THE USE OF WORD LEARNING STRATEGY TO IMPROVE THE VOCABULARY SKILLS AMONG GRADE 5 LEARNERS OF CATEEL CENTRAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

One of the difficulties that elementary pupils have is vocabulary skills. Thus, this quasi-experimental research aimed to determine the effectiveness of word learning strategy in improving the vocabulary skills of Grade 5. The study utilized a research-made pre-test and post-test questionnaires and responded by Grade 5 pupils from two different sections of Cateel Central Elementary School in the academic year 2022-2023 and it involves 52 respondents. The pre-test of the experimental group and control group did not meet the expected level in terms of vocabulary skills which implies that both groups have the same level of vocabulary. The post-test scores showed that experimental group scored higher than the control group. Further, the higher scores from the experimental group resulted after the implementation of Word Learning Strategy. Hence, it can be concluded that Word Learning Strategy is effective in improving vocabulary skills among grade five learners.

1. INTRODUCTION

Yunus et al. (2020) state that primary school students have difficulty learning and remembering words. Students learning traditional techniques still need to improve their vocabulary skills. Despite spending years learning the language during their early education, most primary school students need more vocabulary acquisition (Elihami, 2020). However, Elhamdi and Hezam (2020) estimate that 800 words are necessary to communicate in English.

In a global setting, Hussin et al. (2016) found that learners in Malaysia struggled to pick up language skills because they lacked vocabulary knowledge. English learning and teaching remain a challenge in the classroom. For some students, learning new words is boring. Furthermore, based on the researcher's observations of primary school children, English proficiency is demanded of all pupils as one of the qualifications to enter this world, which is a global village (Syakir & Elihami, 2020).

In a national setting, Ratonel (2019) said that the vocabulary skills of high school students, especially in English, are very frustrating. When a short story was read to the class, it was always observed that unfamiliar words made it difficult to interpret. When students do not pay attention to these words, it affects how well they understand what they are reading. During the unlocking difficulties phase, teachers worked twice as hard as when just trying to get through the reading.

One major problem the academe faces in a local setting is the students' vocabulary skills. Even though the institution is doing its best, it is clear that children need help learning unfamiliar phrases in this setting. The problem with students' vocabulary skills at that school is that they need help to learn. Similarly, Katemba (2020) confirmed that elementary school pupils usually have many problems facing English, such as being too young to learn the language, still playing with each other during class hours, and needing more interest in learning the language. Students always view English as difficult and boring.

Therefore, in this milieu, researchers believe it is crucial to look into the effectiveness of strategies for improving vocabulary skills to determine what might be wrong with teaching and educating individuals on learning new words or strengthening their vocabulary skills. Since this has yet to be studied by others, particularly in the said institution, it is also important to know the problems so that something can be done to propose appropriate mechanisms to address the issue. Hence, something must be done to know what caused the low vocabulary skills and how to manage them appropriately to avoid affecting the learning process. Thus, in this study, the researchers seek to find what will help students enrich their vocabulary during the learning process.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The researcher opted to have this action research problem regarding the difficulty in vocabulary skills of Grade V pupils in Cateel Central Elementary School. This problem grows continuously, affecting their capacity to become productive and competitive students in building vocabulary skills. The pupils experiencing this kind of difficult problem must be taken seriously through a given proposed action that aims to lessen or solve completely the said problem (Martin et al., 2017).

This study sought to answer the following questions:
1. What is the level of the pre-test scores of the two groups in terms of vocabulary skills;
    1.1. Control group, and
    1.2. Experimental group?
2. What is the level of post-test scores of the two groups in terms of vocabulary skills;
    1.1. Control group, and
    1.2. Experimental group?
3. Is there any significant difference in the pre-test result between the control and experimental group in terms of vocabulary skills?
4. Is there any significant difference in post-test results between the control and experimental group in terms of vocabulary skills?
5. Is there any significant difference in the results between the pre-test and post-test scores of the control and experimental group?

1.2 Scope and Limitation

The study was conducted in the second (Aquino) and third (Jacinto) sections of the fifth-grade level in Cateel Central Elementary School for the School Year 2022-2023. The school is at Castro Ave., St. Poblacion, Cateel, Davao Oriental. The respondents were selected through a quasi-experimental sampling with experimental and control groups. Two sections were the subjects of this research: the control group and the experimental group. Furthermore, the research was conducted within two (2) weeks. The data gathered in this study was focused on the objectives mentioned above and was limited to the timeframe of the intervention. This limitation is essential since it was helpful to the researcher to focus on the objectives of the research and also make this thesis accurate and valid. Further, this study is limited to context clues and dictionary use.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter presents and summarizes the related literature and studies after the thorough search done by the researchers. This will also present the synthesis of the art and theoretical framework elicited from different researchers that are significant to the research. The following review is divided into the following main topics: Vocabulary skills defined, Problems on Vocabulary Skills of Elementary Pupils, and the Importance of Vocabulary Skills.

