vocabulary.	3.23	A	6
10. AI writing tools are most effective for vocabulary development when combined with traditional learning methods, such as reading and writing exercises.	3.24	A	7
Composite Mean	3.25	A	
<i>Legend:</i>	<i>SA-Strong Agree</i>	<i>A-Agree</i>	
	<i>D-Disagree</i>	<i>SD-Strongly Disagree</i>	



Students generally expressed a positive perception of AI writing tools, with an overall mean of 3.25 (Agree). The most notable benefit identified was the ability of AI tools to help overcome writer's block and generate ideas ($M = 3.54$). Respondents also acknowledged that AI tools introduced new vocabulary and improved writing clarity. However, they perceived that these tools had limited direct impact on vocabulary development, particularly due to insufficient explanations that hinder learning from mistakes. Additionally, students emphasized that AI tools are most effective when guided by teachers and combined with traditional learning methods, highlighting the importance of structured integration in classroom instruction.

Section 4: Challenges in Using AI Writing Tools

As the AI writing tools were used to enhance the vocabulary of the learners, the challenges they encountered while using this was determined.

Table 8

Challenges Encountered by the Students in using AI writing tools to enhance their vocabulary and word selection in writing tasks

	WM	VI	Rank
1. I often depend too much on AI-generated suggestions, which makes it difficult for me to develop my own vocabulary and word-choice skills without teacher guidance.	3.16	VL	10
2. AI writing tools sometimes provide inaccurate or misleading vocabulary suggestions that affect the quality of my written output.	3.25	L	2
3. I find it challenging to determine whether the vocabulary and word choices suggested by AI are appropriate for the context or tone of my writing.	3.61	L	3
4. Limited features of free or basic AI tools, such as lack of advanced synonym options or contextual word support, make it difficult for me to enhance my vocabulary effectively.	3.75	L	9
5. Although AI feedback helps me identify vocabulary errors quickly, it does not provide enough explanation or reasoning to help me understand and learn from my mistakes.	3.66	L	1
6. I sometimes feel overwhelmed by too many AI suggestions, which makes it hard to decide which words to use in my writing.	3.55	L	3
7. Using AI writing tools requires a stable internet connection or device that I may not always have, limiting my ability to	3.62	L	5



practice vocabulary enhancement.

8. I experience difficulty in transferring new vocabulary learned from AI suggestions to my independent writing tasks without AI assistance.	3.03	L	8
9. AI writing tools do not always recognize my writing style or subject matter, which leads to suggestions that do not match my intended meaning.	3.12	L	6
10. I feel that relying on AI writing tools reduces my confidence in making independent vocabulary and word-choice decisions.	3.59	L	7
Composite Mean	3.43	L	

Legend: *SA-Strong Agree* *A-Agree*
 D-Disagree *SD-Strongly Disagree*

Students reported experiencing moderate challenges in using AI writing tools for vocabulary enhancement ($M = 3.43$). The most significant challenge identified was the lack of detailed explanations in AI feedback ($M = 3.66$), which limited their ability to understand and learn from errors. Other major challenges included difficulty determining the appropriateness of AI-suggested words for context and tone ($M = 3.61$), feeling overwhelmed by multiple suggestions ($M = 3.55$), and technical limitations such as restricted features and internet dependency. Interestingly, overdependence on AI tools was rated as the least challenge, suggesting that while students rely on AI assistance, they remain aware of its limitations.

4. Discussion

The findings of the study reveal that Grade 8 students of Padre Garcia Integrated National High School demonstrate generally low to fair levels of vocabulary development, particularly in terms of range, accuracy, and appropriateness of vocabulary. Although students show emerging abilities in organizing ideas and selecting familiar words, their overall lexical competence remains limited. This suggests that learners still struggle to internalize, accurately apply, and creatively use English vocabulary in varied contexts, which may affect their overall writing proficiency and communicative competence.

When compared to existing studies, these findings align with the results of Nguyen (2022), Serrano and Yu (2022), and Pascual (2023), which all emphasized that vocabulary knowledge is not merely recognition of word meanings but the ability to use words accurately and appropriately in context. Similar to prior research, this study confirms that learners with limited vocabulary exposure tend to rely on repetitive and basic words, resulting in weak lexical flexibility and reduced writing quality. Moreover, the observed difficulties in creativity and



precision support Nation's (2022) assertion that vocabulary development requires sustained exposure, contextual learning, and deliberate practice rather than rote memorization alone.

In terms of the use of AI writing tools, the findings indicate that students generally perceive these tools positively, particularly in generating ideas, improving clarity, and introducing new vocabulary. However, AI tools were seen as less effective in directly developing deep vocabulary knowledge without teacher guidance. This supports the findings of Zhang and Wang (2022), who noted that AI tools enhance engagement and writing support but require instructional scaffolding to ensure meaningful vocabulary acquisition. Similarly, the challenges identified in the study are consistent with Kim and Hannafin (2021), who emphasized that AI-assisted learning must be carefully guided to prevent superficial learning and overreliance on automated suggestions.

The implications of these findings for practice suggest that vocabulary instruction should be strengthened through structured, contextualized, and interactive strategies. Teachers should integrate AI writing tools not as standalone solutions but as supplementary resources within guided writing tasks, reflective exercises, and feedback-based instruction. Schools may also consider developing AI literacy programs to help students critically evaluate AI-generated vocabulary suggestions and apply them appropriately in writing. At the policy level, these results support the need for clearer guidelines on responsible AI integration in basic education, particularly in language learning contexts, consistent with the goals of learner-centered and technology-enhanced instruction under DepEd frameworks.

Despite the valuable insights generated, this study has several limitations. First, it was conducted in a single school setting with Grade 8 students only, which limits the generalizability of the findings. Second, the study relied primarily on self-reported data, which may be influenced by students' perceptions and subjective judgment. Third, the absence of an experimental or longitudinal design limits the ability to establish causal relationships between AI tool usage and vocabulary development. Future studies may consider broader samples, mixed-method approaches, and intervention-based designs to further validate and expand upon these findings.

5. Conclusion

The study concludes that Grade 8 students of Padre Garcia Integrated National High School demonstrate generally low to fair levels of vocabulary development in terms of range, accuracy, and appropriateness, while their word choices are relatively stronger in clarity and precision but weaker in creativity. Although students perceive AI writing tools such as Grammarly, QuillBot, and ChatGPT as helpful for idea generation, clarity, and exposure to new words, their effectiveness in directly enhancing vocabulary is limited without proper teacher guidance. The findings further reveal that students encounter challenges such as difficulty in evaluating AI-generated suggestions, limited vocabulary retention, and over-reliance on automated feedback.

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