

**Vocabulary learning strategies and vocabulary levels of Grade 11 students
of Salinungan Stand-Alone Senior High School**

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ABSTRACT

This descriptive-correlational study examined the vocabulary learning strategies and vocabulary levels of Grade 11 students at Salinungan Stand-Alone Senior High School during the first semester of School Year 2024-2025. From a population of 289 Grade 11 students, 166 participants were selected through stratified random sampling. Data were gathered using a 44-item modified Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire based on Gu and Johnson, which obtained a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .955, and the Vocabulary Levels Test covering the 1000-, 2000-, 3000-, 4000-, and 5000-word levels. Weighted means, frequency counts, percentages, mean scores, and Spearman's rho were used in the analysis. The participants used vocabulary learning strategies from a moderate to a great extent. Oral repetition obtained the highest grand mean ($M = 5.27$), followed by dictionary use ($M = 4.96$), technology use ($M = 4.88$), contextual strategies ($M = 4.81$), and note-taking ($M = 4.80$). Despite this reported strategy use, the mean scores at all five vocabulary levels were below the adopted mastery cut-offs. Most participants did not master the 1000-, 2000-, 3000-, and 5000-word levels, while 51.20% met the reported mastery criterion at the 4000-word level. Most correlations between strategy use and vocabulary level were not statistically significant. Significant weak positive relationships were found between affective strategies and the 4000-word level ($\rho = .17$, $p = .028$), dictionary use and the 5000-word level ($\rho = .16$, $p = .043$), and affective strategies and the 5000-word level ($\rho = .23$, $p = .003$). The findings support a structured vocabulary intervention emphasizing foundational word knowledge, dictionary skills, self-regulation, contextual practice, and sustained monitoring.

Keywords: Vocabulary learning strategies, vocabulary levels, Grade 11 students, dictionary use, affective strategies.

Date Submitted: July 2, 2026
Date Accepted: July 14, 2026
Date Published: July 21, 2026

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is a central component of language proficiency because it supports comprehension and expression across listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Learners may know grammatical rules yet remain unable to communicate effectively when they do not possess enough words or cannot retrieve and use them appropriately. For senior high school

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DOI: <http://doi.org/10.69651/PIJHSS05031390>

Recommended citation:

Guieb, A. D. (2026). Vocabulary learning strategies and vocabulary levels of Grade 11 students of Salinungan Stand-Alone Senior High School. *Pantao (International Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences)* 5 (3), 2173-2184. <http://doi.org/10.69651/PIJHSS05031390>

students, vocabulary knowledge is especially important because academic texts require increasingly precise, abstract, and discipline-specific language.

English continues to serve as a major language of education, business, science, and international communication. In the Philippines, it is taught throughout basic education and is widely used as a medium of instruction. Recent curriculum reforms continue to emphasize English competence as part of preparation for higher education, employment, and participation in a globally connected society (Crystal, 2021; Department of Education, 2022; OECD, 2023).

Despite sustained exposure to English, many learners still experience difficulty in speaking, sentence construction, reading comprehension, and appropriate word use. These difficulties have been associated with limited vocabulary knowledge, inconsistent practice, low confidence, and reduced engagement in remote or technology-mediated learning environments (Simamora et al., 2022; Wahyudin et al., 2021). The continuing weakness in Philippine reading performance reported in PISA 2022 further indicates the need for instruction that develops both basic comprehension and the language resources required for more complex interpretation (OECD, 2023).

One approach to addressing vocabulary difficulty is the explicit development of language learning strategies. Language Learning Strategies refer to the deliberate actions, thoughts, and self-regulatory behaviors that learners use to make language learning more efficient and independent. Strategy frameworks commonly include memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies (Oxford, 2021). In vocabulary learning, these may include repetition, word lists, contextual guessing, dictionary consultation, note-taking, semantic grouping, morphological analysis, imagery, use of technology, and active application of newly learned words.

Research consistently identifies vocabulary knowledge as a strong contributor to reading comprehension and communicative competence (Nation, 2022; Schmitt & Schmitt, 2022). Effective vocabulary learning requires more than memorizing isolated definitions. Learners need repeated exposure, retrieval practice, contextual use, attention to word form and meaning, and opportunities to apply vocabulary in speaking and writing (Webb & Nation, 2021). Digital dictionaries, mobile applications, multimedia materials, and spaced-repetition systems have also expanded the range of strategies available to learners (Chiew & Ismail, 2021; Yu & Trainin, 2021).

