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Vocabulary instruction strategies in relation to the lexical competence of English majors

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ABSTRACT

This survey-correlational research was conducted to determine the relationship between vocabulary instruction strategies and the lexical competence of English majors of Capiz State University, specifically from the Main Campus, Burias Campus, and Pontevedra Campus, for the academic year 2025–2026. The participants of the study were 153 randomly selected third-year and fourth-year Bachelor of Secondary Education major in English students from the three campuses, Main, Burias, and Pontevedra campus. In measuring the relationship between vocabulary instruction strategies and the lexical competence of students, a 24-item adopted-modified 5-point scale Vocabulary Instruction Strategies Questionnaire and a 50-item adopted-modified lexical competence test consisting of multiple-choice and fill-in-the-blank items were used. Data were collected through surveys and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, including mean, standard deviation, and Pearson r, with all inferential tests set at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that the overall level of vocabulary instruction strategies utilized in the classroom, as perceived by the English majors, was "very high". Similarly, the overall level of the dimensions of vocabulary instruction strategies was "very high". Also, the overall level of lexical competence of the English majors was high. However, among its dimensions, Lexical Depth and Collocation obtained the lowest ratings and were described as moderate. Finally, the findings revealed a significant but weak positive relationship between vocabulary instruction strategies and lexical competence.

Keywords: Vocabulary instruction, lexical competence, English major students.

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INTRODUCTION

English proficiency is an essential competency for academic success, professional development, and effective communication in today's globalized society. As future educators and language professionals, English majors are expected to develop a high level of language competence that enables them to communicate effectively, comprehend academic texts, conduct research, and use English appropriately in various educational and professional contexts. Achieving these expectations requires proficiency in the four macro language skills as well as the language components that support effective communication.

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Among these language components, vocabulary plays a fundamental role in English language competence. A rich vocabulary enables learners to comprehend texts, express ideas accurately, and participate effectively in academic and professional discourse. Without adequate vocabulary knowledge, learners may struggle to understand information, convey meaning, and communicate effectively despite having grammatical knowledge. Consequently, vocabulary development remains a crucial aspect of language learning and communicative competence (Salam & Nurnisa, 2021).

A key aspect of vocabulary development is lexical competence, which refers to learners' ability to understand, interpret, and appropriately use words in different communicative contexts. It extends beyond knowing word meanings to include knowledge of word forms, semantic relationships, and contextual usage (Webb & Nation, 2017). However, many English language learners continue to experience vocabulary-related difficulties that affect their speaking, reading comprehension, writing, and overall language proficiency (Humaera, 2023). These challenges highlight the need for effective vocabulary instruction, particularly for English majors preparing to become future English language educators.

To enhance lexical competence, educators have increasingly adopted learner-centered vocabulary instructional approaches that promote contextual learning, interaction, and active participation (Erytis, 2026). Research indicates that contextualized and collaborative vocabulary instruction improves learners' retention and application of new words more effectively than rote memorization (Mohammad and Chen, 2025). Among the commonly used instructional strategies are determination, cognitive, social, and memory strategies, which encourage learners to discover word meanings independently, practice and organize vocabulary, learn through interaction, and retain vocabulary through meaningful associations (Schmitt & Schmitt, 2020).

The effectiveness of these instructional strategies may be reflected in learners' lexical competence. In this study, lexical competence is examined through lexical breadth, lexical depth and collocation, and morphological awareness. Lexical breadth refers to the number of words a learner knows, lexical depth and collocation pertain to the quality of vocabulary knowledge and contextual word use (Read, 2000), and morphological awareness involves recognizing and analyzing meaningful word parts, such as roots, prefixes, and suffixes. Together, these dimensions provide a comprehensive understanding of learners' vocabulary knowledge and their ability to use language effectively in academic and communicative contexts.

Within the Philippine educational context, English language instruction continues to face challenges such as limited instructional resources and learning materials, which may affect the quality of vocabulary instruction (Bai, 2023). For English majors, developing strong lexical competence is particularly important because they are expected to become future English language teachers who can communicate effectively and facilitate vocabulary learning in the classroom.

