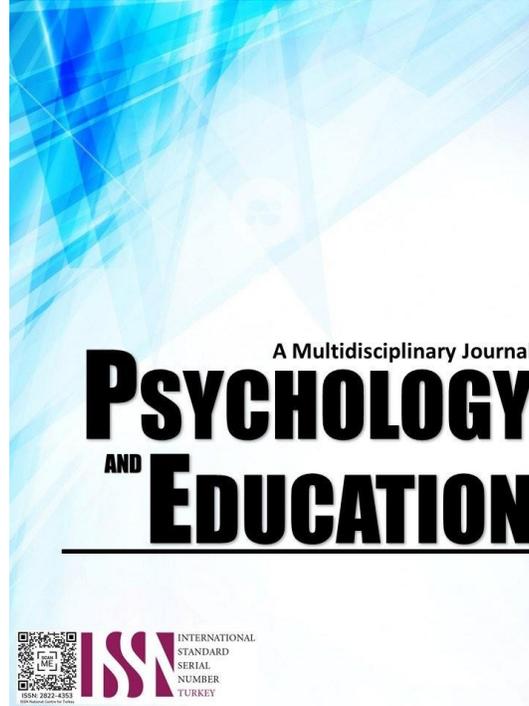


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Project HVS: A 20 Words a Day Vocabulary Intervention for Grade 5 Students

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Abstract

One of the challenges elementary pupils face is developing strong vocabulary skills. This quasi-experimental study aimed to determine the effectiveness of Project HVS (Harnessing Vocabulary Skills), a 20-word-a-day practice, in improving the vocabulary skills of Grade 5 students. The study utilized researcher-designed pre-test and post-test questionnaires, administered to 30 Grade 5 pupils from Clementa F. Royo Elementary School during the 2023-2024 academic year. Pre-test results indicated that the students exhibited below-grade-level proficiency in vocabulary. However, the post-test scores demonstrated significant improvement, with the students' scores increasing after the implementation of the 20-word-a-day practice. The results were statistically significant, supporting the conclusion that the 20-word-a-day practice is effective in enhancing vocabulary skills among Grade 5 learners. It is recommended that educators and policymakers integrate similar interventions into language curricula to promote vocabulary development and linguistic proficiency among students.

Keywords: *quasi-experimental, vocabulary, Grade-V learners*

Introduction

The ability to understand and unlock the meaning of unknown words is crucial for strengthening reading comprehension. Improved reading comprehension not only enhances academic success but also fosters the development of skills needed for real-world applications. In this context, vocabulary plays a critical role in language learning. It is fundamental for acquiring proficiency in reading, speaking, writing, and listening. Without a sufficient vocabulary, individuals struggle to communicate and express their thoughts and feelings effectively, both in spoken and written forms. Therefore, building a robust vocabulary is essential for both academic and everyday communication.

In Indonesia, there is a pressing concern regarding the vocabulary skills of elementary school students. It is evident that many students face difficulties in acquiring and retaining a wide range of words, which can have a detrimental impact on their reading comprehension and overall academic performance. This issue becomes even more complex due to the diverse backgrounds and languages represented within the student population. Also, it was stated that these students struggling with vocabulary words are dealing with difficulties to communicate in terms of their learning process in the classroom and of the outside setting. The extent of this phenomena are associated with the strategies of the learners in the concerns of mastering the vocabularies words. Regarding all aspects, problems of vocabulary words can be seen from lecturers teaching styles, student characteristics, activities, environment (Tungadewi, 2016).

In the Philippines, particularly in Metro Manila, there is a significant concern regarding the vocabulary skills of elementary students. Studies have shown that a majority of Grade 5 students in the country have reading proficiency levels equivalent to those in the early years of primary school. This means that many students are struggling to match single words to familiar objects or concepts, indicating a limited vocabulary range. Additionally, there are challenges in reading comprehension skills, which are closely tied to vocabulary development. Low reading literacy skills among Filipino students highlight the need to address the root causes and enhance their vocabulary and reading comprehension abilities (Caraig, 2022)

In the Division of Davao del Norte, specifically in Clementa Elementary School, a huge number of students with difficulties in vocabulary skills were mostly in an academic concern which was observed from grade 5 level. Students are unable to communicate with their tasks particularly in speaking and writing practice as they were unable to read as well as familiar the vocabulary words. Also, other students are isolating on their own paced to which resulted to the practice of declining their self to enact an oral recitation and in any academic activities.

