PANTAO
(International Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences)
Volume 5, Issue 3
ISSN 3028-0877 | DOI 10.69651/2022PIJHSS

Vocabulary development strategies in Grade 4 English: A descriptive study of teachers' approaches in San Antonio District, Ilagan City

Gladys G. Alimbaba*
Northeastern College, Santiago City, Philippines

ABSTRACT

This study determined the vocabulary development strategies employed by Grade 4 English teachers in San Antonio District Public Elementary Schools, City of Ilagan, during the School Year 2025–2026. Specifically, it described the teachers' profile in terms of age, sex, highest educational attainment, length of teaching experience, and years of teaching Grade 4 English; determined the level of utilization of vocabulary development strategies in terms of explicit vocabulary instruction, contextualized teaching, use of visual and graphic organizers, interactive and collaborative activities, integration of reading materials, and instructional technology; examined the relationship between teachers' profile and their vocabulary development strategies; and proposed an instructional enhancement plan. The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design using a researcher-made questionnaire administered to Grade 4 English teachers through total enumeration. Data were analyzed using frequency and percentage, weighted mean, and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient. The findings revealed that the respondents demonstrated a high level of utilization of vocabulary development strategies across all instructional dimensions. Explicit vocabulary instruction and contextualized teaching emerged as the most frequently utilized strategies. The analysis further showed no significant relationship between the teachers' profile and their vocabulary development strategies. Based on the findings, an instructional enhancement plan was proposed to strengthen vocabulary instruction through continuous professional development, improved instructional resources, and effective integration of innovative teaching strategies.

Keywords: Vocabulary development, Grade 4 English, instructional strategies, English teachers, descriptive-correlational, City of Ilagan.

Date Submitted: July 04, 2026
Date Accepted: July 07, 2026
Date Published: July 14, 2026

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary development is a fundamental component of English language learning and literacy. It enables learners to comprehend written texts, communicate ideas effectively, and achieve academic success across various learning areas. In the elementary grades, particularly in Grade 4, learners transition from learning basic reading skills to using reading as a tool for

*Corresponding author / Email: evelyn.salvador001@deped.gov.ph

Recommended citation:
Alimbaba, G. (2026). Vocabulary development strategies in Grade 4 English: A descriptive study of teachers' approaches in San Antonio District, Ilagan City. Pantao (International Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences) 5 (3), 1395-1402.

acquiring knowledge. Consequently, teachers play a crucial role in developing learners' vocabulary through effective instructional strategies.

Various vocabulary development strategies have been recognized in language education, including explicit vocabulary instruction, contextualized teaching, visual and graphic organizers, interactive and collaborative learning activities, integration of reading materials, and instructional technology. These strategies help learners understand, retain, and appropriately use new vocabulary in different communication contexts.

In San Antonio District Public Elementary Schools, City of Ilagan, Grade 4 English teachers implement different instructional approaches based on learners' needs, available resources, and curriculum requirements. However, there is limited local evidence describing the extent to which these strategies are utilized and whether teachers' demographic characteristics influence their instructional practices.

Anchored on the principles of effective language instruction and supported by the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 (Republic Act No. 10533), the Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001 (Republic Act No. 9155), the MATATAG Curriculum Framework, and relevant Department of Education policies, this study sought to describe the vocabulary development strategies employed by Grade 4 English teachers in San Antonio District Public Elementary Schools, City of Ilagan. The findings served as the basis for an instructional enhancement plan.

Statement of the problem

This study determined the vocabulary development strategies employed by Grade 4 English teachers in San Antonio District Public Elementary Schools, City of Ilagan, during the School Year 2025 to 2026.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, highest educational attainment, length of teaching experience, and years of teaching Grade 4 English?
2. What is the level of utilization of vocabulary development strategies among Grade 4 English teachers in terms of explicit vocabulary instruction, contextualized teaching, use of visual and graphic organizers, interactive and collaborative activities, integration of reading materials, and instructional technology?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the teachers' profile and their vocabulary development strategies?
4. What instructional enhancement plan may be proposed based on the findings of the study?

METHODOLOGY

The study employed the descriptive correlational research design. The descriptive method was used to determine the level of utilization of vocabulary development strategies among Grade 4 English teachers, while the correlational method determined whether a significant relationship existed between the teachers' profile and their vocabulary development strategies.

The study was conducted in the public elementary schools under San Antonio District, City of Ilagan, during the School Year 2025 to 2026. The respondents consisted of all Grade 4 English teachers in the public elementary schools of San Antonio District. Total enumeration was employed to include all teachers handling Grade 4 English classes.