Classroom observations conducted by teachers and the language department head at Salinungan Stand-Alone Senior High School identified recurring weaknesses in vocabulary, pronunciation, sentence construction, and reading comprehension. Low scores in summative examinations further suggested that many learners had difficulty understanding and using English words at a stage when they were preparing for college or employment. These local observations provided the immediate basis for assessing the strategies students used and the level of vocabulary they had attained.

Although vocabulary learning strategies have been widely studied, much of the literature has focused on university students and adult second-language learners. Evidence specific to Grade 11 students remains more limited, particularly in school contexts where learners differ in academic strand, exposure to English, and access to learning resources (Garcia & Lee, 2023; Ahmed et al., 2024). The present study therefore examined the extent to which Grade 11 students used selected vocabulary learning strategies, measured their vocabulary levels, and tested whether strategy use was related to vocabulary performance. The findings were also used to prepare a school-based plan of action.

Contemporary second-language research increasingly treats learners as active participants who plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning. Oxford (2021) groups language learning strategies into direct strategies, which act on the language itself, and indirect strategies, which manage the conditions of learning. Direct strategies include memory, cognitive, and

compensation strategies, while indirect strategies include metacognitive, affective, and social strategies. O'Malley and Chamot's classification similarly emphasize cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective processes. These frameworks explain how learners process vocabulary, regulate study, seek assistance, and manage motivation or anxiety.

Gu and Johnson's vocabulary learning framework includes beliefs about vocabulary learning, metacognitive regulation, guessing, dictionary use, note-taking, rehearsal, encoding, and activation. Schmitt's taxonomy distinguishes strategies used to discover a new word's meaning from strategies used to consolidate knowledge after the word has been encountered. Ma's process-oriented classification presents vocabulary acquisition as a cycle of encountering, identifying, studying, organizing, memorizing, reviewing, retrieving, and using words. Taken together, these classifications support the view that vocabulary develops through coordinated processes rather than through one isolated technique.

Studies cited in the original manuscript report benefits from contextual guessing, semantic mapping, visual representation, repetition, dictionary consultation, and strategy instruction (Tran & Nguyen, 2021; Patel & Singh, 2022; Kim & Park, 2022; Feng et al., 2023). Learners who regulate their own learning and use strategies flexibly tend to demonstrate stronger retention and autonomy (Wang & Zhang, 2023; Liu & Reynolds, 2023). However, frequent use does not automatically mean effective use. Strategy quality, accuracy, timing, and the learner's ability to combine methods may be more important than frequency alone.

Technology has become an increasingly prominent vocabulary resource. Online dictionaries, mobile devices, multimedia platforms, and spaced-repetition applications can provide immediate definitions, pronunciation, examples, and repeated exposure (Chiew & Ismail, 2021; Yu & Trainin, 2021). Informal learning through social media, music, online video, and digital games may also support vocabulary development, although these environments require learners to evaluate meaning and usage carefully (Lopez & Garcia, 2021; Brown & Smith, 2022).

Affective factors influence whether learners persist when vocabulary tasks become difficult. Motivation, confidence, anxiety management, and self-encouragement can affect engagement and sustained practice (Vera, 2023; Xu, 2021). Social support from teachers, peers, and family may lower barriers to participation and encourage meaningful use of new vocabulary. These factors are relevant to the present study because the questionnaire included an affective strategy dimension and because the proposed intervention was intended to support both learning behavior and learner persistence.

The study was anchored in Krashen's Input Hypothesis and Affective Filter Hypothesis. The Input Hypothesis proposes that language acquisition is supported when learners encounter comprehensible language that extends slightly beyond their current competence. Vocabulary strategies can make input more comprehensible by helping learners infer meanings, connect new words with prior knowledge, and verify interpretations. Contextual reading, dictionary consultation, semantic association, and repeated exposure may therefore help learners convert unfamiliar language into usable knowledge.