The inquest on this study arose since this phenomenon is existed. As a student-teacher, it is very important to harness the student's vocabulary skills in the participation of their academic performance of the school setting. This pertains that this action research has significant societal implications as it lays a huge crucial groundwork and improvement in the vocabulary skills of the learners in the role of reading and listening practices. Students are the main factors in the coverage of the quality of education. The contribution of this study especially to the society would give understanding and wide information about the challenges of the elementary students in their aspect of vocabulary skills. This also implied how these learners encounters an unknown words and struggling on comprehending with these various components of English language.

With this, an action research study highlighting the elementary learners in the challenges of the vocabulary skills is a crucial matter that must be focused and should be undertaken. Presently, these concerns are existing in elementary levels as it deals with various

difficulties in reading, comprehension and listening the vocabulary word in the English language areas. As these struggles of vocabulary interacts with the comprehension and academic success, the continuous challenges of learning vocabulary words create a huge negative outcomes in the success of academic performance. Therefore, with the issues presented, there should be an urgency to conduct this action research as this will address a social significance as the bridge to provide an action for an intervention, innovation, and strategies that will support the visible challenges of the vocabulary skills of the elementary learners.

In relation to the international research study, there exists a large body of literature that is somewhat related to this research, such as the study being conducted by Hidayat (2016) entitled, “Improving Students’ Vocabulary Achievement through Word Game” which focused only to the practice of harnessing the vocabulary skills of high school students of Gresik Indonesian school and does not focus on the elementary learners. Other international research study was conducted by De Guzman (2019) entitled, “Difficulties on Vocabulary among Grade 12 Students in PGNHS: Basis for Vocabulary Enrichment Strategies”, that discussed only to the difficulties of grade-12 learners’ vocabulary skills. These research gap serves that these studies are not intended to focus on the harnessing of the vocabulary skills of grade 5 learners as they are the crucial part to be focused and be intervened with various strategies of vocabulary practice due to the continuous concerns of the vocabulary skills of the elementary learners nowadays. Hence, the mentioned previous studies were set as the research gap in the existing literature regarding the difficulties of vocabulary skills and comprehension of the grade 5 learners. As such, this study would contribute to the existing literature by highly recognizing and highlighting the aims of strengthening the overall academic success.

Research Questions

This study aimed to assess the efficacy of a 20 words-a-day practice in enhancing the vocabulary skills of Grade IV students. Specifically, it seeks to evaluate the level of vocabulary proficiency among these students, identify factors contributing to vocabulary deficiency, and elucidate the effectiveness of the proposed daily practice in fostering vocabulary development.

Methodology

Research Design

This study utilized a quasi-experimental design to measure the effect of the 20 Words-A-Day intervention on the vocabulary skills of Grade 5 students. A quasi-experimental design was chosen as it allows for the measurement of changes in vocabulary skills before and after the intervention using pre-test and post-test comparisons. This design is appropriate for evaluating the impact of vocabulary acquisition interventions, aligned with the study’s objective of determining the effectiveness of Project HVS (Ary et al., 2021).

The sample consisted of 30 Grade 5 students from Clementa F. Royo Elementary School, selected using purposive sampling. The sample size was determined based on the availability of participants and the need to ensure a manageable yet representative group for intervention. This approach enabled the researcher to target students with varying levels of vocabulary proficiency.

The pre-test and post-test questionnaires used in the study were adapted from existing vocabulary assessment tools to suit the specific objectives of the 20 Words-A-Day practice. The adaptation process involved reviewing the relevance of test items to the vocabulary being taught, and ensuring the tests were appropriate for Grade 5 learners. The reliability and validity of the instruments were established through pilot testing with a small group of students not included in the study sample.