Despite the recognized importance of vocabulary instruction, many English learners continue to experience difficulties in developing adequate lexical competence. Limited vocabulary knowledge affects learners' speaking, reading, writing, and overall language proficiency (Largo and Bautista, 2024). Moreover, Macabunlas and Sapan (2025) found that even English majors encounter challenges in understanding nuanced meanings, collocations, and context-dependent vocabulary despite years of English language exposure.

Although previous studies have established the importance of vocabulary instruction and lexical competence, these variables have largely been examined independently. Limited research has investigated the relationship between vocabulary instructional strategies and the lexical competence of English majors, particularly in terms of lexical breadth, lexical depth and collocation, and morphological awareness. This gap provides the basis for the present

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study, which seeks to determine whether vocabulary instructional strategies are significantly related to the lexical competence of English majors.

The present study is anchored on theories that explain how learners acquire vocabulary and develop lexical competence through effective instructional practices. It is primarily based on Schmitt's (1997) Vocabulary Learning Strategy Taxonomy, which explains that learners acquire vocabulary through a variety of learning strategies, including determination, cognitive, social, and memory strategies. These strategies help learners discover, understand, practice, retain, and appropriately use new words. This theory served as the foundation of the study's independent variable, vocabulary instructional strategies, as it supports the four dimensions examined in the study: determination, cognitive, social, and memory strategies.

The study is further supported by Nation's Framework of Vocabulary Knowledge (2013), which explains that vocabulary knowledge is a multidimensional construct involving knowledge of a word's form, meaning, and use, developed through meaningful language exposure and use (Webb & Nation, 2017). This theory provides the foundation for understanding the development of learners' lexical competence and supports the study's premise that effective vocabulary instruction contributes to the acquisition and appropriate use of vocabulary.

In addition, the study draws on Read's (2000) Dimensions of Vocabulary Knowledge, which proposes that vocabulary knowledge consists of two essential dimensions: lexical breadth, referring to the number of words a learner knows, and lexical depth and collocation, referring to how well those words are understood and appropriately used. This theory provides the theoretical basis for the lexical breadth and lexical depth and collocation dimensions measured under the study's dependent variable, lexical competence. Together, these theories provide the theoretical foundation for examining the relationship between vocabulary instructional strategies and the lexical competence of English majors and serve as the basis for the study's conceptual framework.

With these, the researcher believed that there is need to conduct this study to examine how instructional strategies contribute to learners' lexical development, particularly among English majors who are expected to demonstrate higher levels of language proficiency. With these considerations, the researcher believes that this study is necessary to determine the effectiveness of vocabulary instructional strategies in relation to the lexical competence of English majors.

Statement of the problem

This study was conducted to determine the relationship between vocabulary instruction strategies and the lexical competence of English majors of Capiz State University, specifically from the Main Campus, Burias Campus, and Pontevedra Campus, for the academic year 2025–2026.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following:

1. What is the level of vocabulary instruction strategies utilized in the classroom as perceived by the English majors as a whole and in terms of determination strategies, cognitive Strategies, social strategies, and memory strategies?
2. What is the level of lexical competence of the students as a whole and in terms of lexical breadth, lexical depth and collocation, and morphological awareness of English majors?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the level of vocabulary instruction strategies and the lexical competence of English majors?

4. What pedagogical framework for lexical integration can be drawn from the results of this study?

METHODOLOGY

The main purpose of the study was to determine the relationship between the vocabulary instruction strategies and the lexical competence of English major students in Capiz State University for the academic year 2025-2026. The study utilized the survey-correlational method of research because it aimed to determine the levels of vocabulary instruction strategies and lexical competence among third- and fourth-year Bachelor of Secondary Education English majors and to examine the relationship between the two variables without manipulating them. The survey method was used because it enabled the researcher to gather data directly from the respondents regarding their perceived level of vocabulary instruction strategies and their level of lexical competence. Survey research involves the systematic collection of data from respondents through questionnaires to describe or measure specific variables (Creswell, 2018). The correlational design was used because the study sought to determine whether a significant relationship existed between vocabulary instruction strategies and lexical competence as they naturally occurred, without manipulating or controlling either variable. Correlational research examines the association or relationship between two or more variables (Cohen et al., 2018). The independent variable in this study was the vocabulary instructional strategies, while the dependent variable was the lexical competence of 3rd and 4th year English majors. The statistical tools used in the descriptive data analyses were mean and standard deviation, while in the inferential data analyses, the Pearson r was used. All inferential tests were set at the 0.05 alpha level of significance.