2.1 Vocabulary Skills Defined

Vocabulary skills are key in modeling reading acquisition and skilled reading (Tunmer & Chapman, 2012). Maskor & Baharudin (2016) define vocabulary knowledge as knowledge of the word. Students learn vocabulary through various contexts, such as talking, interacting, playing with others, listening to stories, watching television, and attending school. Also, according to Simamora and Oktaviani (2020), vocabulary is a collection of English words taught to students during the teaching and learning process, and it is associated with all four English skills, particularly listening. Students' understanding of listening, speaking, reading, and writing will improve as their vocabulary grows. The more they listen, the more words they will learn to master their vocabulary. As noted by Pan

(2012) attested that vocabulary is arguably the most sensitive to input and the experiences of children. Children learn words and meanings for concepts and referents that they are exposed to and find interesting. There is no vocabulary learning in the absence of exposure. In line with that, Mashhadia and Jamalifar (2015) stated that vocabulary is a major component of language proficiency as it provides a solid foundation for how well learners speak, listen, read, and write.

Furthermore, as Novia and Yuyun (2018) claimed, vocabulary is a fundamental component of English that English students must master. Students can speak English with vocabulary, which is also required to improve English skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. According to (Ahmadiet al. 2012), vocabulary can be defined broadly as knowledge of words or word meaning. They stated that vocabulary learning is the foundation of language and that without vocabulary, no language can be learned; it is the knowledge of words. Vocabulary refers to the understanding of the meanings of words.

Aside from that, Chiu (2013) stated that mastery of vocabulary is arguably the foundation of mastering a language, as mastery of vocabulary is the first step in learning a language. Nevertheless, vocabulary must be mastered by the learner in order to understand the language. Vocabulary mastery is needed to express our ideas and to be able to understand other people's sayings. Alqahtani (2015) defined vocabulary mastery as complete knowledge or skill. Mastery means complete knowledge or great skill that makes someone a master in a certain subject. Vocabulary mastery refers to a high level of proficiency in processing words in a language (Susanto & Fazlinda, 2016). It is an individual achievement and possession (Alqahtani, 2015). Due to that reason, the individual bears the greatest responsibility for expanding his or her knowledge. Their motivation and interest in the words of a language, which are acquired based on their interests and needs, are required for success in broadening their vocabulary mastery and great skill in using the words of a language.

From the previous description, vocabulary skills imply clearly that the students' acquisition of an adequate vocabulary is important in determining their success in mastering the foreign language. Although we have good ability in grammar, the skill will only be useful if we have enough vocabulary ability (Sesep & Mahmud, 2012). According to Elihami (2020), vocabulary is the Everest of language because a person who wants to communicate in a certain language must first master the vocabulary of that language. When people are learning a language, one of the aspects that must be learned is vocabulary. Vocabulary is indispensable to language learning, especially in English (Anisa, 2016).

2.2 Problems in Vocabulary Skills of Elementary Pupils

Vocabulary is important in learning English. Any language in this world, including English, has thousands of words. Many native speakers do not know the whole word because there is too much to learn. Susanto et al. (2019) claimed that Language teachers might be aware of numerous discoveries in English grammar. However, they have not heard much about methods to help students learn new words and develop vocabulary skills.

Similarly, Katemba (2020) identified some factors that cause difficulties in learning vocabulary for fifth graders. He confirmed that elementary school pupils usually have many problems facing English, such as being too young to learn the language, still liking to play with each other during class hours, and they need more interest in learning the language. These reasons sometimes hinder fifth-grade students from learning English. Even according to Elhamdi and Hezam (2020), there are approximately 800 words that one must know to use in English conversations. The list of vocabulary words is too long to be mentioned in this article, but a good initial step is to read the list and see how many words are already known. Yunus et al. (2020) stated that primary school students have difficulty learning and remembering vocabulary. Students' vocabulary skills still need to improve as they learn using traditional methods. Most primary school students have low vocabulary acquisition despite years of learning the language during their early education. Hussin et al. (2016) discovered in their research that learners in Malaysia struggled to acquire language skills due to a lack of vocabulary knowledge. The problem of learning and teaching English still exists at school. Memorizing vocabulary is boring for some students. They are also based on the researcher's observation of elementary school students. All students were expected to be able to learn and master English as one of the competencies to enter this era of globalization (Syakir & Elihami, 2020). Students always view English as difficult and boring. Therefore, innovation in the learning process is needed to help the students change their views on English.