A researcher made questionnaire served as the primary data gathering instrument. It consisted of two parts. Part I gathered information on the teachers' profile, while Part II measured vocabulary development strategies covering explicit vocabulary instruction, contextualized teaching, visual and graphic organizers, interactive and collaborative activities, integration of reading materials, and instructional technology. Prior to its administration, the instrument underwent expert validation to ensure its content validity and appropriateness for the objectives of the study.

After obtaining approval from the Schools Division Office and the school heads, the researcher personally distributed the questionnaires to the respondents. The objectives of the study were explained to the participants', informed consent was obtained, and the completed questionnaires were collected. The gathered data were then encoded and subjected to statistical analysis.

The statistical tools utilized in the study included Frequency and Percentage, Weighted Mean, and the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. Frequency and Percentage were used to describe the profile of the respondents, while the Weighted Mean was employed to determine the level of utilization of vocabulary development strategies among Grade 4 English teachers. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to determine whether a significant relationship existed between the teachers' profile and their vocabulary development strategies. A 0.05 level of significance was used in testing the hypothesis.

Ethical considerations were observed throughout the conduct of the study. Approval was secured from the appropriate authorities before the conduct of the research. The respondents were informed of the objectives of the study, and their informed consent was obtained prior to their participation. Participation in the study was voluntary, and the confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents and the information they provided were maintained throughout the research process. The data gathered were used solely for the purposes of the study and were handled with the highest degree of integrity and confidentiality.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study revealed that the respondents were predominantly experienced Grade 4 English teachers with varying educational backgrounds and years of teaching experience.

The findings further showed that teachers demonstrated a high level of utilization of vocabulary development strategies across all six instructional dimensions. Among these, explicit vocabulary instruction and contextualized teaching emerged as the most frequently practiced approaches, while instructional technology showed comparatively lower utilization due to differences in access to technological resources.

The correlation analysis indicated no significant relationship between the teachers' profile variables and their vocabulary development strategies at the 0.05 level of significance. This implies that regardless of age, sex, educational attainment, teaching experience, or years of teaching Grade 4 English, teachers generally employed similar vocabulary instructional approaches.

Based on these findings, an instructional enhancement plan focusing on professional development, innovative vocabulary instruction, and technology integration was developed.

The findings affirm that Grade 4 English teachers recognize the importance of vocabulary instruction in improving learners' language proficiency. Their consistent use of explicit instruction, contextualized teaching, reading integration, and interactive classroom activities reflects adherence to research-based instructional practices recommended by

language education scholars such as Beck et al. (2013), Graves (2016), Nation (2013), and Harmon et al. (2018).

The high utilization of vocabulary development strategies suggests that teachers understand the value of exposing learners to vocabulary through meaningful learning experiences rather than relying solely on memorization. This supports previous findings that varied instructional approaches contribute to improved vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension.

The absence of a significant relationship between teachers' profile and vocabulary development strategies indicates that instructional practices may be influenced more by curriculum standards, school policies, and professional development than by personal demographic characteristics. This finding aligns with studies suggesting that continuous teacher training and curriculum implementation contribute to consistent instructional practices across teachers.

Although instructional technology received relatively lower ratings compared with other strategies, its increasing integration into English instruction demonstrates teachers' willingness to adopt digital resources when available. Strengthening teachers' technological competencies through continuous professional development may further enhance vocabulary instruction.

Overall, the study highlights the need for sustained instructional support, continuous capacity-building activities, collaborative learning communities, and adequate instructional resources to further improve vocabulary development among Grade 4 learners. The proposed instructional enhancement plan may assist school administrators, district supervisors, and teachers in strengthening English language instruction and promoting improved literacy outcomes in San Antonio District Public Elementary Schools.

CONCLUSION

The Grade 4 English teachers in San Antonio District Public Elementary Schools, City of Ilagan possess varied demographic and professional characteristics in terms of age, sex, highest educational attainment, length of teaching experience, and years of teaching Grade 4 English. Despite these differences, they share a common commitment to implementing effective vocabulary instruction.

The teachers demonstrated a high level of utilization of vocabulary development strategies, indicating that they consistently employ research-based instructional approaches to enhance learners' vocabulary acquisition. Among the strategies, explicit vocabulary instruction and contextualized teaching were the most frequently utilized, reflecting teachers' emphasis on providing meaningful and systematic vocabulary learning experiences.