The Affective Filter Hypothesis emphasizes the role of motivation, confidence, and anxiety in language acquisition. Learners who remain engaged and regulate negative reactions are more likely to attend to input and participate in language use, whereas disengagement may restrict learning opportunities (Vera, 2023). This framework supports the inclusion of affective strategies and the interpretation of their relationship with vocabulary performance.

The framework treated vocabulary learning strategy use and vocabulary level as the principal inputs. The process involved describing both variables, testing their relationships, and identifying specific gaps. The intended output was a practical plan that could strengthen

vocabulary instruction and learner strategy use. Feedback from implementation and monitoring may be used to revise succeeding activities.

Statement of the problem

This study sought to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent did the participants use the different vocabulary learning strategies?
2. What was the vocabulary level of the Grade 11 students at the 1000-, 2000-, 3000-, 4000-, and 5000-word levels?
3. Was there a significant relationship between the participants' extent of use of vocabulary learning strategies and their vocabulary levels?
4. What plan of action could be proposed to improve the participants' vocabulary levels?

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational design. The descriptive component determined the extent to which the participants used selected vocabulary learning strategies and described their vocabulary performance at five word-frequency levels. The correlational component tested the direction and strength of the relationship between each strategy category and each vocabulary level without manipulating the variables. This design was appropriate because the study examined naturally occurring learner behaviors and test scores (Dullas et al., 2021).

The study was conducted at Salinungan Stand-Alone Senior High School under the Schools Division Office of Isabela. The school offered the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM); Accountancy, Business, and Management (ABM); Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS); and Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) strands. The school recorded 660 learners in the first semester and 640 learners in the second semester of School Year 2024-2025.

The Grade 11 population covered by the study consisted of 289 students enrolled in core English subjects. A sample of 166 was determined using the Raosoft sample-size calculator at a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error. Stratified random sampling was used to represent the strands and sections proportionately.

Two instruments were used. The first was a modified Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire based on the instruments of Gu and Johnson (1996) and Gu (2005), as adopted in the manuscript from Gaboy (2018). The modified form contained 44 items grouped into 15 strategy categories: word lists, oral repetition, written repetition, association, imagery, visualization, semantics, contextual learning, word structure, dictionary use, note-taking, guessing, activation, technology use, and affective strategies. Responses were recorded on a six-point scale. Pilot testing produced a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .955, indicating excellent internal consistency for the administered form.

The second instrument was the Vocabulary Levels Test associated with Webb, Sasao, and Ballance. It assessed vocabulary knowledge at the 1000-, 2000-, 3000-, 4000-, and 5000-word levels. Each level contained 30 items. The original manuscript reported reliability estimates of .96 and separation estimates of 4.72 or higher. Scores were interpreted by level rather than combined because each band represented a different layer of lexical knowledge.

The strategy questionnaire was interpreted using the following ranges: 5.60-6.00, very great extent; 4.50-5.59, great extent; 3.50-4.49, moderate extent; 2.50-3.49, some extent; 1.50-2.49, small extent; and 1.00-1.49, no extent. The upper boundary of the "great extent" category was written as 5.59 in the revised manuscript to remove the gap present in the original scale.

For the Vocabulary Levels Test, the reported results classified scores of 29-30 as mastered for the 1000-, 2000-, and 3000-word levels, and scores of 26-30 as mastered for the 4000- and 5000-word levels. These cut-offs were used consistently in the revised Results section because they were the criteria applied in the original frequency table.

The researcher first requested approval from the Dean of the Graduate School and the Schools Division Superintendent of Isabela. After approval was secured, permission to administer the instruments was obtained from the school principal. The identified participants and their parents or guardians received information about the study and the required consent and assent forms. The questionnaires and tests were administered and retrieved within a uniform data-collection period. Responses were then checked, organized, encoded, and prepared for statistical analysis.

Data were processed using SPSS version 22. Weighted means described the extent of use of each vocabulary learning strategy. Frequency counts, percentages, and mean scores described vocabulary mastery at each word level. Spearman's rho tested the relationship between strategy-use scores and vocabulary scores because the analysis focused on ranked or nonparametric associations. Statistical significance was evaluated at $\alpha = .05$. The proposed action plan was developed from the identified low-mastery areas, the least-developed strategies, and the statistically significant relationships.