Vocabulary learning is difficult because students must be motivated to learn vocabulary, participate in vocabulary instruction, and meet vocabulary learning standards to achieve the goal. Even though learning vocabulary is an important part of learning a foreign language, they found that EFL students needed to gain the skills or strategies to learn vocabulary (Asyiah, 2017). Even if students know the meaning of every single word, they will not be able to understand and recognize the entire text if they focus solely on the meaning of a single word and do not focus on the

contextual meaning of the word. Students' success in foreign language learning has been hampered by their inability to use strategy in vocabulary learning. When learning a foreign language, vocabulary knowledge affects how and why EFL students read and try to figure out what is written (Ahmadiet al., 2012). If students do not have a large vocabulary, it will be hard to understand what they are reading. They will fail the vocabulary test and lose interest in reading.

Teaching vocabulary is one of the most discussed parts of teaching English as a foreign language. When the teaching and learning process takes place, problems appear for the teachers. They need help determining how to teach students to achieve satisfactory results. The teacher should prepare and determine the appropriate techniques to implement with the students (Elhamdi & Hezam, 2020). It is not easy to teach vocabulary in the context of English as a foreign language (EFL). Likewise, Yunus et al. (2013) discovered that time, skill constraints, and learners' participation are limitations that teachers must handle in boosting learners' vocabulary. Vocabulary learning is difficult, especially for non-native English speakers who need help with new word meanings, spelling, pronunciation, correct word usage, and guessing meaning from context. The reasons for such difficulties can be multifaceted. Al-Seghayer (2015) claims that Saudi English teachers employ traditional approaches. They teach in the pupils' native language, which lowers performance.

Thus, it is crucial to identify vocabulary-learning challenges and provide techniques to improve students' knowledge of the target vocabulary, and allow students to learn new words. The present study advocates that students in Saudi Arabian universities need enough vocabulary knowledge to tackle on-campus lectures delivered in English and to improve their communication skills. Various factors have been discovered through numerous previous studies done by many researchers, such as traditional teaching approach, family background, socio-economic background, limited exposure to the English environment, a lack of interesting and conducive media (learning materials and tools), low motivation and interest, as well as students' perceptions and attitudes toward the learning process (Kusuma et al., 2017). Consequently, Kusuma et al. (2017) commented that most teachers need more strategies to support teaching as they rely heavily on the textbook as the only source of teaching material. For this reason, learners become bored and demotivated with the passive learning style. Undeniably, primary school pupils often have short-term memory, resulting in a disappointing, poor outcome, although the teachers have drilled them throughout the lessons. Similarly, students' lack of motivation to learn the language is frequently the result of repeated failures (Yunus et., 2020). Vocabulary mastery is required and important in communication, difficult or difficult-to-memorize vocabulary frequently causes problems (Syakir & Elihami, 2020). If the students do not have enough vocabulary, they will have difficulty expressing their thoughts to others.

2.3 The Importance of Vocabulary Skills

According to research, children's language skills are consistently linked to their ability to learn to read (Morgan et al., 2015). Children with a strong command of the language and vocabulary arrive at school knowing the definitions of a wide range of words. Strong language and vocabulary abilities let young readers focus on decoding or recognizing words rather than figuring out their meanings. This makes reading easier and faster. In addition, vocabulary is essential for oral language development and early literacy (Hill, 2012). A Filipino child must learn higher-order skills as well as functional literacy. It is a given that any Filipino child with adequate reading skills will outperform a child with poor reading skills, and more often than not, those with poor reading skills will outperform those with adequate reading skills (Cayubit, 2012). Focusing on vocabulary can help pupils gain knowledge and skills in many areas of language and literacy.