The intervention lasted four months, during which students received daily vocabulary practice through the 20 Words-A-Day program, along with mentoring and support to reinforce learning. At the end of the intervention period, the same participants completed a post-test to assess improvements in vocabulary skills.

Data analysis was conducted using paired sample t-tests to compare pre-test and post-test scores, assessing whether the changes observed were statistically significant. All statistical analyses were performed using [insert statistical software], ensuring accurate interpretation of results.

Respondents

The researchers used purposive sampling in which it refers to a group of non-probability sampling techniques in which units are selected because they have characteristics that you need in your sample. In other words, units are selected “on purpose” in purposive sampling (Nikolopoulou, 2023). Also called judgmental sampling, this sampling method relies on the researcher’s judgment when identifying and selecting the individuals, cases, or events that can provide the best information to achieve the study’s objectives.

In this case, the research participants for this study were students from grade 5, enrolled in the academic year 2023-2024 at Clementa F. Royo Elementary School. The total number of participants in this study was 30 students from grades 5, who took a pretest, received the intervention, and took a post-test.

Instrument

The researcher adapted downloadable questionnaires from the web sources to measure the variables. The instrument is adapted from the study of Escal, J., et al (2023), entitled “The Use of Learning Strategy to Improve the Vocabulary Skills among Grade 5 Learners

of Cateel Central Elementary School". The content of the questionnaires was based on a specific vocabulary lesson, focuses on contextual understanding and word usage. The questions assess the ability to choose the correct word based on the given context, ensuring that the selected word makes logical and grammatical sense within the sentence. It is a multiple-choice test consisting of twenty (20) items.

Procedure

To collect the needed data for this research, the following steps had been implemented by the researchers; prior to the conduct of the study, the researchers sent a request to the principal of the respective schools where the participants are from. The researchers conducted a pretest using the adapted tool to assess the entry vocabulary skills of the participants. After the pretest, the Project HVS was introduced and was then followed by a four months' intervention implementation. Concluding the research process, the researchers conducted a post-test still using the same tool to assess whether the vocabulary skills of the participants have improved after using the intervention. The data gathered from the pretest and posttest have been collated and tabulated.

Data Analysis

In conducting the analysis of the pre-test and post-test scores, data collation and tabulation were pivotal. The collected scores underwent scrutiny using various statistical tools. Firstly, mean and standard deviation calculations were employed to gauge the students' comprehension levels during both tests and assess the dispersion of scores. Additionally, the paired sample t-test served as a critical tool in evaluating the significance of the disparities between the pretest and post-test scores, providing valuable insights into the effectiveness of the instructional intervention.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the summary of the findings about the results of Project HVS (Harnessing Vocabulary Skills) as a practice for enhancing the vocabulary skills among Grade 5 pupils of Clementa F. Royo Elementary School. Analysis and interpretations of data were done parallel to the research objectives.

Table 1. *Mean Average of the Score in Pretest*

<i>Pre Test Score</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
8	2	6.67%
9	2	6.67%
10	5	16.67%
11	4	13.33%
12	3	10.00%
13	2	6.67%
14	4	13.33%
15	6	20.00%
16	1	3.33%
17	1	3.33%
Total	30	100.00%
Overall		12.30
Mean Percentage Score		61.5%
Description		Low

Presented in Table 1 are the results of the pretest, indicating the performance level of 30 students in the experimental group in vocabulary problems. The overall average score for the group was 12.30. The highest score (17) was achieved by one student, representing 3.33% of the total. In contrast, the lowest score (8) was recorded by two students, making up 6.67% of the group. The most frequently occurring score was obtained by six students, accounting for 20.00% of the total. These results indicate a diverse range of performance levels within the group, with a notable concentration of students around the most frequent score. The mean percentage score shown in the table above, is 12.30, which indicates low performance by the students in the pretest. These measures describe that the vocabulary skills of the students are fairly satisfactory.