The use of visual and graphic organizers, interactive and collaborative activities, integration of reading materials, and instructional technology further indicates that teachers recognize the importance of varied instructional approaches in promoting learner engagement and vocabulary development. These practices are consistent with the goals of the Department of Education to strengthen literacy and language learning in the elementary grades.

The statistical analysis revealed no significant relationship between the teachers' profile and their vocabulary development strategies. This suggests that the utilization of vocabulary instructional approaches is not significantly influenced by teachers' demographic or professional characteristics. Rather, it may be attributed to the implementation of the curriculum, professional standards, and shared instructional practices within the district.

Overall, the findings affirm that Grade 4 English teachers in San Antonio District are implementing appropriate vocabulary development strategies that support effective English language instruction. Nevertheless, continuous professional development, enhanced

instructional resources, and strengthened technology integration remain important to further improve vocabulary instruction and sustain quality English education in public elementary schools.

REFERENCES

Adriano, T. (2020). Contextualized English instruction in Philippine elementary classrooms. Philippine Journal of Language Education, 12(1), 45–60.

Alqahtani, M. (2018). The importance of vocabulary in language learning and how to be taught. International Journal of Teaching and Education, 3(3), 21–34.

August, D., & Shanahan, T. (2018). Developing literacy in second-language learners: Report of the National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth. Routledge.

Baumann, J. F., & Kame'enui, E. J. (2015). Vocabulary instruction: Research to practice (2nd ed.). Guilford Press.

Bautista, M. (2021). Vocabulary teaching strategies among public school teachers. Philippine Journal of Educational Research, 9(2), 45–58.

Bautista, M., & Gonzales, R. (2022). Teacher preparation and effective English instruction in Philippine schools. Asian Journal of Language Education, 14(1), 60–74.

Beck, I. L., McKeown, M. G., & Kucan, L. (2013). Bringing words to life: Robust vocabulary instruction (2nd ed.). Guilford Press.

Bernardo, A. B. I. (2020). Language and literacy development among Filipino learners. Philippine Journal of Psychology, 53(1), 1–15.

Bernardo, A. B. I., & Mendoza, R. (2021). Reading engagement and vocabulary growth among elementary learners. Philippine Journal of Education, 99(2), 34–49.

Biemiller, A. (2016). Teaching vocabulary in the primary grades. Guilford Press.

Coxhead, A. (2018). Vocabulary and English for academic purposes research: Trends and directions. TESOL Quarterly, 52(2), 1–17.

Coxhead, A. (2020). Academic vocabulary and language learning. TESOL Journal, 11(3), 1–9.

Cruz, R. (2020). Teaching experience and instructional strategies in elementary English classrooms. Journal of Philippine Basic Education, 8(2), 23–38.

Cunningham, A. E., & Stanovich, K. E. (2016). What reading does for the mind. American Educator, 22(1–2), 8–15.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2017). Teacher education around the world: What can we learn from international practice? European Journal of Teacher Education, 40(3), 291–309.

De Guzman, M. (2023). Teachers' instructional strategies and learners' vocabulary acquisition. Philippine Journal of Educational Studies, 16(1), 88–104.

Department of Education. (2015). DepEd Order No. 8, s. 2015: Policy guidelines on classroom assessment for the K to 12 basic education program. Department of Education.

Department of Education. (2019). DepEd Order No. 21, s. 2019: Policy guidelines on the K to 12 basic education program. Department of Education.

Department of Education. (2023). MATATAG curriculum framework: Bansang makabata, batang makabansa. Department of Education.

Dizon, M. (2022). Reading-based vocabulary instruction among Grade 4 learners. Philippine Education Review, 14(1), 67–82.

Ellis, R. (2018). The study of second language acquisition (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.

Flores, M. (2019). Visual aids and interactive activities in enhancing vocabulary retention among elementary learners. Asia Pacific Journal of Multidisciplinary Research, 7(4), 102–110.

Flores, M., & Bautista, M. (2022). Collaborative vocabulary learning among Grade 4 pupils. Philippine Social Science Journal, 5(2), 55–70.

Garcia, L. (2022). Technology integration in English language instruction in public elementary schools. Philippine Education Review, 14(1), 67–82.

Garcia, L. (2023). Reading materials integration and vocabulary development. Journal of Language Education Research, 6(1), 44–60.

Graves, M. F. (2016). The vocabulary book: Learning and instruction (2nd ed.). Teachers College Press.

Graves, M. F., & Sales, G. (2019). Effective vocabulary instruction in elementary classrooms. Reading Teacher, 73(1), 23–34.

