

English literacy and vocabulary size of Grade 1 learners

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ABSTRACT

This study attempted to determine the relationship between the English Literacy and Vocabulary Size of Grade 1 Learners of Estancia Central Elementary School in the District of Estancia, Province of Iloilo during the School Year 2025-2026. The study utilized a descriptive–correlational research design. The sample consisted of 117 Grade 1 learners of Estancia Central Elementary School for the 2025-2026 school year, and, to obtain a balanced representation of all sections, random sampling was used. The instruments for the study consisted of two researcher-made tests instruments, an English Literacy Test with 25 items, and Vocabulary Size Test with 29 items, both of which were evidenced to be valid by an expert, and pilot tested for reliability. The study utilized the mean, standard deviation and Pearson r , for descriptive statistics, and for inferential statistics, a significance level was set at 0.5 alpha. The results of the study revealed that Grade 1 learners were high in their overall level of English Literacy and moderate in their vocabulary size. In English Literacy, they showed very strong performance in sound and letter identification, high ability in word recognition, and moderate skills in both phonemic awareness and reading comprehension. In vocabulary size, learners demonstrated moderate achievement across all components, including word meaning in context, word usage, and word relationships. Importantly, the findings also established a significant relationship between English Literacy and vocabulary size, underscoring their interdependence in early language development.

Keywords: English literacy, vocabulary size, grade 1 learners

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INTRODUCTION

Most teachers with experience understand that they have to teach literacy skills to their pupils as early as possible. Learning to be even slightly literate in English involves much more than just learning a few basic words, reading, and writing. It enables learners to grasp the foundational skills needed for more advanced and complex learning throughout their education. Recent studies confirm that advanced readers acquire sophisticated vocabulary that enhances their comprehension and appreciation of texts, while novice readers begin to develop higher-order thinking skills through exposure to increasingly complex materials (Hadley & Dickinson, 2020; Wright & Cervetti, 2016). The more sophisticated the reading materials, the more knowledge children are able to acquire. Teaching children English Literacy skills enables them

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to develop higher-order thinking skills coupled with effective communication, making literacy the most important skill to prepare children to contribute meaningfully to society.

Despite the global focus on literacy initiatives, problems in literacy are far from resolved in the Philippines. Recent national assessments have shown that young learners' reading comprehension problems often stem from inadequate vocabulary and limited exposure to English texts (DepEd, 2023; Snow, 2023). Children's cognitive and expressive difficulties, such as the inability to articulate ideas clearly, are reflected in weak comprehension and poor verbal and written expression. Filipino learners continue to lag behind global benchmarks in reading literacy, and the adverse effects of inadequate comprehension extend to other subjects, including science, mathematics, and social studies, which require higher-order thinking skills to analyze and synthesize information (Suggate, Schaughency, & Reese, 2018; Wright & Cervetti, 2016). This prevailing situation calls for an urgent response, particularly in strengthening the teaching of literacy and vocabulary in the primary grades.

Public school classrooms in Grade I public schools in Iloilo have a problem that needs to be addressed immediately. A significant number of these students do not even know the most basic skills of reading. These students are not even provided basic skills of literacy. The situation is worse for these children not only because they do not have books at home, do not have an English-speaking parent to assist them, and do not have the basic literacy skills of breaking words down into syllables. In their case, the disadvantages that they face are more than just test items because the psychological effect that they experience is reflected in their speech and in the way they avoid reading. The Department of Education of the Philippines has documented data that are longitudinal in nature and have resulted in the opening of the BES Basa program in Iloilo (Iloilo Provincial Government, 2026; Daily Tribune, 2026). The systematic approach to literacy issues as documented longitudinally by the various provincial education offices and applied in this program shows that in these issues, the difficulties are systemic and not isolated issues that can be solved with a single intervention.

There have been numerous studies that have isolated English Literacy and Vocabulary Size as separate constructs. However, there has been a scarcity of studies that looked into the field of education as a whole, even more so, within the context of the Philippines. The majority of these studies have centered on older students and their ability to comprehend reading, leaving a void in the literature on teaching literacy as a means to influence the vocabulary of younger students. This study intends to establish a baseline for the amount of English Literacy and Vocabulary Size that Grade I learners possess. This information will assist in the preparation of policies and practices that will enhance the literacy of young learners, and will also, to some extent, expand the limited literature in the Philippines.