Formal authorization was obtained before data collection. Participation was voluntary, and participants were informed of the purpose, procedures, and expected use of the data. Because the participants were students, parental or guardian consent and learner assent were obtained. Participants could withdraw without penalty. Individual responses were kept confidential, reported in aggregate form, and handled in accordance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012. The researcher also used consistent administration procedures to reduce avoidable variation in testing conditions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study involved 166 Grade 11 students who served as respondents in a descriptive-correlational investigation of vocabulary learning strategy use and vocabulary mastery. Data were gathered through a structured questionnaire measuring the extent of use of fifteen categories of vocabulary learning strategies, complemented by a Vocabulary Levels Test administered across five word-frequency bands, namely the 1000, 2000, 3000, 4000, and 5000 word levels. The results were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency counts, percentages, and grand means with corresponding qualitative interpretations, as well as Spearman rank-order correlation to determine the relationship between strategy use and vocabulary scores at each word level. The findings presented in this section are grounded strictly in the data collected and are interpreted in direct relation to the objectives of the study, namely to determine the extent of strategy use, to assess vocabulary mastery across word levels, to establish the relationship between these two variables, and to propose a plan of action responsive to the results obtained.

Analysis of the extent of use of vocabulary learning strategies revealed that participants employed the fifteen strategy categories at levels ranging from moderate to great extent, with no category falling below the moderate threshold. Oral repetition ranked first with a grand mean of 5.27, interpreted as great extent, indicating that saying words aloud or rehearsing them mentally was the strategy most frequently employed by the participants. This finding aligns with the view that repetition remains a foundational mechanism for maintaining word forms in memory, particularly when paired with meaning-focused and productive use of vocabulary

(Webb & Nation, 2021). Dictionary use ranked second with a grand mean of 4.96, followed by technology use at 4.88, contextual strategies at 4.81, note-taking at 4.80, and activation at 4.78, all likewise interpreted as great extent. These results collectively point to a strong reliance among the participants on rehearsal, reference tools, digital resources, contextual inference, and the active application of newly acquired vocabulary. The prominence of dictionary, technology, contextual, and activation strategies is consistent with research suggesting that digital tools and reference materials support autonomous vocabulary learning when learners engage meaningfully with definitions, usage patterns, and pronunciation rather than relying on mechanical copying of meanings (Chiew & Ismail, 2021; Yu & Trainin, 2021; Zuhairi & Musthar, 2023).

Guessing obtained a grand mean of 4.60, written repetition 4.55, and semantics 4.50, all likewise falling under the great extent interpretation, rounding out the upper half of the strategy ranking. In contrast, imagery recorded a grand mean of 4.46, association 4.40, word structure 4.34, affective strategies 4.26, and word lists 4.05, the lowest among all categories, with these five strategies interpreted as used only to a moderate extent. At the item level, carrying vocabulary cards obtained the lowest mean of 3.36, while silently repeating new words obtained the highest mean of 5.30, a pattern that reinforces the broader finding that rehearsal-based techniques were favored over portable, list-based practices. The comparatively limited use of vocabulary cards suggests that traditional word-list methods may have been displaced by more convenient digital alternatives, while the moderate use of prefixes, roots, suffixes, and meaning-based associations points to a need for more explicit instruction in morphological analysis and semantic organization, approaches that can help learners progress beyond mere recognition toward deeper and more durable lexical knowledge (Feng et al., 2023; Patel & Singh, 2022). The affective strategy category warrants cautious interpretation, since one item in this category was negatively worded and the source data did not permit independent verification of whether this item had been reverse-scored prior to the computation of the category mean; the significant correlations involving affective strategies discussed later in this section should therefore be read in light of this scoring limitation.