Moreover, Hasan (2016) stated that vocabulary is an indispensable concern in learning a foreign language because there is a tangible connection between the size of students' vocabulary and their performance in language skills. Accordingly, the importance of vocabulary is a reason for teachers to give serious attention to teaching it, especially to children, because vocabulary is the foundation for building language and plays a fundamental role in communication (Katemba, 2020). Also, Konza (2016) talks about how important it is to teach vocabulary clearly so that pupils can be sure they know what a word means and how to use it in a sentence so that it becomes a part of their vocabulary. Building a strong vocabulary is essential for reading and broader academic success (Foorman et al., 2016). Readers must comprehend most of the vocabulary and contextual meanings used in the passage during the foreign language learning process (Ahmadiet al., 2012) to understand the vocabulary's meaning better. The importance of vocabulary knowledge in literacy and academic achievement is rarely disputed in academia. Language building blocks are essential in acquiring literacy competency (Geva & Farnia, 2012). It also strongly predicts various verbal abilities and reading comprehension levels (Niklas & Schneider, 2013).

Besides, it has always been an important part of reading comprehension (Kintsch & Vipond, 2014). Furthermore, because vocabulary knowledge can predict reader knowledge, it would result in a better understanding

of the text's overall meaning. The Teachers' Word Book by E. L. Thorndike got people interested in studying vocabulary by putting English words into groups based on how often they are used in English (Schwanenflugel & Knapp, 2015). Vocabulary knowledge is one of the most important factors affecting language learning, and it is widely accepted that having a good vocabulary helps improve language learning. As a result, reading more will help students improve their vocabulary knowledge. Vocabulary learning improves learners' spelling and writing abilities (Ahmadiet al., 2012). According to Nagy & Herman (2014), students will be regularly tested on their vocabulary knowledge to determine how much they have learned. Vocabulary knowledge is an important predictor of foreign language learning and reading motivation in

first and second language learners (Geva & Farnia, 2012).

Tunmer & Chapman (2012) indicates that the main factors in reading a text

in context are vocabulary learning and word information. The findings of this study demonstrated that vocabulary knowledge is an important factor in deriving meaning from written passages. Abdullah et al. (2013) stated that readers should be familiar with the vocabulary and motivated to continue their education. Brooks et al. (2021) elaborated that a learner must systematically understand and decode vocabulary in a passage to have a successful learning experience. Jensen (2013) believes vocabulary development is the key to students' academic achievement. Furthermore, Bîzgu (2020) states that students must be disciplined about spending more time on new words to memorize high-frequency vocabulary and retain it in their long-term memory. For example, acquiring new vocabulary for vocabulary learning has become one of the most important aspects of target language learning, and teachers can no longer rely on students acquiring the necessary vocabulary simply through interaction with the language. Beck et al. (2013) students should learn vocabulary in context to remember and use it more often. It allows students to use the new words they learned during the lesson differently, like making predictions, asking questions, getting more information, or summarizing.

Besides that, vocabulary improves all communication areas: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It is one of the motivations for researchers to conduct research. Language learners must expand their vocabulary to expand their word bank and develop their linguistic repertoire. Vocabulary learning is an important aspect of learning a foreign language. Students will greatly improve if they learn more words and expressions (Syakir & Elihami, 2020). In another study, Alqahtani (2015) declares vocabulary learning to be an important aspect of foreign language learning, emphasizing new word meanings.

Further, Farjami and Aidinlou (2013) state that learning a foreign or second language at various proficiency levels requires many words, for which the learners try to retain the words in their long-term memory. This study also elaborates on the learners' problems in learning vocabulary and offers some practical learning and teaching strategies to improve these problems. However, it emphasizes long-term vocabulary techniques over short-term vocabulary techniques. As a result, Farjami and Aidinlou (2013) propose one of the more practical approaches to improving students' vocabulary knowledge. They assert that teachers should present new vocabulary items in rich contexts and give learners clues to guess the meanings.

Vocabulary must be addressed by everyone who learns English (Anisa, 2016). Frequently, students instinctively recognize the importance of vocabulary in their language learning. That is why vocabulary is important for speaking, listening, writing, and reading. If students want to read English books, they must also increase their vocabulary in writing. Vocabulary influences writing quality (Windasari & Salehuddin, 2016). Rusiana and Nuraengsih (2016) wrote that the lesson should emphasize vocabulary when teaching early-age students since that is the beginning step of learning the language. In other words, teaching English vocabulary should be

introduced at the elementary level. The quality of a person's language skills

depends greatly on the quantity and quality of his vocabulary skills. The richer or

better the ability to master vocabulary, the more skilled the language (Syakir and

Elihami, (2020).). Vocabulary is important in language learning because, without it, the learners cannot communicate with other people. The quality of students' language depends on the extent of their vocabulary knowledge. As asserted by Elihami (2019), he believed that teaching is the process of assisting or guiding someone to learn how to do something by providing evaluation, guiding in the study of something, providing knowledge, and causing someone to understand.