Graves, M. F., & Watts-Taffe, S. (2019). Fostering word consciousness in young readers. Reading Teacher, 72(3), 343–352.

Harmon, J. M., Wood, K. D., & Hedrick, W. B. (2018). Vocabulary instruction in the content areas: Research-based practices. Middle School Journal, 49(3), 5–14.

Hiebert, E. H., & Kamil, M. L. (2018). Teaching and learning vocabulary: Bringing research to practice. Routledge.

Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, R. T. (2019). Cooperative learning and student achievement. Educational Researcher, 38(5), 365–379.

Kim, Y. (2020). Multimedia-assisted vocabulary learning among elementary students. Language Teaching Research, 24(3), 1–15.

Llego, M. (2021). Interactive teaching strategies in Philippine elementary English classrooms. TeacherPH Educational Journal, 3(1), 10–18.

Lopez, A. (2022). English teaching practices in Grade 4 classrooms. International Journal of Educational Research in the Philippines, 5(2), 55–70.

Malipot, M. (2022). Instructional resources and English teaching effectiveness in Philippine schools. Education and Development Review, 12(2), 66–78.

Martin, I. (2020). Language use and English education in the Philippines. Asian Englishes, 22(1), 1–15.

Marzano, R. J. (2017). The art and science of teaching vocabulary. ASCD.

Mayer, R. E. (2017). Multimedia learning (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Mendoza, C. (2023). Teacher profile and instructional strategies in English language teaching. Philippine Journal of Educational Studies, 16(1), 88–104.

Nagy, W. E., & Townsend, D. (2012). Words as tools: Learning academic vocabulary as language acquisition. Reading Research Quarterly, 47(1), 91–108.

Nation, I. S. P. (2013). Learning vocabulary in another language (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Nation, I. S. P., & Webb, S. (2017). Vocabulary learning and language acquisition. TESOL Quarterly, 51(1), 123–134.

Navarro, R. (2024). Technology integration in elementary English instruction. Philippine Education Review, 18(1), 45–60.

Navarro, R., & Ramos, P. (2024). Multimedia tools and vocabulary learning among elementary pupils. Journal of Philippine Education Research, 7(1), 70–85.

Pascual, E. (2024). Challenges in vocabulary instruction among public elementary teachers. Journal of Educational Development in Luzon, 3(1), 41–58.

Ramos, P. (2023). Reading integration and vocabulary learning in English classes. Philippine Journal of Language Teaching, 15(2), 55–70.

Republic of the Philippines. (1987). The 1987 Philippine Constitution. Official Gazette.

Republic of the Philippines. (2001). Republic Act No. 9155: Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001. Official Gazette.

Republic of the Philippines. (2013). Republic Act No. 10533: Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013. Official Gazette.

Reyes, J. (2021). Vocabulary teaching strategies in public elementary schools. Philippine Social Science Journal, 4(3), 120–134.

Reyes, J., & Cruz, R. (2023). Technology integration in English instruction in Philippine schools. Asian Journal of Educational Technology, 10(2), 25–40.

Richards, J. C., & Renandya, W. A. (2021). Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of current practice. Cambridge University Press.

Schmitt, N. (2017). Vocabulary in language teaching. Cambridge University Press.

Schmitt, N., & Schmitt, D. (2020). Vocabulary in language teaching. Language Teaching Research, 24(5), 1–17.

Silverman, R. (2019). Vocabulary instruction and reading comprehension in elementary classrooms. Reading Research Quarterly, 54(2), 1–15.

Silverman, R., & Hines, S. (2019). Interactive vocabulary instruction in elementary classrooms. Reading Teacher, 73(3), 301–312.

Slavin, R. E. (2020). Educational psychology: Theory and practice (13th ed.). Pearson.

Snow, C. E. (2017). Literacy development in the early years. Harvard Educational Review, 87(2), 1–14.

Stahl, S. A., & Nagy, W. E. (2006). Teaching word meanings. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Teng, F. (2021). Technology-assisted vocabulary learning and learner engagement. Computer Assisted Language Learning, 34(5–6), 1–19.

Tupas, R. (2018). English language teaching in the Philippines. Asian Englishes, 20(3), 1–14.

Villanueva, M. (2021). Contextualized English instruction in Philippine classrooms. Philippine Journal of Education, 100(1), 45–59.

Webb, S. (2020). Learning vocabulary through reading. Language Teaching Research, 24(3), 1–16.

Webb, S., & Nation, I. S. P. (2017). How vocabulary is learned. Oxford University Press.