The assessment of vocabulary mastery across the five word levels revealed substantial gaps, particularly at the foundational and intermediate bands. At the 1000-word level, only 69 participants, or 41.57%, met the mastery criterion, while 97 participants, or 58.43%, did not, yielding a mean score of 26.18, interpreted as not mastered. At the 2000-word level, 62 participants, or 37.35%, were classified as having mastered the level, while 104 participants, or 62.65%, had not, with a mean score of 24.77, likewise interpreted as not mastered. The 3000-word level showed the most pronounced deficit, with only 26 participants, or 15.66%, meeting the mastery criterion and 140 participants, or 84.34%, failing to do so, corresponding to a mean score of 22.39 and an interpretation of not mastered; this level therefore contained the largest proportion of participants classified as not having achieved mastery. At the 4000-word level, 85 participants, or 51.20%, met the reported mastery cutoff, while 81 participants, or 48.80%, did not, producing a mean score of 21.48, interpreted as not mastered. At the 5000-word level, 80 participants, or 48.19%, met the cutoff, while 86 participants, or 51.81%, did not, yielding a mean score of 20.70, also interpreted as not mastered. Although the proportions classified as mastered appear numerically higher at the 4000 and 5000 word levels than at the 3000-word level, this pattern must not be read as evidence that participants performed better on more advanced vocabulary, since the upper levels applied a lower mastery cutoff while the mean scores continued to decline steadily from 26.18 at the 1000-word level to 20.70 at the 5000-word level. The more defensible conclusion is that average performance remained below the mastery threshold at every word level examined. These word bands, particularly the 1000- and 2000-word levels, contain vocabulary essential for basic reading comprehension and for the transition toward more varied academic language use, and weakness at these levels may

constrain the speed and accuracy with which learners process texts, follow classroom discourse, and articulate ideas. This pattern is consistent with the position that vocabulary knowledge develops cumulatively, such that gaps in high-frequency words can restrict subsequent lexical growth and overall comprehension (Nation, 2021, 2022; Read, 2021; Schmitt & Schmitt, 2022), and it supports a pedagogical emphasis on systematic progression that prioritizes frequent words, recycles them across varied texts and tasks, and gradually extends learners toward more advanced word families, while simultaneously developing both breadth of vocabulary knowledge and depth, encompassing form, meaning, collocation, grammatical behavior, and appropriate contextual use.

Spearman rank-order correlation was used to examine the relationship between the fifteen vocabulary learning strategy categories and vocabulary scores at each of the five word levels, tested at an alpha level of .05. The results showed that the majority of these relationships were weak and statistically non-significant, leading to retention of the null hypothesis for nearly all tested pairs. No strategy category demonstrated a statistically significant relationship with vocabulary scores at the 1000-word, 2000-word, or 3000-word levels, indicating that self-reported frequency of strategy use was not measurably associated with mastery at these foundational bands. At the 4000-word level, affective strategy use demonstrated a statistically significant weak positive relationship with vocabulary score, with a Spearman rho of 0.17 and a p value of 0.028, falling below the 0.05 alpha level and thereby warranting rejection of the null hypothesis for this specific relationship. At the 5000-word level, dictionary use showed a statistically significant weak positive relationship with vocabulary score, with a Spearman rho of 0.16 and a p value of 0.043, also below the 0.05 alpha level and likewise warranting rejection of the null hypothesis. Affective strategy use again demonstrated a significant relationship at the 5000-word level, and in fact produced the strongest coefficient recorded across the entire correlation matrix, with a Spearman rho of 0.23 and a p value of 0.003, well below the 0.05 threshold, again warranting rejection of the null hypothesis, although the relationship remained weak in magnitude despite its statistical significance. All other tested relationships across the fifteen strategy categories and five word levels did not reach statistical significance, and the null hypothesis was retained in each of those instances. The absence of significant relationships across most strategies does not indicate that these strategies were ineffective; rather, the questionnaire measured how frequently learners reported using each strategy rather than the accuracy, consistency, or combined application of these strategies in practice. It is also plausible that learners experiencing greater vocabulary difficulty reported more frequent use of certain strategies precisely because of that difficulty, a pattern that could produce weak or even negative correlations, and because the design employed was correlational in nature, the direction of influence between strategy use and vocabulary mastery cannot be established from these data alone. The pattern of significant findings, limited to affective strategies at the 4000 and 5000 word levels and to dictionary use at the 5000-word level, suggests nonetheless that persistence, emotional regulation, and careful, informed consultation of reference tools may become increasingly relevant as vocabulary demands intensify, a finding that resonates with existing research emphasizing motivation, self-regulation, and strategic dictionary use in more advanced stages of vocabulary learning (Xu, 2021; Zuhairi & Musthar, 2023). Taken together, these results reveal a gap between the frequency with which strategies were reportedly used and the level of vocabulary mastery actually achieved, suggesting that learners may be familiar with numerous techniques without receiving sufficient guidance on when to apply them, how to evaluate their effectiveness, or how to transfer newly learned vocabulary into authentic reading and communicative contexts.