English Literacy and Vocabulary Size are the two central variables in this study. English Literacy, the independent variable, includes essential skills such as word decoding, comprehension, letter recognition, and phonemic awareness. These skills enable children to function effectively within the language system. Instruction in literacy cultivates the pleasure of reading and promotes confidence and self-motivation to learn further. Literacy teaching in the primary years prepares children to unlock meaning and construct understanding across all areas of the curriculum. Vocabulary Size, the dependent variable, refers to the number of words children learn and use in speech and writing. A child's vocabulary is more than a collection of words; it reflects the ability to verbalize ideas, integrate concepts, and connect with others. A well-developed vocabulary allows learners to comprehend texts, engage in meaningful conversations, and excel academically. Recent studies confirm that reading comprehension and school achievement are strongly predicted by vocabulary knowledge (Hadley & Dickinson, 2020; Wright & Cervetti, 2016; Casido, 2024). English Literacy and Vocabulary Size reinforce each other: literacy enhances vocabulary development, while vocabulary strengthens comprehension. Together, they form a solid foundation for academic success.

This research is built on two key theories explaining the relationship between English Literacy and Vocabulary Size. According to the Simple View of Reading (SVR) model, Gough and Tunmer (1986) say that reading comprehension is the result of two processes, decoding and word knowledge. Absence of either of these processes means that the learner is unable to grasp the text fully. This model advocates for the teaching of both word recognition and meaning construction in the early years of literacy. In relation to language learning, Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1982) posits that the best language learning takes place when learners are exposed to language input that is understood, but is just above their level. For example, new vocabulary is introduced through shared reading, and storytelling, and literacy facilitated in these processes. Krashen posited that vocabulary and literacy are best developed through repeated activities in which new linguistic input is supplied, and that of the processes, comprehension of input is the most critical.

The theories, although proposed before 2016, continue to be valid and applicable to literacy and language acquisition research. They still represent the ways contemporary research articulates the connection between literacy and vocabulary. Both Krashen and SVR theories illustrate the importance of comprehension and decoding within literacy as well as the role of input in vocabulary acquisition. They complement each other and thus offer the foundation for this study, which analyzes how effective literacy teaching and relevant language input collaboratively contribute to vocabulary, comprehension, and academic achievement of Grade 1 learners.

Situated within global, national, and local contexts, and guided by the identified research gap and theoretical foundations, the study examines the impact of English Literacy instruction on the Vocabulary Size of Grade 1 learners. Literacy is treated as the independent variable, while Vocabulary Size functions as the dependent variable, reflecting comprehension and academic achievement. Together, these variables form a system that sustains educational progress and long-term learning.

Statement of the problem

This study attempted to determine the influence of English Literacy on the Vocabulary Size of Grade 1 learners in Estancia Central Elementary School, District of Estancia, during the school year 2025–2026.

Specifically, this study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the level of English Literacy of Grade 1 learners as a whole and in terms of sound and letter identification, phonemic awareness, word recognition, and reading comprehension?
2. What is the level of Vocabulary Size of Grade 1 learners as a whole and in terms of word meaning in context, word usage and word relationships?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the English literacy and Vocabulary Size of Grade 1 learners?

METHODOLOGY

This chapter is divided into three parts, namely the Purpose of the Study and Research Design, the Methods, and the Data Analysis Procedure. The first part, Purpose of the Study and Research Design, restates the main problem and discusses the research design. The second part, Methods, describes the participants, the data gathering instrument, and the data gathering

procedure used. The third part, Data Analysis Procedure, describes how the data will be analyzed.

This study aimed to assess the level of English Literacy and the extent of vocabulary of Grade 1 students of Estancia Central Elementary School for the School Year 2025-2026 of the 5th Congressional District of Iloilo. For the purpose of the study, the researcher used the descriptive correlational research method. A descriptive correlation design, as a non-experimental research design, describes an individual or a group through the collection of data using a structured questionnaire such as a test or inventory, and examines the statistical relationship between variables. Price, Jhangiani, and Chiang (2021) described correlational research as a type of non-experimental research where the researcher attempts to measure a relationship between two variables, that is, a relationship between one variable and the other, with minimal control over other variables. Classroom based studies are ideal for correlational research because data can be collected quickly and naturally, and the research can be applied to real world situations, ensuring external validity. The study considered English Literacy as the independent variable and Vocabulary Size as the dependent variable. This study's data was analyzed through a combination of descriptive and inferential statistics, wherein the mean and standard deviation were used to describe the students' scores, and Pearson's r was used to evaluate the relationship between English Literacy and Vocabulary Size. All inferential tests were done using a 0.05 alpha level of significance.