The participants of this study were 153 students randomly selected from a population of 248 3rd and 4th year Bachelor of Secondary Education English majors of Capiz State University from Main Campus, Burias Campus, and Pontevedra Campus for the school year 2025-2026. The sample size was determined using Taro Yamane's formula. The participants were selected through stratified proportional random sampling using a manual lottery method. The population was first grouped according to campus location: Roxas City Campus, Burias Campus, and Pontevedra Campus. Proportional allocation was then used to determine the required number of participants from each campus based on its respective population size. After determining the required number of participants for each campus, the eligible students were assigned individual identification numbers. Each identification number was written on a uniform slip of paper, and the slips for each campus were placed in separate containers. The slips were thoroughly mixed, and the researcher randomly drew slips without looking until the required number of participants for each campus was reached. Students whose identification numbers were drawn were included as participants in the study. This manual lottery method provided each eligible student with an equal opportunity to be selected while maintaining the required sample distribution across the three campuses.

The proportional allocation of the sample size in each campus, determined using the Taro Yamane formula and distributed based on the population of 3rd and 4th year English majors in each campus, showed that Main Campus had a population of 146 and a sample of 90, composed of 46 third year and 44 fourth year students. Burias Campus had a population of 61 and a sample of 38, composed of 22 third year and 16 fourth year students. Pontevedra Campus had a population of 41 and a sample of 25, composed of 9 third year and 16 fourth year students. In total, the population was 248 and the sample was 153, composed of 77 third year and 76 fourth year students.

The personal profile of the English major students in terms of age, sex, year level, campus, and type of high school graduated from was also examined. Data revealed that out of

the 153 participants, 3 or 2.0% were 19 years old and below, 109 or 71.2% were 20-21 years old, and 41 or 26.8% were 22 years old and above. In terms of sex, 25 or 16.3% were male, 124 or 81.0% were female, and 4 or 2.6% preferred not to say. Students' year level showed that 75 or 49.0% were third year and 78 or 51.0% were fourth year. In terms of campus, 90 or 58.8% were from Roxas City Campus, 38 or 24.8% were from Burias Campus, and 25 or 16.3% were from Pontevedra Campus. The type of high school the students graduated from showed that 141 or 92.2% were from public school and 12 or 7.8% were from private school. Altogether, these profiles accounted for the 153 participants, or 100.0% of the sample.

The study utilized two data-gathering instruments to obtain the necessary data for the identified variables. The first instrument measured the level of vocabulary instruction strategies, while the second assessed the lexical competence of the respondents. For the first, a 24-item adopted-modified vocabulary instruction strategies questionnaire based on Schmitt's (1997) Vocabulary Learning Strategy Taxonomy was used to measure the level of vocabulary instruction strategies utilized in the classroom as perceived by 3rd and 4th year Bachelor of Secondary Education English majors. The questionnaire was divided into four dimensions: Determination Strategies (Items 1–6), Cognitive Strategies (Items 7–12), Social Strategies (Items 13–18), and Memory Strategies (Items 19–24). Each dimension consisted of six items intended to assess the respective aspects of vocabulary instruction strategies utilized in the classroom. Using a five-point Likert scale, each item was answered with any of the following responses: a score of 5 corresponded to Always, 4 to Often, 3 to Sometimes, 2 to Rarely, and 1 to Never. For the descriptive interpretation of vocabulary instructional strategies, mean scores of 4.21 – 5.00 were interpreted as Very High, 3.41 – 4.20 as High, 2.61 – 3.40 as Moderate, 1.81 – 2.60 as Low, and 1.00 – 1.80 as Very Low.