Park (2012) asserts that the knowledge of vocabulary possessed by a student influences the quality of their writing and shows that students need to master the meaning of the word. Therefore, students who need more vocabulary will need help understanding the text, speaking, and writing their ideas. In learning English, the students rely heavily on their vocabulary knowledge. With vocabulary, people can speak, write, and read in English because vocabulary is the main ability that students must master to know a lot of vocabulary (Ramadani, 2019).

3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter deals with the presentation of steps and procedures used by the researchers in this study. It comprises the research locale and duration, research design, data sources, study respondents, data gathering, and data analysis.

3.1 Research Locale and Duration

The study was conducted in Cateel Central Elementary School, particularly the Grade 5 pupils of the School Year 2022-2023. The Grade 5 classrooms are in Building 15 in front of Building 17 and next to Building 16. Also, the intervention or data collection from the respondents was done within two (2) weeks and only on days and times that the grade five advisers agreed to. Further, this study was conducted from March to May 2023.

Figure 1. Research Locale Map of Cateel Central Elementary School

3.2 Research Design

This study employed a quasi-experimental design with control and experimental group to demonstrate the effectiveness of the intervention. A quasi-experimental design aims to establish a cause-and-effect relationship between an independent and dependent variable (Thomas et al., 2022). In addition, the researchers prepared self-made pre-test and post-test questionnaires for the respondents was undergone validity and reliability testing.

3.3 Research Instrument

The data collection in this study was solely based on the researcher-made quantitative instrument, mainly the pre-test and post-test questionnaires. The questionnaires that were used underwent reliability testing through a pilot test in San Rafael Integrated School before being administered to the actual respondents of the research study in Cateel Central Elementary School and validity testing, after comparing the questionnaire's content to the curriculum guide, the content validity as confirmed by a subject-matter expert was used to determine the validity of the instrument. The content of the questionnaires was based on a specific vocabulary lesson, which is compound words, a contextualizing vocabulary improvement skill covered by the K–12 curriculum guide. It is a multiple-choice test consisting of thirty (30) items.

3.4 Respondents of the Study

The respondents in this study were the section - Jacinto and section – Aquino of Grade 5 pupils at Cateel Central Elementary School. The respondents were grouped as experimental and control groups based on the pre-intervention given by one of the researchers as an acting substitute teacher who reads a passage. The experimental and control groups comprise complete sampling enumeration over the week's three sessions. Further, to determine which section is the experimental group and which is the control group, the researchers and the research adviser jointly tossed a coin. The Grade 5 pupils at this school were divided into two groups that the researchers chose as study respondents

because they shared a common problem: the difficulty in understanding words, one of the important learning skills for developing their vocabulary.

3.5 Data Gathering

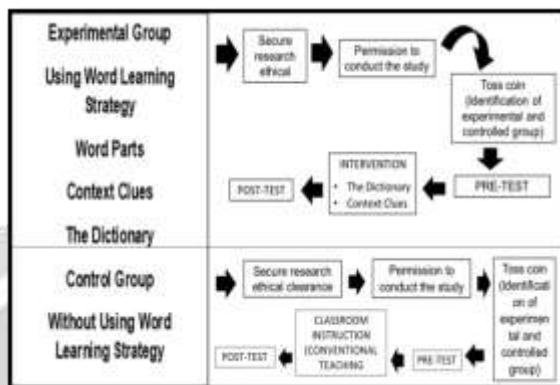The figure below describes the data-gathering processes in this study.

Figure 2. Schematic Diagram Presenting the Variables of the Study

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results and discussion of the study. The results are discussed thoroughly, and the order is based on the study's problem statement.

4.1 Level of Fifth Graders' Vocabulary Skills in the Pre-test

The data was obtained by administering a pre-test. It was to determine the pre-test score in terms of vocabulary skills among fifth graders. Table 1 summarizes the scores of experimental and control groups of fifth graders' vocabulary in the pre-test. The control group has a grade percentage of 67.35, and the experimental group has a grade percentage of 68.85, in which the fifth graders did not meet the expected vocabulary skill level.