Before the intervention was implemented, as detailed in Table 2 of Chapter 3, the pretest score was 12.30, which is classified as very low. This indicates that the students' vocabulary skills were below expectations. The low score suggests that fifth graders have limited exposure to the English language, making it challenging for them to understand unfamiliar words. Katemba (2020) identified several factors contributing to the difficulties fifth graders face in learning vocabulary. He noted that young students often struggle with English because they are too young to fully grasp the language, prefer playing with peers during class, and generally lack interest in learning the language. These factors hinder fifth-grade students from effectively learning English and improving their vocabulary skills.

In connection, Yunus et al. (2020) found that primary school students struggle with learning and retaining vocabulary. The study indicated that students' vocabulary skills remain insufficient, largely due to the reliance on traditional teaching methods. Despite several years of language instruction in their early education, most primary school students still exhibit low levels of vocabulary acquisition.

Table 2 presents the post-test results, showing the performance of 30 students in the experimental group on vocabulary tasks. The

group's average score was 17.07, with five students (16.67%) achieving the highest score of 20, and one student (3.33%) obtaining the lowest score of 12. The most frequent score, achieved by six students (20.00%), was 18. These results highlight a range of performance levels within the group, but the majority of students performed near or above the group's average, reflecting an overall improvement in vocabulary proficiency.

Table 2. *Mean Average of the Score in Post-test*

<i>Post-Test</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
12	1	3.33%
13	1	3.33%
14	1	3.33%
15	6	20.00%
16	2	6.67%
17	5	16.67%
18	5	16.67%
19	4	13.33%
20	5	16.67%
Total	30	100.00%
Overall		17.07
Mean Percentage Score		85.35%
Description		High

The mean score of 17.07 in the post-test indicates a substantial improvement compared to the pre-test results, showing that the 20 Words-A-Day intervention significantly enhanced the students' vocabulary skills. Specifically, the intervention led to gains in several areas: contextual understanding of vocabulary, word usage, and reading comprehension. Students demonstrated increased ability to understand words in context and apply them in meaningful ways, both of which are essential components of language proficiency.

Furthermore, the improvements extended beyond mere word recognition. The students displayed better critical thinking in reading exercises, where they applied newly learned vocabulary to infer meanings and make connections across texts. These skills are crucial for developing comprehensive language proficiency, suggesting that the intervention not only increased the number of words students knew but also deepened their understanding of how to use those words effectively in various contexts.

This finding aligns with the research of Syakir & Elihami (2020), which demonstrated that daily vocabulary practice using 20 words per day significantly enhances students' vocabulary acquisition and overall knowledge. The study supports the idea that consistent, focused vocabulary instruction is a powerful tool for improving language proficiency. Linlin et al. (2019) further emphasized that vocabulary instruction, especially at an early age, lays the foundation for future language development. A rich and well-developed vocabulary is essential for achieving proficiency in a language, as it enables learners to use the language fluently and flexibly.

In conclusion, the results of this study reinforce the importance of targeted vocabulary instruction. The 20 Words-A-Day intervention proved to be an effective strategy for fostering significant gains in vocabulary knowledge, contextual understanding, and critical thinking, all of which contribute to the broader goal of language proficiency. The findings suggest that integrating such interventions into elementary education could lead to long-term improvements in students' linguistic abilities.

Table 3. *Significant Difference between the Pretest and Post-test Scores*

<i>Type of Test</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>Decision</i>
Pre-Test	30	29	12.30	2.52	-14.709	< .001	Significant
Post-Test	30		17.07	2.21			

Presented in table 3 was the result of the significant difference between the pretest and post-test scores, $t(29) = -14.709$, $p < .001$. Since the probability value ($< .001$) is less than the level of significance ($\alpha = 0.05$), the null hypothesis is being rejected. There is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test.

In connection with the result, Stahl & Nagy (2020) repeated exposure to words is important because it allows students to encounter vocabulary in a variety of circumstances, allowing them to understand the entire range of a word's meanings and applications. Each time a learner comes across a word, they learn more about its subtleties, connotations, and proper situations for its application. This approach helps to establish the term in their memory, increasing the likelihood that they will be able to use it appropriately in the future.