For the second instrument, a 50-item adopted-modified lexical competence test consisting of multiple-choice and fill-in-the-blank items was used. The test was based on the framework of Nation (2012) for lexical breadth and Read (2000) for lexical depth and collocation. It covered four dimensions of lexical competence: Lexical Breadth (Items 1-20), Lexical Depth and Collocation (Items 21-35), and Morphological Awareness (Items 36-50). The items were distributed across the four dimensions to assess the respondents' vocabulary knowledge in terms of the range of words known, depth of word knowledge, awareness of word formation, and knowledge of appropriate word combinations. The total scores were classified as follows: scores of 40.01 – 50.00 were described as Very High, 30.01 – 40.00 as High, 20.01 – 30.00 as Moderate, 10.01 – 20.00 as Low, and 0.00 – 10.00 as Very Low.

After the content validation, the instruments were tested on 30 Bachelor of Secondary Education English majors of Capiz State University, Main Campus, who were not included as participants in the study. The result of the pilot-testing was used in determining the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient in order to establish the questionnaire's reliability using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The result of the pilot-testing revealed a Cronbach's alpha of 0.827. According to Gay, Mills, and Airasian (2012), the instrument is considered reliable if the reliability coefficient is 0.70 or above, which indicates that the vocabulary instruction strategies questionnaire was reliable. The performance test was likewise pilot-tested by 30 Bachelor of Secondary Education English majors of Capiz State University, Main Campus, who were not included as participants in the study, and it underwent item-analysis. Items with a difficulty index ranging from 0.20 to 0.80 were considered acceptable, whereas items with values below 0.20 or above 0.80 were reviewed and revised. Moreover, items with a discrimination index of 0.20 or higher were considered acceptable for retention, while those with discrimination indices below 0.20 were revised or discarded. Based on the results of the item analysis, the necessary revisions were made to improve the clarity and

appropriateness of the identified items. All 50 items were retained and used in the final administration of the lexical test.

Prior to the conduct of the study, the researcher secured authorization from the University President. Upon approval, the authorization letter was forwarded to the School Administrators of the three participating campuses for proper coordination and approval to conduct the study. After obtaining permission from the School Administrators, the researcher coordinated with the respective Deans of the participating campuses. After the necessary permissions were obtained, the researcher coordinated with the respective Program Chairs and English instructors to facilitate the distribution of the Google Forms link to the selected 3rd and 4th year Bachelor of Secondary Education English majors. Where possible, the researcher provided an orientation regarding the purpose, objectives, and procedures of the study; however, participants who could not be reached personally were provided with the necessary information through the Google Form and the assistance of their instructors or class representatives.

Participation was voluntary, and participants were informed of their right to decline or withdraw from the study at any time without consequences. In compliance with Republic Act No. 10173, or the Data Privacy Act of 2012, participants were assured that their identities and responses would be kept confidential and used solely for academic and research purposes. The first section of the Google Form contained the informed consent form, which explained the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, the voluntary nature of participation, and the participants' rights. Participants were required to read the consent information and indicate their agreement before proceeding to the questionnaire and lexical competence test. The Google Form allowed participants to complete the research instruments within the designated data collection period, whether they were reached personally or through the coordinated distribution of the survey link. After the participants submitted their responses, the researcher reviewed the collected data for completeness. The responses were then compiled, organized, and prepared for statistical analysis using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Throughout the data collection and analysis process, all collected information was handled with strict confidentiality and used exclusively for the purposes of the study.

The gathered data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The mean was used to determine the perceived level of vocabulary instruction strategies and the average score in the lexical competence test. The standard deviation was used to determine the variability of students' responses in terms of vocabulary instruction strategies and lexical competence. The Pearson r, set at the .05 alpha level of significance, was used to determine the relationship between vocabulary instruction strategies and lexical competence among English major students. All inferential tests were set at the 5% alpha level of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents and interprets the data gathered from 153 third and fourth year Bachelor of Secondary Education English majors of Capiz State University for the school year 2025-2026. These participants were drawn from a population of 248 students across the Main Campus, Burias Campus, and Pontevedra Campus. The study employed a survey-correlational research design, which made it possible to examine the levels of vocabulary instruction strategies and lexical competence, and the relationship between them, without manipulating either variable. The participants were selected through stratified proportional random sampling using a manual lottery method, with the sample size determined through Taro Yamane's formula. Data were collected through a 24-item adopted-modified vocabulary instruction strategies questionnaire based on Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy, which yielded a Cronbach's