The participants in this study consisted of 117 Grade 1 learners from Estancia Central Elementary School for the 2025–2026 school year. There were 173 learners across eight sections in the Grade 1 population. These participants were chosen using the random sampling technique, which gives proportional representation from each section. Random sampling is a method in which every member of the target population has an equal chance of being selected, and this method minimizes bias and improves the study's trustworthiness. The distribution of participants by section in Estancia Central Elementary School showed that out of 117 (100%) participants, Section 1 contributed 15 learners (12.82%) from a population of 22, Section 2 contributed 14 learners (11.97%) from a population of 21, Section 3 contributed 13 learners (11.11%) from a population of 20, Section 4 contributed 16 learners (13.68%) from a population of 23, Section 5 contributed 15 learners (12.82%) from a population of 22, Section 6 contributed 14 learners (11.97%) from a population of 21, Section 7 contributed 15 learners (12.82%) from a population of 22, and Section 8 contributed 15 learners (12.82%) from a population of 22, yielding a total population of 173 learners and a total sample of 117 participants. In terms of demographic profile, the distribution of participants by age and gender revealed that out of 117 learners, 67 (57.3%) were six years old and 50 (42.7%) were seven years old. By gender, the sample was nearly balanced, with 59 males (50.4%) and 58 females (49.6%), comprising the total of 117 (100%) participants.

A researcher made test was utilized in this study, and it had two parts. The first part was the English Literacy Test, and the second part was the Vocabulary Size Test. The English Literacy Test was a 25-item researcher made test that measured the overall literacy skills of Grade 1 learners. The first part was the identification of letters and sounds, the second part was phoneme awareness, the third part was word recognition, and the fourth part was reading comprehension. Each correct response was scored as one point, while incorrect responses were scored as zero, yielding a maximum possible score of 25. To describe the level of English Literacy, the learners' scores were interpreted using a scale wherein a score range of 21 to 25 was described as Very High, 16 to 20 as High, 11 to 15 as Moderate, 6 to 10 as Low, and 1 to 5 as Very Low. After the validation of the content, the instrument was pilot tested to thirty (30) non respondents. The result of the pilot testing was subjected to computer processed item analysis, which showed that 25 out of 30 items met the acceptable ranges of difficulty index (0.20–0.80) and discrimination index (0.20–1.00). Since this number already satisfies the

standard for reliability, the instrument was considered valid and reliable, and therefore used in this study.

The Vocabulary Size Test was a 29-item researcher made test which measured the learners' vocabulary knowledge. The first part was picture vocabulary, the second part was contextual vocabulary use, and the third part was synonyms and antonyms. Each correct response was scored as one point, while incorrect responses were scored as zero, yielding a maximum possible score of 29. To describe the Vocabulary Size, the learners' scores were interpreted using a scale wherein a score range of 25 to 29 was described as Very High, 19 to 24 as High, 13 to 18 as Moderate, 7 to 12 as Low, and 1 to 6 as Very Low. After the validation of the content, the instrument was pilot tested to thirty (30) non respondents. The result of the pilot testing was subjected to computer processed item analysis, which revealed that 29 out of 30 items met the acceptable criteria, with a difficulty index ranging from 0.20 to 0.80 and a discrimination index ranging from 0.20 to 1.00. Since this number already satisfies the standard for reliability, the instrument was considered valid and reliable, and therefore used in this study.

In gathering the necessary data needed in the pursuit of this study, the researcher undertook several steps. First, the researcher sought permission from the Schools Division Superintendent of Iloilo to conduct the study, after which another permission letter was sent to the school principal of Estancia Central Elementary School in the 5th District of Iloilo. Second, after the approval to conduct the study, the researcher secured informed consent from the parents or guardians of the Grade 1 learners. They were informed that their children were participating in this research, that they would benefit from the study, that their participation was voluntary, and that information gathered from them would be treated with utmost confidentiality. Only those learners whose parents or guardians signed the consent form were included in the study. Third, the researcher personally administered the researcher made tests through one-on-one sessions with the participants in Estancia Central Elementary School. This procedure was necessary because some parts of the test required oral responses, such as identification of letters, sounds, and word reading. The researcher individually briefed each learner on the mechanics of the instruments, the intent of the study, and the benefits they might derive from participating, and the learners were given enough time to answer the test items, with teachers available to provide assistance when needed. Fourth, after the conduct of the test for eight school days, all the tests were completed, and the 117 participants were successfully covered within the target period. Lastly, the collected data were coded, tabulated, and computer processed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

