Scientia
Publica
Media

Research Article

Utilizing the 'Words of the Day' Strategy to Enhance Students' Vocabulary Skills

Godman R. Caupayan[1] ✉ iD, **Joey S. Revelo**[2]

[1]College of Education, Misamis University, Philippines
[2]Ozamiz City National High School, Philippines

Abstract
Vocabulary development remains a critical concern among students in the Philippines. Despite ongoing efforts to enhance language education, many students struggle to achieve satisfactory vocabulary proficiency, which significantly impacts their overall language skills. Vocabulary acquisition is fundamental to developing reading comprehension, writing, and effective communication. This study investigates the effectiveness of the "Words-of-the-Day" strategy in enhancing students' vocabulary, building on previous research that underscores the importance of vocabulary development in overall language proficiency. The general objective of the research was to evaluate whether this strategy could significantly improve vocabulary skills among students. Conducted during the 2023–2024 school year at Ozamiz City National High School, the study employed a quasi-experimental design involving both a control group and an experimental group. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, comprising students from two comparable classes with similar academic abilities. The primary instrument for measuring vocabulary proficiency was a standardized vocabulary test administered before and after the intervention. Data analysis involved paired t-tests to compare pre- and post-intervention scores within groups and independent t-tests to assess differences between the control and experimental groups. The findings revealed that while the control group exhibited a significant improvement in vocabulary scores post-intervention, the experimental group demonstrated a more substantial enhancement, with students achieving higher performance levels overall. This supports the conclusion that the "Words-of-the-Day" strategy effectively enhances vocabulary skills and boosts confidence in language use. Based on these findings, it is recommended that educators integrate the "Words-of-the-Day" strategy into the regular curriculum to foster better vocabulary acquisition and long-term language development among students.

Keywords: Engagement, Language Proficiency, Strategy, Vocabulary, Words-of-the-Day

1. INTRODUCTION

English, the official language in many countries and spoken by approximately 1.5 billion people (Crystal, 2011), plays a critical role in academic and career success (Vadivel, 2018). In the Philippines, English is widely used as the medium of instruction in schools, making proficiency in the language a key determinant of academic achievement (Kotut, 2013). Vocabulary, as a fundamental component of language proficiency, significantly impacts reading comprehension, text production, and overall communication skills (Nation, 2013). However, limited vocabulary knowledge often hinders students' ability to comprehend texts and express ideas effectively, particularly among struggling readers (Rupley & Nichols, 2006).

While targeted vocabulary instruction has been shown to enhance literacy and academic performance (McKeown, 2019), many students in the Philippines face challenges in acquiring adequate vocabulary to meet their academic and communicative needs. These challenges stem from limited exposure to rich linguistic input, ineffective strategies for word retention, and insufficient opportunities for practical word application. According to Tennant (2013), such deficiencies highlight the need for innovative strategies to improve vocabulary acquisition among English learners.

Despite various interventions, a significant gap remains in ineffective vocabulary instruction. Research by Miles (2017) emphasizes the importance of bridging this divide through structured and engaging methods that cater to diverse learner needs. This study addresses this gap by exploring the effectiveness of the "Words-of-the-Day" strategy, a method designed to expose students to new words daily while integrating their meanings, pronunciations, and practical applications.

1.1. Research Questions

In this study, the researchers used the 'Words of the Day' approach to enhance the vocabulary skills of Grade 7 students at Ozamiz City National High School during the school year 2023-2024. The approach involves presenting two related words daily in English class (except Thursdays), along with their definitions and example sentences, and encouraging students to identify synonyms and construct sentences using these words through group discussions by the end of the lesson.

1. What is the performance of the control group before the conduct of Words-of-the-day?

2. What is the performance of the experimental group before the Words-of-the-day conduct?

3. What is the performance of the control group after the conduct of Words-of-the-day?

4. What is the performance of the experimental group after the conduct of Words-of-the-day?

5. Is there a significant difference in the pretest and posttest performance of the control group?

6. Is there a significant difference in the pretest and posttest performance of the experimental group?

7. Is there a significant difference in the post-test performance between the two groups

2. METHODS

This study employed a classroom-based action research design to assess the effectiveness of the "Words of the Day" strategy in improving Grade 7 students' vocabulary at Ozamiz City National High School. Participants were in two sections: Grade 7 Mount Panay (experimental group) and Grade 7 Mount Arayat (control group). The research involved pre-tests, implementation of the strategy (introducing two new words daily), group discussions, and post-tests to evaluate vocabulary improvements. Ethical protocols ensured confidentiality, and data were analyzed using IBM SPSS with descriptive statistics and t-tests to measure the impact of the intervention on students' performance.