In direct response to the low vocabulary mastery levels observed, the moderate use of several key strategy categories, and the significant relationships identified for dictionary use and affective strategies, a proposed plan of action was developed to guide systematic instruction, repeated practice, learner self-regulation, and continuous monitoring throughout the school year. The plan is anchored on a literacy intervention program intended to raise mastery across all five vocabulary levels through collaborative planning among language teachers, Learning Action Cell sessions focused on vocabulary instruction, and the implementation of a school-wide literacy program with level-based targets, to be carried out year-round under the coordination of the school head, department head, reading coordinator, and language teachers, with the expected output of an approved literacy program accompanied by periodic vocabulary progress reports. A second component targets foundational vocabulary and dictionary skills, aiming to improve mastery specifically at the 1000- to 3000-word levels and to strengthen accurate dictionary use by integrating dictionary skills instruction, personalized word lists, word-family analysis, contextual examples, and short retrieval practice into lesson plans from July 2025 to May 2026, under the responsibility of the department head and language teachers, with SQAT-approved activities, lesson plans, and learner vocabulary portfolios as expected outputs. A third component addresses application and retention, seeking to increase meaningful use and long-term retention of newly learned words through spaced-repetition cards or applications, sentence creation, short writing exercises, oral practice, peer teaching, games, and quizzes, likewise scheduled from July 2025 to May 2026 and involving teachers and learners using mobile or printed learning tools, with the expected outcome of integrated vocabulary tasks and improved periodic Vocabulary Levels Test scores. A fourth component focuses specifically on the word-list strategy, given its status as the lowest-rated category, aiming to make word-list practice more portable and regular through the creation of compact vocabulary cards or digital lists as a learner-parent performance task accompanied by weekly review and retrieval checks, to be initiated at the beginning of the school year and sustained weekly thereafter, producing a submitted vocabulary card set or digital deck along with a review log. A fifth component provides affective and self-regulation support, responding directly to the significant correlations found for this category, and is designed to strengthen persistence, confidence, and coping during difficult vocabulary tasks through regular brief consultations, goal-setting instruction, self-monitoring techniques, break-and-return routines, and positive self-instruction, to be conducted monthly and as needed by teachers, advisers, and parents, yielding anecdotal records, learner goals, and self-monitoring sheets. The final component addresses association and word structure, aiming to improve meaning-based connections and morphological analysis through semantic maps, word families, cognate comparisons where appropriate, and instruction in prefixes, roots, suffixes, and association games, to be implemented year-round by language teachers and resulting in lesson plans that embed association and morphology activities.

Taken as a whole, the findings of this study demonstrate that the Grade 11 participants reported active and varied use of vocabulary learning strategies, ranging from moderate to great extent across all fifteen categories, yet this reported engagement did not correspond to adequate vocabulary mastery, as average performance remained below the mastery threshold at every word level from 1000 to 5000 words, with the 3000-word level exhibiting the most severe deficit at 84.34% not mastered. The correlational analysis further revealed that strategy use, as measured by self-reported frequency, was largely unrelated to vocabulary scores, with the sole exceptions being affective strategies at the 4000-word level, dictionary use at the 5000-word level, and affective strategies again at the 5000-word level, all of which were statistically significant yet weak in magnitude. These results collectively address the study's objectives by establishing the extent of strategy use, quantifying the depth of vocabulary gaps across frequency bands, and clarifying the limited but meaningful role of specific strategies,

particularly affective regulation and dictionary consultation, as vocabulary demands increase. The findings contribute to the broader field of vocabulary acquisition by underscoring that breadth of strategy exposure alone is insufficient without explicit instruction in strategic quality, monitoring, and integrated application, and they provide empirical grounding for the proposed plan of action, which combines teacher collaboration, level-based targets, dictionary and morphological instruction, contextual and spaced practice, peer learning, and affective support. The observable products called for under this plan, including lesson plans, vocabulary portfolios, progress assessments, consultation records, and periodic reviews of mastery rates, establish a basis for the school to determine whether the interventions produce measurable gains in vocabulary mastery rather than increased instructional activity alone, and this framework sets the stage for the subsequent chapter, which addresses the summary of findings, conclusions drawn from the study, and recommendations for practice and future research.