alpha of 0.827 during pilot testing, and a 50-item adopted-modified lexical competence test based on the frameworks of Nation (2012) and Read (2000). The data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation for the descriptive analyses and the Pearson r for the inferential analysis, with all inferential tests set at the 0.05 alpha level of significance. The discussion is grounded in the data gathered, and the results are interpreted in direct relation to the objectives of the study, namely to determine the levels of vocabulary instruction strategies and lexical competence and to establish the relationship between the two.

Profile of the participants

Of the 153 participants, 3 or 2.0% were 19 years old and below, 109 or 71.2% were 20 to 21 years old, and 41 or 26.8% were 22 years old and above. In terms of sex, 25 or 16.3% were male, 124 or 81.0% were female, and 4 or 2.6% preferred not to say. By year level, 75 or 49.0% were third year students and 78 or 51.0% were fourth year students. By campus, 90 or 58.8% were from the Main Campus, 38 or 24.8% were from the Burias Campus, and 25 or 16.3% were from the Pontevedra Campus. As to the type of high school graduated from, 141 or 92.2% came from public schools and 12 or 7.8% from private schools. This distribution shows a sample composed mostly of young adult, female, public school graduates, with a near-even split between the two-year levels and a distribution across campuses that reflects the proportional allocation of the sample.

Vocabulary instruction strategies utilized in the classroom

The level of vocabulary instruction strategies utilized in the classroom, as perceived by the English majors, was Very High (M = 4.33, SD = 0.55), based on the interpretive scale in which 4.21 to 5.00 is Very High. All four dimensions were likewise at the Very High level. Determination Strategies obtained the highest rating (M = 4.44, SD = 0.56), followed by Social Strategies (M = 4.33, SD = 0.62) and Cognitive Strategies (M = 4.26, SD = 0.59), while Memory Strategies obtained the lowest rating (M = 4.25, SD = 0.66). The Very High overall rating implies that vocabulary instruction strategies are extensively used in the classroom and that teachers regularly employ varied techniques to help students learn new words. The low standard deviation indicates that most students gave similar responses, suggesting a shared view that such strategies are widely used. This result affirms the premise of Nation (2024) that vocabulary learning develops through intentional learning, incidental learning, and repeated exposure to words in meaningful contexts, and it suggests that students are exposed to many opportunities for vocabulary growth.

The Very High rating for Determination Strategies (M = 4.44, SD = 0.56) suggests that students are frequently encouraged to determine the meanings of unfamiliar words independently through context clues, word analysis, dictionaries, and other word-solving techniques. This implies that teachers focus on helping students become independent and critical learners. The result conforms with Usmonova (2020), who noted that lexical competence involves understanding word meanings and word formation processes, which determination strategies help learners accomplish on their own.

The Very High rating for Social Strategies (M = 4.33, SD = 0.62) implies that collaborative learning activities and peer interactions are commonly employed to enhance vocabulary learning. It also indicates that students perceive classroom instruction as helping them participate actively and use vocabulary in meaningful ways. This supports Caro and Mendinueta (2017), who held that language competence extends beyond grammar to

meaningful communication in social contexts, where collaborative learning gives learners opportunities to negotiate meaning and develop vocabulary through interaction.

The Very High rating for Cognitive Strategies (M = 4.26, SD = 0.59) implies that students commonly use mental and learning processes such as note-taking, repetition, summarization, vocabulary exercises, and contextual analysis to understand and retain new words. This suggests that teachers' encouragement leads to active processing of vocabulary and a deeper understanding of word meanings and usage. The finding affirms Teng (2024), who reported that metacognitive and vocabulary strategy instruction significantly improved learners' lexical depth, collocation, and morphological awareness. It also supports Read (2023), who observed that vocabulary knowledge develops when learners engage actively with words beyond simple recognition.