The gathered data from the study were analyzed using the appropriate statistical procedures, with descriptive and inferential statistical tools employed to interpret the results. Frequency counts and percentages were used to present the profile of the respondents in terms of age and gender. The Mean was used to describe the performance of the Grade 1 learners in the English Literacy and Vocabulary Tests. The Standard Deviation (SD) was used to determine the homogeneity and heterogeneity of the scores obtained by the participants. The Pearson *r* was used to ascertain the significant relationship between the English Literacy and Vocabulary Size scores of the participants. The level of significance was set at 0.05 alpha for all inferential tests.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the interpretation of the data gathered and discusses the results of the study in direct relation to its stated objectives. The investigation employed a descriptive-correlational research design to determine the levels of English Literacy and Vocabulary Size

of Grade 1 learners and to test whether a significant relationship exists between these two variables. Data were collected using researcher-made instruments that measured English Literacy through the domains of sound and letter identification, phonemic awareness, word recognition, and reading comprehension, and that measured Vocabulary Size through the domains of word meaning in context, word usage, and word relationships. The gathered data were analyzed using the mean and standard deviation to describe the levels of both variables, and the Pearson r correlation coefficient was applied to determine the significant relationship between English Literacy as the independent variable and Vocabulary Size as the dependent variable, with the level of significance set at the 0.05 alpha level to ensure rigorous and reliable interpretation of the results. The succeeding discussion is grounded entirely in the data gathered from the respondents and is organized into two parts, namely Descriptive Data Analysis, which deals with the levels of English Literacy and Vocabulary Size of Grade 1 learners as measured by the researcher-made instruments, and Inferential Data Analysis, which discusses the significant relationship between English Literacy and Vocabulary Size of Grade 1 learners, with all interpretations linked directly to the objectives of the study.

Descriptive data analysis

Level of English literacy of Grade 1 learners

The level of English Literacy of Grade 1 learners was examined across four sub-domains and consolidated into an overall index. The results indicate that learners performed at a Very High level in sound and letter identification with a mean of 6.52 and a standard deviation of 0.87, at a Moderate level in phonemic awareness with a mean of 2.71 and a standard deviation of 1.05, at a High level in word recognition with a mean of 7.86 and a standard deviation of 1.42, and at a Moderate level in reading comprehension with a mean of 2.93 and a standard deviation of 0.98. Taken together, the overall level of English Literacy of Grade 1 learners yielded a mean of 18.05 and a standard deviation of 5.70, which is classified as High based on the interpretive scale, where mean scores from 21 to 25 are described as Very High, 16 to 20 as High, 11 to 15 as Moderate, 6 to 10 as Low, and 1 to 5 as Very Low. The spread reflected by the overall standard deviation of 5.70 indicates that while learners as a group fall within the High range, there is meaningful variation across the sub-domains, with notably tighter clustering in sound and letter identification ($SD = 0.87$) and wider variability in word recognition ($SD = 1.42$) and in the overall composite score, suggesting that strengths and weaknesses are unevenly distributed across the foundational literacy components.

The Very High performance in sound and letter identification, with a mean of 6.52 and a standard deviation of 0.87, demonstrates that the learners possess a strong mastery of recognizing letters and their corresponding sounds, indicating a solid foundation in the alphabetic principle, which is essential for decoding and spelling, and reflecting readiness for more complex literacy tasks. In contrast, the Moderate performance in phonemic awareness, with a mean of 2.71 and a standard deviation of 1.05, suggests that while learners can identify and manipulate some sounds, they still struggle with blending, segmenting, and recognizing phoneme patterns, which highlights a clear need for targeted instruction in auditory discrimination and phonological processing, since these skills are critical for spelling, decoding unfamiliar words, and developing fluent reading; without strengthening this area, learners may face significant difficulties in progressing to higher-order literacy skills. The High level of word recognition, with a mean of 7.86 and a standard deviation of 1.42, shows that learners can recognize and recall familiar words with relative ease, supporting fluency and confidence in reading by allowing them to identify sight words and common vocabulary without relying heavily on decoding, which in turn contributes to smoother oral reading and prepares them for

comprehension tasks. Meanwhile, the Moderate level in reading comprehension, with a mean of 2.93 and a standard deviation of 0.98, suggests that learners can understand simple texts but struggle with deeper meaning construction, inference, and critical thinking, since while they can recall basic details, they often find it challenging to interpret implied meanings, connect ideas across sentences, or analyze passages, indicating that comprehension strategies such as questioning, summarizing, and predicting need to be deliberately reinforced in classroom instruction.