2.1. Research Design

This study used a classroom-based action research design to evaluate the effectiveness of using the 'Words of the Day' approach in enhancing the students' vocabulary skills. This approach allowed teachers to investigate their practice and discover what worked and what did not work for their students in their classrooms. Classroom-based action research, with its cyclical nature of systematically investigating teaching and learning, followed by data-driven improvements based on the outcomes of the investigations, provided a viable and valuable professional development alternative. After setting improvement goals, the process of action research was used to customize teachers' professional development, enabling a more meaningful approach to professional growth (Mertler, 2013).

2.2. Participants

The participants of the study were Grade 7 students from two sections at Ozamiz City National High School: Grade 7 Mount Arayat and Grade 7 Mount Panay. The selection of the participants was based on the following criteria: Students who were enrolled in the Junior High School Department at Ozamiz City National High School as Grade 7 students for the academic year 2023-2024. Students who gave their full consent served as respondents to the study. Grade 7 Mount Arayat served as the control group, meaning no strategy was applied, while Grade 7 Mount Panay served as the experimental group where the 'Words of the Day' strategy was applied. The researcher ensured that all these conditions were met prior to conducting the survey.

2.3. Research Instruments

The research instrument used in this study was a 30-item multiple-choice vocabulary test designed to assess the students' vocabulary proficiency. This test was administered twice: first, as a pre-test to establish a baseline of the students' initial vocabulary skills, and later, as a post-test after implementing the "Words of the Day" strategy. The test included the targeted vocabulary words introduced during the intervention, allowing the researcher to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy in enhancing the students' vocabulary.

2.4. Procedures

The research procedures were conducted in three phases: pre-implementation, implementation, and post-implementation.

In the pre-implementation phase, the researcher reviewed relevant literature on vocabulary enhancement strategies and developed a research proposal. The school principal approved the study, and consent from the participants was secured. A 30-item vocabulary test was administered to both the control and experimental groups to assess baseline vocabulary skills.

During the implementation phase, the "Words of the Day" strategy was introduced in the experimental group. Two new vocabulary words were presented daily, along with their meanings and usage. The researcher facilitated group discussions and interactive activities to reinforce understanding while monitoring student engagement. Periodic formative and summative assessments were conducted to evaluate the strategy's impact.

In the post-implementation phase, the researcher administered a post-test to both groups to measure any changes in vocabulary skills. The pre-test and post-test results were compared to assess the effectiveness of the intervention. Data were analyzed, conclusions were drawn, and recommendations for future improvements were made. Finally, the research findings were prepared for dissemination.

2.5. Data Analysis

The data analysis in this study involved the use of descriptive statistics and paired t-tests to assess the impact of the "Words of the Day" strategy on students' vocabulary skills. Descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, were computed to summarize the students' performance before and after the intervention. The paired t-test was used to compare pre-test and post-test scores within the experimental group to determine whether there was a significant improvement in vocabulary proficiency. Additionally, an independent t-test was conducted to compare the performance of the control and experimental groups, measuring the effectiveness of the strategy. The analysis was performed using IBM SPSS software to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the findings.

3. RESULTS

This section presents the study's results, detailing the effects of the "Words-of-the-Day" strategy on students' vocabulary improvement in both control and experimental groups. The data collected were analyzed to understand the significance and effectiveness of this educational intervention.

Table 1 provides a comprehensive comparison of the posttest vocabulary performance between the control group and the experimental group after the implementation of the "Words-of-the-Day" strategy. This table offers critical insights into the effectiveness of the intervention in enhancing students' vocabulary acquisition.

Table 1. Significant Difference in the Posttest Performance Between the Two Groups

Group	Vocabulary	M	SD	t-value	p-value	Decision
Control	Did not Meet the Expectations	8.00	2.407	-4.812	0.001	Reject Ho
Experimental	Fairly Satisfactory	18.30	4.606	-11.612	0.001	Reject Ho

Note Scale: 26-30 (Outstanding); 23-25 (Very Satisfactory); 21-22 (Satisfactory); 18-20 (Fairly Satisfactory); 1-17 (Did not Meet the Expectations)

Note: Probability Value Scale: **p<0.01 (Highly Significant); *p<0.05 (Significant); p>0.05(Not Significant)