Table 1. Level of pre-test scores between the control and experimental groups

Group	Total Score	Standard Deviation	Mean	Grade Percentage	Remarks
Control	30	2.65	10.41	67.35	Did Not Meet Expectations
Experimental	30	2.79	11.31	68.85	Did Not Meet Expectations

Table 1 shows that the control group had a mean score of 10.41 with an equivalent grade percentage of 67.35, which means it did not meet expectations. On the other hand, the experimental group had a mean score of 11.31 with an equivalent grade percentage of 68.85, which means it did not meet expectations. The result shows that both the control and experimental groups did not meet expectations, which means they failed based on their scores in the pre-test. It implies that students in both groups had different levels of understanding and poor vocabulary.

Based on the result, fifth graders have less exposure to the English language, making it difficult for them to grasp unfamiliar words. Katemba (2020) identified some factors that cause difficulties in learning vocabulary for fifth graders. He confirmed that elementary school pupils usually have many problems facing English, such as being too young to learn the language, still liking to play with each other during class hours, and they need more interest in learning the language.   These reasons hinder fifth-grade students from learning English and developing their vocabulary skills.

In support of the result, the study by Yunus et al. (2020) revealed that primary school students have difficulty learning and remembering vocabulary. Students' vocabulary skills still need to improve as they learn using

traditional methods. Most primary school students have low vocabulary acquisition despite years of learning the language during their early education.

The fifth graders needed help understanding the given words even after reading some articles, poems, and short stories or passages. The problem of learning and teaching English still exists at school. Memorizing vocabulary is boring for some students, based on the researcher's observation of elementary school students. All students were expected to be able to learn and master English as one of the competencies to enter this era of globalization (Syakir & Elihami, 2020). Students always consider English difficult and boring (Farooq et al., 2020).

4.2 Difference Between Control and Experimental Groups in Pre-test

Table 2 compares pre-test scores between the experimental and control groups. It is to determine the significant difference between control and experimental groups in terms of vocabulary skills. As shown in the interpretation, there is no significant difference between the control and experimental group. It means that both groups have the same level of vocabulary skills.

Table 2. Mean comparison between pre-test scores of control and experimental group

Group	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
Control	10.41	2.65	-1.170	0.248	Pre-test scores between the two groups do not differ significantly.
Experimental	11.31	2.79			

The pre-test scores between the control and experimental groups were compared using the data treatment tool, mean, to get their mean comparison. The control group had a mean score of 10.41 with an equivalent standard deviation of 2.65. On the other hand, the experimental group had a mean score of 11.31 with an equivalent standard deviation of 2.79. The findings indicated a significant difference between the two groups pre-test scores, with a t-value of -1.170 and a p-value of 0.248. The findings indicated no significant difference between the two groups pre-test scores. It implied that both control and experimental groups have the same levels of vocabulary skills.

Elihami (2020) stated that vocabulary is the Everest of language because a person who wants to communicate in a certain language must first master the vocabulary of that language. When people are learning a language, one of the aspects that must be learned is vocabulary. Vocabulary learning is difficult, especially for non-native English speakers who need help with new word meanings, spelling, pronunciation, correct word usage, and guessing meaning from context.

The reasons for such difficulties can be multifaceted. Al-Seghayer (2015) claims that English teachers employ traditional approaches. They teach in the pupils' native language, which lowers performance. Thus, it is crucial to identify vocabulary-learning challenges, provide techniques to improve students' knowledge of the target vocabulary, and allow students to learn new words. Ford-Connors & Paratore (2015) stated that word learning strategy is a technique for teaching vocabulary, essentially a tool students can use to figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words and increase their word knowledge.

Direct teaching of word-learning strategies can help students become independent word learners. Word learning strategy is used to identify and define unfamiliar concepts and vocabulary. For every word, word learning allows students to use words. In connection, Piaget (1930) stated that many processes go into cognitive thinking. Knowing, remembering, judging, and thinking are higher-

level brain functions that impact a person's vocabulary, language, planning ability, and perception.

4.3 Level of Fifth Graders' Vocabulary Skills in Post Test

The data obtained in this table were from the post-test administered by the researchers. This was to determine the level of post-test score in terms of vocabulary skills among fifth graders after the intervention has been conducted.

Table 3. Level of post-test scores between the control and experimental groups

Group	Total Score	Standard Deviation	Mean	Grade Percentage	Remarks
Control	30	2.57	18.32	80.53	Satisfactory
Experimental	30	4.92	24.00	90.00	Outstanding

As shown in Table 3, the control group has a mean score of 18.32 with an equivalent grade percentage of 80.53, which means satisfactory. On the other hand, the experimental group had a mean score of 24.00 with an equivalent grade percentage of 90.00, which means outstanding. It implied that the respondents in the two groups improved their vocabulary skills, especially in the experimental group, using word learning strategy. They can infer the meaning of unfamiliar words through context clues and dictionaries.