When examined holistically, the overall English Literacy mean of 18.05 with a standard deviation of 5.70 confirms a high classification, reflecting strong foundational skills in sound-letter identification and word recognition; however, the moderate performance in phonemic awareness and reading comprehension points to specific areas that require focused intervention. These findings emphasize the importance of balanced literacy instruction that not only strengthens decoding and recognition skills but also develops phonological awareness and comprehension strategies, since addressing these weaker components allows learners to achieve more holistic literacy growth and to be better prepared for the academic demands of higher grade levels. The uneven profile observed here, where surface-level decoding is strong but deeper phonological and comprehension processes are only moderate, mirrors a pattern frequently noted in early literacy research and underscores that mastery of letter-sound correspondences alone is insufficient to guarantee robust reading development, since meaning-making and phonological manipulation require deliberate and sustained instructional support to flourish alongside decoding skills.

Level of vocabulary size of Grade 1 learners

The level of Vocabulary Size of Grade 1 learners was measured across three sub-domains out of a total of 29 items. The results show that learners performed at a Moderate level in word meaning in context with a mean of 5.21 and a standard deviation of 1.34, at a Moderate level in word usage with a mean of 6.02 and a standard deviation of 1.47, and at a Moderate level in word relationships with a mean of 5.68 and a standard deviation of 1.29. The overall Vocabulary Size of Grade 1 learners yielded a mean of 16.91 and a standard deviation of 4.99, which is classified as Moderate based on the interpretive scale, where scores from 24 to 29 are described as Very High, 18 to 23 as High, 12 to 17 as Moderate, 6 to 11 as Low, and 1 to 5 as Very Low. The standard deviation of 4.99 for the overall composite indicates a fairly wide spread of scores around the mean, suggesting that although the group is generally located within the Moderate range, the dispersion of individual performance highlights that some learners cluster closer to the lower boundary of the category while others approach the upper threshold of the Moderate band.

In terms of word meaning in context, the mean of 5.21 with a standard deviation of 1.34 demonstrates that learners can understand simple word meanings but struggle with more complex or abstract usage, and that their ability to grasp contextual meaning is limited, which affects comprehension of longer texts and reduces their capacity to infer meaning beyond literal interpretations. For word usage, the mean of 6.02 with a standard deviation of 1.47 indicates that learners can apply words in basic sentences but often lack accuracy, appropriateness, and variety in expression, suggesting that while classroom instruction provides them with functional vocabulary, they are not yet able to use words flexibly across different contexts, which hinders both fluency and confidence in communication. In the area of word relationships, the mean of 5.68 with a standard deviation of 1.29 likewise reflects a Moderate level, showing that learners can recognize some connections between words such as synonyms,

antonyms, or categories, but that their ability to expand and link vocabulary meaningfully remains underdeveloped, which restricts their capacity to build networks of meaning that are essential for higher-order thinking and comprehension.

Taken together, the Moderate overall Vocabulary Size of 16.91 with a standard deviation of 4.99 reflects that learners have absorbed some vocabulary from classroom instruction but that their word knowledge growth is still limited, indicating a lack of all-round development in a growing child. Learners are able to identify and use a number of words, yet they face difficulties in learning new words and applying them in varied contexts. The reasons for this moderate performance can be traced to limited exposure to English outside the classroom, since learners often use vernacular language at home, have little access to reading materials, and face socioeconomic barriers that restrict opportunities to learn new words. Nation argued that vocabulary knowledge grows when there are meaningful repeated interactions and experiences, yet learners from disadvantaged backgrounds typically lack such exposure, which explains their limited vocabulary development, while Cruz similarly found that socioeconomic status and parental engagement are strong predictors of literacy achievement, highlighting why some students progress while others do not. Within this profile, students with moderate Vocabulary Size can understand and utilize simple basic words taught in school, but they struggle to use these words in a wide range of contexts, may recall familiar words from previous lessons yet find complex texts too difficult to understand, and often resort to vague or incomplete expression, so that their vocabulary knowledge remains functional but restricted, limiting their participation in activities that require serious communication and higher levels of understanding. These findings collectively show that vocabulary development is shaped by both school instruction and the home environment, since while classroom teaching provides the foundation, reinforcement outside school is crucial for growth; the Moderate Vocabulary Size observed in this study reflects systemic inequities in exposure and resources, underscoring the need for collaboration among schools, families, and communities to provide enriched literacy environments through storytelling, reading, and meaningful conversations that offer learners authentic opportunities to apply literacy and vocabulary skills in real contexts, enrich comprehension, strengthen word knowledge, and foster confidence in communication, ultimately empowering learners to overcome barriers, sustain progress, and achieve long-term academic success across subjects.