Memory Strategies obtained the lowest mean (M = 4.25, SD = 0.66), yet this remained at the Very High level. This implies that techniques such as associating new words with prior knowledge, using mnemonic devices, and repeated review are also widely practiced, and that teachers give students opportunities to strengthen vocabulary retention for long-term recall. The finding affirms Elgort and Brysbaert (2026), who found that lexical depth and collocation develop through repeated exposure to words and their meaningful use across contexts. It further suggests that learners strengthen their vocabulary knowledge when they repeatedly encounter, recall, and apply words in authentic communicative situations. Overall, the level of vocabulary instruction strategies utilized in the classroom, as perceived by the Bachelor of Secondary Education English students, was Very High.

Lexical competence of English majors

The level of lexical competence of the English majors was High (M = 30.89, SD = 8.01), based on the scale in which 30.01 to 40.00 is High. Among the three dimensions, Lexical Breadth obtained the highest level (M = 14.70, SD = 3.93) and was described as High. Morphological Awareness followed (M = 9.71, SD = 2.96), also described as High, while Lexical Depth and Collocation obtained the lowest level (M = 6.48, SD = 2.91) and was described as Moderate. The overall High rating implies that students have adequate vocabulary knowledge and can understand and use words effectively in various academic and communicative contexts. The standard deviation indicates some variation among students, although overall performance remained within the High category. This supports Din and Ghani (2018), who argued that lexical competence is fundamental to linguistic competence because it directly influences listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and that sufficient lexical knowledge enables learners to participate more effectively in language use and academic communication.

The High level in Lexical Breadth (M = 14.70, SD = 3.93) indicates that students have a broad vocabulary and can recognize and understand a considerable number of words, which suggests a strong foundation for reading comprehension, communication, and academic learning. This supports Paniagua-Legaspi (2018), who found that receptive vocabulary size significantly predicts academic reading comprehension among higher education students. It is also consistent with earlier studies reporting that learners need to reach certain vocabulary-size thresholds to comprehend academic texts successfully, since students with larger vocabularies generally experience fewer difficulties in reading and learning (Laufer, 2023).

The High level in Morphological Awareness (M = 9.71, SD = 2.96) indicates that students generally recognize and analyze word structures such as roots, prefixes, and suffixes. They can use their understanding of word parts to infer the meanings of new words and expand their vocabulary independently, which also improves their overall language skills. This result supports Kieffer and Box (2018), who found that morphological awareness significantly

contributes to reading comprehension because learners can analyze word structures to derive meaning. It also supports De Leon and Castillo (2022), who showed that explicit strategy instruction improved the morphological awareness and vocabulary depth of Filipino pre-service teachers.

Lexical Depth and Collocation, however, was only Moderate (M = 6.48, SD = 2.91). Although students performed satisfactorily in this dimension, the result suggests greater difficulty with nuanced word meanings, word associations, collocations, and the appropriate use of vocabulary across contexts. This implies that while students know many words, their understanding of how those words relate to one another and function in authentic language use is less developed than their vocabulary size. The result agrees with Abdul (2018), who found that English majors performed strongly in context clues and word formation but less well in idioms, which points to limitations in deeper vocabulary knowledge. It also conforms with Al-Ghazo (2023), who described a breadth-depth disconnect among pre-service English majors, who have substantial vocabulary size but weaker depth of vocabulary knowledge. Overall, the lexical competence of the Bachelor of Secondary Education English students was High, although Lexical Depth and Collocation obtained the lowest rating and was described as Moderate.

Relationship between vocabulary instruction strategies and lexical competence

The Pearson r was used to test the relationship between vocabulary instruction strategies and lexical competence at the 0.05 level of significance. The computed correlation coefficient was r = 0.183 with a significance value of p = 0.023, which is lower than the 0.05 alpha level and therefore significant at the 5% level. The null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between vocabulary instruction strategies and lexical competence is therefore rejected. The correlation indicates a weak positive relationship, meaning that higher levels of vocabulary instruction strategies are associated with higher levels of lexical competence among the English majors. Although the relationship is weak, it is statistically significant.