Based on the results, the findings implied that word learning strategy is useful in improving the vocabulary skills of the fifth graders. The fifth graders start understanding unfamiliar words from the given passages. Throughout the process, the teacher assisted and gave immediate feedback whenever incorrect understanding was heard. Vocabulary mastery is needed to express our ideas and to be able to understand other people's sayings Chiu (2013).

It was supported by the claim of Chiu (2013) stated that mastery of vocabulary is arguably the foundation of mastering a language, as mastery of vocabulary is the first step in learning a language. Nevertheless, vocabulary must be mastered by the learner in order to understand the language. Vocabulary mastery is needed to express our ideas and to be able to understand other people's sayings. Moreover, supporting the result of this study, Cognitive Learning Theory, as claimed by Piaget (1930), transfers knowledge to the learner in the most efficient way by allowing the learner to use the most effective cognitive strategy to encode information. During the interaction, children use language to ask questions, and others answer them. This helps children develop their thinking skills (Cacioppo et al., 2013).

Simamora and Oktaviani (2020) stated that vocabulary is a collection of English words taught to students during the teaching and learning process, and it is associated with all four English skills, particularly listening. Students' understanding of listening, speaking, reading, and writing will improve as their vocabulary grows. The more they listen, the more words they will learn to master their vocabulary.

4.4 Difference Between Control and Experimental Groups in Post Test

Table 4 compares the post-test scores of the control and experimental groups. It answers the question about any significant difference between the control and experimental groups in the post-test. The experimental group showed greater scores than the control group.

Table 4. Mean comparison between post-test scores of control and experimental group

Group	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
Control	18.32	2.57	-4.922	0.000	Post-test scores between the two groups differ significantly.
Experimental	24.00	4.92			

In line with the result in Table 4, the control group had a mean score of 18.32 with an equivalent standard deviation of 2.57. On the other hand, the experimental group had a mean score of 24.00 with an equivalent standard deviation of 4.92. The findings indicated a significant difference between the two groups' post-test scores, with a t-value of -4.992 and a p-value of 0.000. The findings indicated a significant difference between the two groups' post-test scores. Although both groups improved based on the post-test results, it implied that by using a word-learning strategy, the experimental group enhanced the learners' vocabulary skills. Previously, the experimental group needed more background knowledge than the control group, as shown in the pre-test results. However, the group improved on the post-test because the intervention used a word-learning strategy.

In connection with the result, Linlin et al. (2019) revealed that word learning strategies (WLS) are effective strategies to improve student's vocabulary skills. Moreover, the study indicated that the program was positively associated with student vocabulary learning and knowledge gains. Rusiana and Nuraengsih (2016) wrote that the lesson should emphasize vocabulary when teaching early-age students since that is the beginning step of learning the

language. In other words, teaching English vocabulary should be introduced at the elementary level. The quality of a person's language skills depends greatly on the quantity and quality of his vocabulary skills. The richer or better the ability to master vocabulary, the more skilled the language is (Syakir & Elihami, 2020).

Various factors have been discovered through numerous previous studies done by many researchers, such as traditional teaching approach, family background, socio-economic background, limited exposure to the English environment, a lack of interesting and conducive media (learning materials and tools), low motivation and interest, as well as students' perceptions and attitudes toward the learning process (Kusuma et al., 2017). Consequently, Kusuma et al. (2017) commented that most teachers need more strategies to support teaching as they rely heavily on the textbook as the only source of teaching material. For this reason, learners become bored and demotivated with the passive learning style.

A study by Geva & Farnia (2012) revealed that language building blocks are essential in acquiring literacy competency. It also strongly predicts various verbal abilities and reading comprehension levels. Besides, it has always been an important part of reading comprehension (Kintsch & Vipond, 2014). Furthermore, because vocabulary knowledge can predict reader knowledge, it would result in a better understanding of the text's overall meaning. The Teachers' Word Book by E. L. Thorndike got people interested in studying vocabulary by putting English words into groups based on how often they are used in English. Vocabulary knowledge is one of the most important factors affecting language learning, and it is widely accepted that having a good vocabulary helps language learning improve (Schwanenflugel & Knapp, 2015).