Inferential data analysis

Relationship between English literacy and vocabulary size of Grade 1 learners

The test of relationship between English Literacy as the independent variable and Vocabulary Size as the dependent variable among Grade 1 learners was conducted using the Pearson r correlation coefficient at the 0.05 alpha level of significance. The analysis yielded a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.254$ with a significance value of $p = 0.007$, where $p < 0.05$ denotes significance at the 5% alpha level and $p > 0.05$ denotes non-significance. Since the obtained p -value of 0.007 is lower than the cutoff of 0.05, the relationship is considered positive and statistically significant, indicating that the two variables are systematically associated rather than independent. The correlation coefficient of 0.254, while positive and significant, reflects a low to modest strength of association, which suggests that as learners' English Literacy improves, their Vocabulary Size also tends to increase, but the magnitude of this relationship implies that other factors beyond literacy alone contribute to vocabulary development. On the basis of this result, the null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant relationship between English Literacy and Vocabulary Size of Grade 1 learners, is rejected, affirming that

literacy and vocabulary are meaningfully and directly linked among the respondents of this study.

This significant correlation implies that English Literacy serves as a foundation for vocabulary growth, since learners who can decode words, read fluently, and comprehend texts are more likely to encounter and retain new vocabulary, while those with weaker literacy skills struggle to learn unfamiliar words, which in turn constrains their vocabulary expansion. The finding emphasizes that literacy instruction is not only about reading comprehension but also about building word knowledge as a parallel and interdependent outcome. Several factors help explain why literacy and vocabulary are correlated in the present results, as literacy skills expose learners to words in meaningful contexts that reinforce both their understanding and their active usage. Corpuz, Morales, Clarin, Dionio, and Cocolan (2024) illustrated that literacy events provide frequent exposure to unfamiliar words, while Zengin and Papadakis (2026) noted that reading and writing difficulties directly hinder vocabulary growth, and Zeng, Kuo, Chen, Lin, and Shen (2025) confirmed that vocabulary teaching is most effective when integrated with literacy instruction. These studies converge to support the present finding that literacy and vocabulary development are mutually reinforcing, since students with high literacy are typically able to recognize sounds, decode words, and comprehend texts with fluency, and because of these skills, they encounter new vocabulary in varied contexts and are able to remember and use these words effectively, expanding their vocabulary naturally through reading and comprehension activities and thereby strengthening their overall language proficiency. At the same time, the relatively modest magnitude of $r = 0.254$ cautions that literacy alone does not fully account for vocabulary outcomes, which is consistent with the descriptive finding that learners showed High literacy but only Moderate Vocabulary Size, and which aligns with the broader literature suggesting that home language exposure, socioeconomic conditions, parental engagement, and access to reading materials also exert substantial influence on lexical development. Taken together, these findings show that literacy and vocabulary are inseparable in early language development, that strong literacy instruction enhances vocabulary growth, that a richer vocabulary in turn supports deeper comprehension, and that comprehensive programs which integrate both ensure learners build stronger reading skills, broader word knowledge, and greater success in communication and academic achievement.

Synthesis of findings

Taken together, the findings of this study provide a coherent and empirically grounded response to the objectives that guided the investigation on the English Literacy and Vocabulary Size of Grade 1 learners. The descriptive analysis established that the overall level of English Literacy is classified as High, with an overall mean of 18.05 and a standard deviation of 5.70, supported by a Very High performance in sound and letter identification ($M = 6.52$, $SD = 0.87$), a High performance in word recognition ($M = 7.86$, $SD = 1.42$), and Moderate performances in phonemic awareness ($M = 2.71$, $SD = 1.05$) and reading comprehension ($M = 2.93$, $SD = 0.98$), revealing a clear pattern in which decoding-related skills are strong while phonological manipulation and meaning-based processing remain in need of focused instructional support. The descriptive analysis further established that the overall level of Vocabulary Size of Grade 1 learners is classified as Moderate, with an overall mean of 16.91 and a standard deviation of 4.99 out of 29 items, with consistently Moderate performances in word meaning in context ($M = 5.21$, $SD = 1.34$), word usage ($M = 6.02$, $SD = 1.47$), and word relationships ($M = 5.68$, $SD = 1.29$), indicating that while learners have begun building functional word knowledge, they

have not yet achieved the breadth and flexibility necessary for fully fluent comprehension and expression. The inferential analysis, anchored on Pearson r at the 0.05 alpha level, yielded a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.254$ with a significance value of $p = 0.007$, which led to the rejection of the null hypothesis and confirmed a positive and significant relationship between English Literacy and Vocabulary Size, although the modest magnitude of the association also signals that vocabulary growth is shaped by additional factors beyond literacy instruction alone.