Various aspects have been discovered through multiple previous investigations done by many academics, including as traditional teaching technique, family history, socioeconomic background, and inadequate exposure to English. Environment, a lack of engaging and appropriate media (learning materials and instruments), poor motivation and interest, as well as students' perspectives and attitudes toward the learning process. As a result, many teachers require additional teaching strategies to supplement their reliance on the textbook serves as the sole source of teaching content. As a result, students feel bored and discouraged with passive learning style stated by Kusuma et al. (2017).

A study by Blachowicz and Fisher (2020) revealed the importance of frequent vocabulary exercise in providing learners with repeated

exposure to new terms and their meanings, which helps to reinforce their learning and memory of these words. This consistent practice allows students to incorporate new vocabulary into their existing linguistic framework, boosting their ability to use these terms correctly and confidently in a variety of circumstances. As students participate in these activities, they not only learn new words but also how to use them properly, improving their overall language skills.

Additionally, Depth of Processing Theory stated by Craik, & Tulving, (2021) mentioned that students engaging with words on a deeper level results in stronger memory traces, making the word simpler to recall later. This is because deeper processing necessitates more detailed encoding, which improves long-term memory retention. When words are deeply absorbed, their meanings become more fully comprehended. This deeper understanding enables greater text comprehension and more accurate word use in conversation.

Conclusions

This study explored the efficacy of the "20 Words-A-Day" program as a targeted intervention for enhancing students' vocabulary skills. The substantial improvement in participants' vocabulary, as demonstrated by the disparity between their pre-test and post-test scores, highlights the effectiveness of the intervention in bolstering linguistic capabilities. Initially, students displayed below-grade-level proficiency in vocabulary. However, after implementing the 20 Words-A-Day intervention, their performance significantly improved, reaching highly satisfactory levels. This transformation underscores the positive impact of the intervention on students' language proficiency.

The program proved to be a valuable tool for enriching students' vocabulary, empowering them to not only acquire new words but also use them effectively in diverse contexts. Additionally, the intervention enhanced students' understanding of word meanings, nuances, and appropriate usage, which contributed to improved overall language comprehension. Over the course of one month, students demonstrated significant progress in vocabulary acquisition, including identifying unfamiliar words, discerning subtle differences in meanings, and integrating new vocabulary into their language use.

While the results of this study are promising, several limitations should be considered. The relatively small sample size of 30 students and the one-month duration of the intervention may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future studies could benefit from larger, more diverse samples and extended intervention periods to better understand the long-term effects of vocabulary practice. Additionally, the study focused solely on vocabulary acquisition, leaving room for future research to explore the intervention's impact on other language domains, such as grammar, reading comprehension, and writing skills.

In conclusion, the 20 Words-A-Day intervention shows great potential in fostering linguistic growth and proficiency among students. The study demonstrates that structured, consistent vocabulary practice can significantly enhance students' language skills. Future research should investigate the program's long-term effectiveness, its applicability across different student populations, and its potential impact on broader language development.

Based on the findings of this study, the "20 Words-A-Day" intervention proved highly effective in strengthening students' vocabulary skills. The significant improvements observed highlight the importance of targeted programs for language instruction, particularly in building vocabulary. Therefore, it is recommended that educators and policymakers integrate similar interventions into language curricula to foster linguistic growth and proficiency among students.

To enhance the implementation of this program, it is suggested that vocabulary sessions be conducted daily or at least three to five times per week to ensure consistent practice and reinforcement. Activities could include a mix of direct vocabulary instruction, contextual usage exercises, and word games to engage students actively in learning. Teachers play a critical role in guiding and monitoring students' progress, offering personalized support and feedback to maximize vocabulary retention and usage.

Incorporating technology-based tools, such as educational apps, online flashcards, or interactive vocabulary games, could further support vocabulary acquisition. These resources can offer additional opportunities for students to practice outside the classroom and make the learning process more engaging. Integrating digital platforms would allow for greater flexibility in how students practice and review new words, promoting sustained vocabulary growth.

The success of the "20 Words-A-Day" program demonstrates the transformative potential of structured interventions in enhancing students' linguistic capabilities. By adopting a well-rounded approach that includes regular vocabulary practice, teacher support, and technological resources, students can develop essential language skills that contribute to academic success and future proficiency.

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