This finding suggests that vocabulary instruction strategies may be associated with the development of learners' lexical knowledge. Exposure to word-discovery activities, cognitive strategies, collaborative learning experiences, and memory-based techniques may give learners opportunities to encounter, process, practice, and retain vocabulary. However, the weak correlation also suggests that vocabulary instruction strategies alone do not sufficiently explain differences in lexical competence. Other factors, such as reading habits, language exposure, motivation, academic experiences, and individual learning strategies, may also be associated with lexical development. The finding is consistent with Zeng et al. (2025), who emphasized the role of effective vocabulary instruction in developing morphological awareness through explicit teaching of word formation, affixes, and structural analysis. It also aligns with De Leon and Castillo (2022), who found that structured vocabulary instruction can support understanding of word formation and deeper lexical knowledge, and with Teng (2023), who reported that students who actively use vocabulary learning strategies demonstrate stronger vocabulary knowledge.

The Strategic Lexical Integration framework

Based on the significant relationship and the lexical gaps identified in the data, the Strategic Lexical Integration (SLI) Framework was developed, guided by Schmitt (1997),

Nation (2013), and Read (2000). It has four interconnected components: Input, Strategic Lexical Processing, Output, and Outcome. The Input comprises the four vocabulary instruction strategies. Determination strategies foster independence through context clues, dictionary use, and word analysis. Cognitive strategies promote active processing through repetition, note-taking, and classifying words. Social strategies build vocabulary through discussions, group tasks, and teacher guidance. Memory strategies support retention through visualization, mnemonics, semantic mapping, and word associations. The mediating component, Strategic Lexical Processing, consists of four stages. In Engage, learners develop interest in unfamiliar words. In Process, they analyze meanings and relationships among words. In Apply, they use new vocabulary in authentic speaking, writing, reading, and collaborative tasks. In Reflect, they review words, monitor progress, and take responsibility for their learning. The Output is lexical competence, reflected in lexical breadth, lexical depth, and morphological awareness. The Outcome is enhanced communicative competence and teaching readiness, which includes better expression, effective academic communication, confident language use, a stronger teaching foundation, effective vocabulary teaching, and professional growth. The framework treats vocabulary instruction as a purposeful and continuous process and provides a practical guide for designing instruction that promotes both language proficiency and professional readiness.

Synthesis

Taken together, the data from the 153 participants show that vocabulary instruction strategies were perceived as Very High overall ($M = 4.33$, $SD = 0.55$), with Determination Strategies highest ($M = 4.44$, $SD = 0.56$) and Memory Strategies lowest ($M = 4.25$, $SD = 0.66$). Lexical competence was High ($M = 30.89$, $SD = 8.01$), with Lexical Breadth ($M = 14.70$, $SD = 3.93$) and Morphological Awareness ($M = 9.71$, $SD = 2.96$) at the High level and Lexical Depth and Collocation ($M = 6.48$, $SD = 2.91$) at the Moderate level. The Pearson r ($r = 0.183$, $p = 0.023$) showed a significant but weak positive relationship at the 0.05 level, leading to rejection of the null hypothesis. These results address the objectives of the study by establishing the levels of both variables and the relationship between them. They contribute to the literature by showing that strong strategy use accompanies strong vocabulary size and word-structure knowledge but not equally strong depth of word knowledge, and that instruction is only one of several factors in lexical development. The SLI Framework translates these findings into a pedagogical guide, and the next chapter presents the summary, conclusions, and recommendations drawn from them.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationship between vocabulary instruction strategies and the lexical competence of Bachelor of Secondary Education English majors in the 3rd and 4th year at Capiz State University, covering the Main Campus, Burias Campus, and Pontevedra Campus, for the school year 2025-2026. Using a survey-correlational design with 153 respondents drawn from a population of 248, the study measured vocabulary instruction strategies through a 24-item adopted-modified 5-point questionnaire based on Schmitt's (1997) Vocabulary Learning Strategy Taxonomy, and lexical competence through a 50-item adopted-modified test grounded in Nation's (2012) work on lexical breadth and Read's (2000) work on lexical depth and collocation. Descriptive data were analyzed using the mean and standard deviation, while the Pearson r was used to test the null hypothesis at the 0.05 level of significance. In view of the results, the following conclusions are drawn.