Collectively, these results directly address the objectives of the study by quantifying the levels of English Literacy and Vocabulary Size, describing the patterns of strength and weakness within each variable, and statistically validating the significant relationship between them, thereby contributing to the field by reinforcing the position advanced by Corpuz, Morales, Clarin, Dionio, and Cocolan (2024), Zengin and Papadakis (2026), Zeng, Kuo, Chen, Lin, and Shen (2025), as well as the perspectives of Nation and Cruz, that literacy and vocabulary develop interdependently and are jointly shaped by classroom instruction, home environment, socioeconomic conditions, and meaningful language exposure. The findings hold practical significance for teachers, curriculum designers, school administrators, parents, and community stakeholders, since they affirm the value of balanced literacy instruction that simultaneously develops phonemic awareness, reading comprehension, and vocabulary knowledge, and they highlight the importance of sustained partnerships between schools and families to provide enriched literacy environments that extend learning beyond the classroom. These insights logically prepare the reader for the next chapter of the manuscript, which will present the summary of the problems, methods, and findings, the conclusions drawn from the results, and the recommendations intended for educators, parents, policymakers, and future researchers seeking to strengthen early literacy and vocabulary development among Grade 1 learners.

CONCLUSION

This study sought to determine the relationship between English Literacy and Vocabulary Size of Grade 1 learners in Estancia Central Elementary School in the District of Estancia, Province of Iloilo during the school year 2025 to 2026. Specifically, it endeavored to ascertain the level of English Literacy of Grade 1 learners as a whole and in terms of sound and letter identification, phonemic awareness, word recognition, and reading comprehension, as well as the level of Vocabulary Size of Grade 1 learners as a whole and in terms of word meaning in context, word usage, and word relationships. Furthermore, the study aimed to determine whether a significant relationship existed between English Literacy and Vocabulary Size of Grade 1 learners. Based on these problems, the study hypothesized that there is no significant relationship between English Literacy and the Vocabulary Size of Grade 1 learners. To test this null hypothesis, the investigation measured the learners' level of English Literacy and their Vocabulary Size, and thereafter examined the correlation between these two variables.

In carrying out the investigation, the researcher employed a descriptive correlational design involving 117 randomly selected Grade 1 learners from Estancia Central Elementary School during the school year 2025 to 2026. Data were collected through a researcher-made test designed to measure the respondents' English Literacy and Vocabulary Size. The instrument underwent content validation by a panel of experts, whose suggestions and corrections were incorporated into the revision of the questionnaire. It was further pilot tested on 30 non-respondents, and the results were used to determine its reliability through Cronbach's alpha computed in SPSS. The independent variable of the study was the English Literacy of Grade 1 learners, while the dependent variable was their Vocabulary Size. The statistical tools used to analyze the gathered data included the mean, standard deviation, and Pearson's r , with

the level of significance for inferential statistics set at alpha equal to .05. The analysis revealed that the level of English Literacy of Grade 1 learners as a whole and in terms of sound and letter identification, phonemic awareness, word recognition, and reading comprehension was high, while the level of Vocabulary Size of Grade 1 learners as a whole and in terms of word meaning in context, word usage, and word relationships was moderate. Moreover, a significant relationship was found to exist between English Literacy and Vocabulary Size, which led to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

In light of these findings, several conclusions were drawn. The Grade 1 learners demonstrated a high level of English Literacy overall, with very high performance in sound and letter identification, high achievement in word recognition, and moderate skills in phonemic awareness and reading comprehension. This indicates that most learners have already developed the essential skills to recognize words, map sounds to letters, read aloud with fluency, and comprehend texts at a basic level. Their strong literacy foundation provides readiness for higher grade levels and supports the acquisition of more complex skills such as critical reading and advanced comprehension, thereby ensuring continued academic growth across subjects. In contrast, the learners exhibited only a moderate level of Vocabulary Size overall, with moderate performance across word meaning in context, word usage, and word relationships. This suggests that while learners possess sufficient vocabulary to support basic comprehension, their word knowledge is not yet strong enough to sustain higher level literacy development. Consequently, they may face limitations in understanding more complex texts, which could hinder long term academic achievement across subjects if vocabulary instruction is not strengthened. It is therefore essential that vocabulary enrichment be integrated into literacy instruction to ensure balanced development and to support learners' progression toward advanced comprehension and critical reading skills. Furthermore, the significant correlation established between English Literacy and Vocabulary Size confirms that the two variables are interconnected, with stronger vocabulary supporting higher literacy outcomes and weaker vocabulary limiting progress despite the presence of basic literacy skills. Learners with richer vocabulary tend to achieve better comprehension and fluency, whereas those with limited vocabulary tend to struggle with meaning. Thus, instruction that integrates vocabulary development with literacy tends to produce more balanced growth and sustainable academic success.