CONCLUSION

Grade 11 students at Salinungan Stand-Alone Senior High School reported moderate to great use of a broad range of vocabulary learning strategies, relying most strongly on oral repetition, dictionary consultation, technology, contextual learning, note-taking, and activation. Despite this reported strategy use, their mean vocabulary scores did not meet the adopted mastery criteria at any of the five word levels examined, with the largest concentration of non-mastery occurring at the 3000-word level and mean scores declining progressively across higher word bands, indicating increasing difficulty as lexical frequency decreased. This pattern suggests that while students were generally aware of and employed various strategies to support vocabulary acquisition, such engagement did not translate into measurable command of the target vocabulary at any proficiency band.

Further analysis revealed that most vocabulary learning strategy categories were not significantly related to vocabulary scores. Significant weak positive relationships were limited specifically to affective strategies at the 4000- and 5000-word levels and to dictionary use at the 5000-word level. Taken together, these results indicate that the frequency with which students reported using strategies did not, by itself, account for their level of vocabulary mastery. Rather, the findings point to the importance of strategy quality, correct application, learner persistence, and systematic instruction as factors that likely mediate the relationship between strategy use and vocabulary outcomes. This distinction between merely employing a strategy and applying it effectively underscores the need for pedagogical approaches that go beyond encouraging frequent strategy use toward ensuring that such use is purposeful and well-executed.

In light of these findings, a proposed plan of action was developed to prioritize foundational vocabulary development, explicit instruction in dictionary and word-analysis skills, contextual application, spaced retrieval, self-regulation, and continuous monitoring, with implementation intended to focus on measurable gains in vocabulary scores and classroom language performance. Building on this framework, it is recommended that language teachers provide explicit instruction on how and when to combine contextual guessing, word-part analysis, dictionary verification, note-taking, and retrieval practice, since strategy quality rather than mere frequency appears central to vocabulary mastery. The school should likewise prioritize mastery of the 1000- to 3000-word levels through a structured, year-round vocabulary program supported by baseline, quarterly, and end-of-year assessments, given that non-mastery was most pronounced at these foundational levels. Continued use of digital tools is encouraged, provided that such activities require demonstrable evidence of learning, including example

sentences, oral use, short writing, and delayed recall, rather than simple dictionary lookup, which alone was insufficient to produce mastery. Given the weak but significant relationship observed between affective strategies and vocabulary scores at the upper word levels, affective and self-regulation support should be incorporated through learner goals, progress monitoring, brief consultations, and routines for managing difficulty and returning to unfinished vocabulary tasks. At the institutional level, the language department should implement the proposed plan through Learning Action Cell sessions, common lesson resources, peer observation, and periodic review of vocabulary results, thereby embedding these recommendations within ongoing instructional practice rather than treating them as isolated interventions. Before final academic submission or replication, the researcher should verify the official Vocabulary Levels Test cut-off scores and confirm that the negatively worded affective item was reverse-scored correctly, since the integrity of these measurement decisions directly affects the validity of the reported outcomes. Future studies should examine strategy quality, motivation, exposure to English, and classroom practices using mixed methods or intervention designs, and may also extend this inquiry by comparing strands, grade levels, or schools to determine the broader applicability of these findings.

These conclusions and recommendations should nonetheless be interpreted within the boundaries of the study's limitations. The reliance on self-reported strategy frequency may not accurately reflect learners' actual behavior, and the study's conduct within a single school using a cross-sectional correlational design constrains both the generalizability of the findings and the extent to which causal interpretations can be drawn. Additionally, the original manuscript contained inconsistent mastery cut-offs for the 4000- and 5000-word levels and did not provide raw data for independent verification of reverse scoring in the affective scale. Although the revised manuscript applied the cut-offs used in the reported frequency table and retained the reported category mean, both should be checked against the original dataset and scoring manual to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the conclusions drawn.

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