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The findings show that vocabulary instruction strategies were utilized at a very high level in the classroom, as perceived by the English major students. This held across all four dimensions, namely determination, cognitive, social, and memory strategies, each of which was also rated very high. It may therefore be concluded that vocabulary instruction was characterized by the consistent use of varied strategies that support the different processes involved in learning, understanding, practicing, and retaining vocabulary. Taken together, these dimensions were highly utilized and collectively formed a comprehensive approach to vocabulary instruction in the classroom.

Despite this strong instructional picture, the students demonstrated a high level of lexical competence overall, which is a lower rating than that given to the instruction itself. Lexical breadth and morphological awareness were both at a high level, whereas lexical depth and collocation obtained the lowest score and were described as moderate. This indicates that the students generally possessed a satisfactory level of vocabulary knowledge, particularly in the range of words they knew and their awareness of word forms, while their knowledge of deeper word meanings and appropriate word combinations was comparatively lower.

The test of the relationship between the two variables revealed a significant but weak positive correlation between vocabulary instruction strategies and lexical competence, and the null hypothesis of no significant relationship was accordingly not supported. Higher levels of vocabulary instruction strategies corresponded to higher levels of lexical competence, which confirms an association between the two variables. However, because the strength of this association was weak, it was limited in extent. The relationship is not strong enough to indicate that vocabulary instruction strategies alone account for students' level of lexical competence, and it should be interpreted with caution and without implying a direct causal effect. The very high ratings of instruction, set against only high and moderate levels of competence and a weak correlation, suggest that other factors also shape how students' vocabulary develops.

In light of these conclusions, several recommendations follow. English teachers may continue implementing a variety of vocabulary instructional strategies while reflecting on their effectiveness, providing balanced opportunities for students to learn, practice, and apply vocabulary through meaningful activities that promote long-term retention, and assessing vocabulary progress regularly to determine which strategies best serve their learners. Teachers may also complement existing instruction with authentic and contextualized materials such as literary texts, newspaper articles, podcasts, educational videos, and digital resources, so that students see how words function in actual communication and learn to use them appropriately across academic and real-life situations. Because classroom instruction alone may not be sufficient to fully develop vocabulary knowledge, teachers may further extend learning beyond the classroom through reading programs, vocabulary enrichment activities, independent learning tasks, and communicative experiences that encourage authentic language use.

Students, for their part, may take an active role in strengthening their lexical competence through extensive reading, listening to English materials, watching educational content, and participating in English communication activities, all of which increase exposure to a wider range of vocabulary and build confidence in using English effectively. They may also pursue deeper vocabulary knowledge rather than focusing only on memorizing word meanings, by learning collocations, multiple meanings, idiomatic expressions, and word relationships, which directly addresses the area where their competence was lowest. Maintaining vocabulary journals, practicing newly learned words in speaking and writing, and consistently reviewing unfamiliar terms can enhance retention and prepare them for their future roles as English language teachers.

School administrators likewise have a part in sustaining these efforts. They may strengthen institutional support by providing English teachers with adequate instructional resources, updated teaching materials, digital learning resources, and professional development and training programs on effective vocabulary instruction, thereby enabling more effective implementation of diverse strategies. They may also promote language-rich learning environments by organizing reading programs, language enhancement workshops, English speaking activities, literary events, and other language-based initiatives, and by developing programs and providing resources that encourage continuous vocabulary practice. Such initiatives complement classroom instruction, help maximize its contribution, address other factors affecting students' lexical competence, and support the continuous development of their lexical competence and communicative skills.

Finally, future researchers may build on these findings by examining additional variables that may influence the lexical competence of English major students, such as reading habits, language exposure, learner motivation, learner autonomy, vocabulary learning strategies, and the use of digital learning resources. Exploring these variables may help explain the weak relationship identified in the present study and contribute to a broader understanding of how lexical competence develops. In sum, while vocabulary instruction strategies are meaningfully related to students' lexical competence, their influence is best understood as one contributing element within a wider set of instructional, personal, and institutional factors.

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