In view of these conclusions, several recommendations are hereby advanced. Learners may continue to be provided with literacy rich experiences on a consistent basis both in school and at home, since regular opportunities to practice reading tend to strengthen their decoding and word recognition skills, phonemic awareness, and comprehension abilities. With sustained support from parents or guardians who encourage reading at home, teachers who design enrichment tasks such as guided reading and writing activities, and school heads who ensure access to diverse reading materials and promote literacy programs, learners will be able to reach very high levels of literacy and maintain readiness for more advanced academic tasks. Parents or guardians may consistently encourage literacy rich experiences at home by providing time, space, and support for children to practice reading, thereby reinforcing school instruction and ensuring that learners sustain high literacy levels. Teachers may likewise continue to provide literacy rich experiences in the classroom through guided reading, writing activities, and comprehension exercises, as consistent exposure to structured literacy tasks strengthens learners' decoding, word recognition, phonemic awareness, and comprehension skills. School heads may ensure that literacy rich environments are consistently maintained by providing classrooms and libraries with diverse and age-appropriate reading materials, while also initiating school wide literacy programs such as reading clubs, competitions, and recognition

activities that motivate learners to sustain their high literacy levels. The Department of Education may further strengthen literacy programs by ensuring that Grade 1 learners across schools are consistently provided with literacy rich experiences through the supply of age-appropriate reading materials, the monitoring of classroom practices, and the support of initiatives that reinforce decoding, word recognition, phonemic awareness, and comprehension.

Considering the moderate level of vocabulary among the learners, it is further recommended that learners actively participate in vocabulary building activities such as word games, contextual reading, and peer discussions to expand their word knowledge, since exposure to new words in meaningful contexts tends to improve comprehension and communication skills. Parents or guardians may support vocabulary growth by engaging learners in conversations that introduce new words and by encouraging their use in daily communication, thereby complementing classroom instruction and helping prevent limitations in understanding complex texts. Teachers may integrate vocabulary enrichment into daily literacy instruction by introducing new words in meaningful contexts, encouraging their use in oral and written communication, and designing activities that promote word retention, thereby strengthening both comprehension and communication. School heads may prioritize vocabulary development by allocating resources for vocabulary rich materials, supporting teacher training on vocabulary instruction, and organizing language focused programs that integrate vocabulary enrichment into daily classroom activities. The Department of Education may likewise prioritize vocabulary development by integrating vocabulary enrichment into the national curriculum and teacher training programs, providing instructional guides, vocabulary rich resources, and professional development opportunities to help teachers deliver systematic vocabulary instruction that expands learners' word knowledge and comprehension.

Finally, since a significant correlation exists between English Literacy and Vocabulary Size, learners may engage in activities that combine reading fluency with vocabulary expansion, such as reading aloud with comprehension checks and applying new words in daily communication, as the integrated practice of literacy and vocabulary tends to produce better comprehension and fluency. Parents or guardians may encourage learners to apply newly learned vocabulary in everyday interactions, such as storytelling, discussions, or simple writing tasks, thereby strengthening the correlation between literacy and vocabulary and supporting balanced and sustainable academic success. Teachers may design lessons that combine literacy and vocabulary development through reading aloud with comprehension checks, thematic reading activities, and writing tasks that require the use of newly learned words, thereby enabling learners to achieve balanced growth in fluency and comprehension. School heads may promote instructional approaches that integrate literacy and vocabulary development by organizing professional development workshops for teachers, encouraging collaborative planning of lessons, and supporting thematic programs such as reading weeks or integrated language workshops, thereby fostering a school culture that values both literacy and vocabulary. The Department of Education may institutionalize these integrated strategies in order to reinforce balanced growth in fluency and comprehension, ultimately supporting sustainable academic success across schools. Taken together, the findings, conclusions, and recommendations underscore that nurturing both English Literacy and Vocabulary Size in a complementary manner is indispensable in cultivating Grade 1 learners who are not only proficient readers but also well prepared for the increasing academic demands of higher educational levels.

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