4. DISCUSSION

The table indicates a clear distinction between the performance of the control and experimental groups, underscoring the effectiveness of the "Words-of-the-Day" intervention. The control group, which continued with traditional instructional methods, remained in the "Did Not Meet Expectations" category even after the intervention period. While their mean score improved to 8.00 (SD = 2.407), this statistically significant improvement (p = 0.001) was insufficient to move any students into higher performance categories. This suggests that while traditional methods may lead to minor gains, they are inadequate for fostering substantial vocabulary growth. In contrast, the experimental group demonstrated remarkable progress following the introduction of the "Words-of-the-Day" strategy. Their mean score increased to 18.30 (SD = 4.606), with scores distributed across a wider range of performance categories. Notably, a significant portion of students achieved "Fairly Satisfactory" or higher, with some reaching the "Outstanding" and "Very Satisfactory" levels. This highlights the intervention's capacity not only to raise average scores but also to elevate individual student performance to higher levels of achievement.

The result aligns with the study of Abrar-ul-Hassan (2010) on independent lexical development initiatives, particularly his advocacy for strategies like "Word-of-the-Day" to enhance learners' lexical repertoires. Similar to his approach, the study demonstrates that the "Words-of-the-Day" intervention significantly improved students' vocabulary scores, highlighting its effectiveness in fostering autonomous lexical learning. The findings support Abrar-ul-Hassan's assertion that such activities, when integrated into the curriculum, can boost linguistic fluency by expanding learners' lexical knowledge, which in turn contributes to improved syntactical understanding.

5. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that routine educational activities, while resulting in statistically significant improvements, were insufficient for substantial vocabulary development, as students in the control group remained within the "Did not Meet Expectations" category. In contrast, the "Words-of-the-Day" strategy significantly enhanced vocabulary acquisition, enabling students in the experimental group to achieve higher performance levels, including "Outstanding" and "Very Satisfactory." Statistical analysis confirmed significant vocabulary improvements in both groups. The strategy's success lies in its ability to provide consistent and contextualized exposure to new vocabulary, allowing students to effectively apply their learning. To build on these findings, educators are encouraged to integrate the "Words-of-the-Day" strategy systematically into daily teaching practices, ensuring consistent and meaningful vocabulary exposure through clear definitions, examples, and contexts. Schools should also prioritize professional development workshops to equip educators with effective vocabulary teaching methods and promote collaborative initiatives for sharing best practices and resources. Furthermore, educational policymakers are urged to incorporate structured vocabulary programs into school curricula, acknowledging their critical role in academic achievement. Finally, future research should focus on longitudinal studies to assess the sustained impact of vocabulary strategies on students' language development and academic outcomes across diverse demographics and educational contexts.

Data Availability. All data can be obtained from the corresponding author.

Conflict of Interest. The authors declare no conflict of interest.

REFERENCES

Crystal, D. (2011). English as a global language. Cambridge University Press. https://culturaldiplomacy.org/academy/pdf/research/books/nation_branding/English_As_A_Global_Language_-_David_Crystal.pdf

Kotut, J. B. (2016). Factors influencing performance of english as a subject in Kenya certificate of primary education in Nakuru Town, East sub-county, Kenya. https://rediie.cl/wp-content/uploads/Project-research.pdf

Marpaung, M. S., & Situmeang, H. J. P. (2020). Enhancing Students' Vocabulary through Authentic Materials and Multimedia. Acuity: *Journal of English Language Pedagogy, Literature and Culture, 5*(2), 85-101. https://doi.org/10.35974/acuity.v5i2.2247

McKeown, M. G. (2019). Effective Vocabulary Instruction Fosters Knowing Words, Using Words, and Understanding How Words Work. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools, 50*(4), 466-476. https://doi.org/10.1044/2019_LSHSS-VOIA-18-0126

Nation, I. S. P. (2013). Current perspectives on vocabulary teaching and learning. In C. A. Chapelle (Ed.), *The encyclopedia of applied linguistics* (pp. 1–7). Wiley-Blackwell https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007/978-3-319-58542-0_42-1

Rupley, W. H., & Nichols, W. D. (2005). Vocabulary Instruction for the Struggling Reader. *Reading & Writing Quarterly, 21*(3), 239–260. https://doi.org/10.1080/10573560590949368

Tennant, A. (2013). Vocabulary matters: Techniques for teaching and learning. Onestopenglish. https://www.onestopenglish.com/support-for-teachingvocabulary/vocabulary-matters-techniques-for-teaching-and-learning/155373.article