Additionally, Piaget's theory has greatly influenced child and developmental psychology (Oates et al., 2012). Using a word-learning strategy helps learners where vocabulary involves far more than using the words in a sentence (context clues) and looking up words in a dictionary (Susanto, 2017). Through the Word Learning Strategy, teachers can help pupils improve their vocabulary skills and give them a strategy for independently determining the meanings of unfamiliar words that have yet to be explicitly introduced in class. Since students encounter so many unfamiliar words in their reading, the help of a dictionary and context clues provided by such a strategy can be useful (Teng, 2014).

4.5 Comparison Between Pre-test and Post-Test Scores of Control and Experimental Groups

Table 5 compares the pre-test and post-test of experimental and control groups. This is to determine the significant difference between the test scores of the experimental and control group. The result implied that the group who received the intervention had a greater score than those who did not. It can be shown in the table that the scores of the experimental group increased after the conduct of the word-learning strategy.

Table 5.Mean comparison between pre-test and post-test scores

Type of Test	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
Pre-Test	10.92	2.73	19.417	0.000	Pre-test and post-test scores differ significantly.
Post-Test	21.55	4.94			

Based on the overall result, the scores differ significantly in their performances between the mean pre-test and post-test scores, with a t-value of 19.417 and a p-value of 0.000. It implied that with a word-learning strategy, the vocabulary performance shows a higher significant difference as the experimental group can carry out the results of the control group in the post-test. Moreover, it also implied that in learning vocabulary, there was a significant difference from the pre-test to the post-test that was more noticeable in the experimental group. In support of this study, the findings of Enerio (2019) concluded that the Word Learning Strategies (WLS) is an effective strategy for developing students' vocabulary acquisition skills. Vocabulary must be addressed by everyone who learns English (Anisa, 2016). Frequently, students instinctively recognize the importance of vocabulary in their language learning. That is why vocabulary is important for speaking, listening, writing, and reading.

In addition, through the word learning strategy, teachers can help pupils improve their vocabulary skills and give them a tool for independently determining the meanings of unfamiliar words that have yet to be explicitly introduced in class. Since students encounter so many unfamiliar words in their reading, the help of a dictionary and context clues provided by such a strategy can be useful (Teng, 2014). Furthermore, Nahampun & Sibarani (2014) asserted that this model greatly helps students develop a conceptual understanding of new vocabulary or concepts. Likewise,

this allows students to use dictionaries. Students must use dictionaries, print or online, during their schooling and throughout their lives. Teachers must show students how to identify and select the most appropriate meaning of the word based on how the word is used in context (Munalim, 2021).

It was supported by the study conducted by Panjaitan (2016), which states that word learning strategy is useful in enhancing vocabulary among grade five learners. Starke (2020) cited that it can be used at any grade level or subject matter instruction. However, it is most effective at the upper elementary and secondary levels and in content. Moreover, the reason for using the word learning strategy to teach vocabulary is its ability to provide an excellent technique for students. It allows students to determine the meaning of words through dictionary use and context clues.

Furthermore, according to the concept of cognitive learning theory, using context clues can help improve learners' ability to infer vocabulary meanings from uninstructed words and their performance in reading comprehension (Deng & Trainin, 2015). Also, a learner will be introduced to unfamiliar words, and a basic level of comprehension will be attained with the help of a dictionary. With that, a connection will be made between the new vocabulary and previously known words needed for speaking, writing, and translating. Thus, Cognitive Learning Theory entails that humans learn from thinking from our experiences and can improve our vocabulary skills by applying word learning strategy.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the researcher concludes the following:

1.) The vocabulary skill of Grade 5 learners in the pre-test did not meet expectations, as shown in the result.

2.) The pre-test scores between the control and experimental groups did not differ significantly, which shows that both groups have the same vocabulary skills.

3.) Prior to the results presented, the word learning strategy effectively improves the vocabulary skills of grade 5 learners. The fifth graders' (experimental group) vocabulary skills significantly improved from the pre-test to the post-test after the word learning strategy was conducted. The word-learning strategy helped them develop their vocabulary skills from failing to meet the expectation to an outstanding level.

4.) The experimental group that received the intervention scored higher than the control group. This finding showed that the intervention effectively improved the vocabulary skills of the fifth graders.

5.) The comparison showed that the post-test had a positive t-value, meaning there was a large difference between the respondents. The post-test was mostly associated with the experimental group that dominated the given test.

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