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VOCABULARY ACQUISITION IN HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOMS UTILIZING EMERGING TRENDS IN LITERACY DEVELOPMENT: PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

Inviolata Lunani Sore

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Inviolata Lunani Sore

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Inviolata Lunani Sore	Dr. Richard Brown

ABSTRACT

VOCABULARY ACQUISITION IN HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOMS UTILIZING EMERGING TRENDS IN LITERACY DEVELOPMENT: PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

Inviolata Lunani Sore

The current global trends demand that we remain conscious of how distinct norms in groups we affiliate with affect decisions. Among developmental aspects, childhood language acquisition depends heavily on epigenetic interactions between the innate and the immediate environment (Sinha, 2017). This explanatory sequential mixed methods study explored how high school students acquire and incrementally build their vocabulary while utilizing emergent learning trends divergent from traditional curricula. The study leans on schema theory, critical race theory, whole-language theory, and reciprocal model. The independent variable is literacy curriculum, while the dependent variable is vocabulary acquisition. The researcher utilized classroom lesson observations, one-on-one interviews, focus group discussions, and surveys to collect data and gain insights into vocabulary trends. A total of 70 students aged between 16 and 19 years participated in the study; 38 males (54.3%) and 32 females (45.7%) responded to the survey. The researcher administered surveys to nine teachers: seven females (77.8%) and two males (22.2%). Five students participated in focus group discussions. The sampled teachers ranged between 31- 60 years, with 50% between 41-50 years, 33.3% 31- 40 years, and 16.7% were 51- 60 years. Five teach English (55.6%), two teach Theology

(22.2%), and two teach Special Education (22.2%). Of the nine, three participants had 21-30 years of experience, while three had 1-10 years, 11-20 years, and 5-10 years of experience, respectively. Data was analyzed using quantitative and qualitative approaches in MAXQDA software. The findings were triangulated, interpreted, integrated, and discussed using converged data results and findings. The researcher hopes this study will enlighten education stakeholders on the benefits of flexible curricula. This might inform policy on the prevailing trajectory of literacy skills development, leading to revised curricula and best practices in education. Replicating this study on a larger scale will bolster the research base. Sharing their literacy development experiences and knowing their viewpoints are valued might have fostered a sense of belonging in students and enhanced their self-reverence. As senior students, participation may motivate them to pursue higher education.

Keywords: constructivist, positivist, paradigm, mixed methods, vocabulary acquisition, literacy development, struggling readers

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to the memory of my late father - Clement Sore Indoko, who always pushed me to do more for the 14 years I was lucky to have him in my tender years. To my mother Difina Masitsa, who wanted a better education and career for me despite her limited education. My late husband, Peter Otieno, for encouraging me to start my undergraduate education program and for relentlessly supporting me. My late uncle, George Amayi, and my late aunts, Maximilla Khatenje and Bernadette Muteitsi - Mulama. They were the epitome of true love who instilled in me the value of education, hard work, resilience, and accomplishment. I strongly felt their presence with me along this journey, and I can vividly remember their words of encouragement then and now, their pride in who I have become. They rooted for me and taught me to believe in my academic strengths, which they noted in my early years.

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PREFACE

This dissertation partially fulfilled the Ph.D. in Literacy Education for At-Risk and Diverse Populations program requirements. The topic under study is Vocabulary Acquisition in High School Classrooms Utilizing Emerging Trends in Literacy Development: Perceptions of Teachers and Students. One might question, 'What is vocabulary acquisition?' It entails pronunciation (learning how to say words), definition (learning the meanings of words), and use of the words (learning how to use the words in writing and speaking). Scholars have variously referred to vocabulary acquisition as a multifaceted phenomenon. I successfully defended my proposal in August 2020, but I could not access research subjects due to the unprecedented COVID-19 lockdown. It was not until the Spring Semester of 2023 that a school principal accepted my request to collect data. Due to moving parts on the school calendar, the data collection took a staggering turn, so I did not complete phase II by the end of the semester. I resumed data collection during the Fall Semester of 2023, and I completed the collection before the start of the Christmas break. I then embarked on data analysis and write-up. Despite having a passion for research, I never thought I would independently carry out mixed methods research. I was reluctant to step out of my 'Qualitative Inquiry' comfort zone. How did I overcome this fear? Well, I give credit to my Ph.D. program coursework professors. The rigor and mentorship they displayed enabled me to start easing into quantitative research, and I took the challenge of delving into a mixed-method study. I am delighted to have faced this challenge head-on, for it has improved my scholarship.

Inviolata Lunani Sore - Queens, NY, April 12, 2024

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CHAPTER 1

Background

The fundamental idea behind literacy development and language learning is to advance communicative competence, the teaching and learning process, and above all the potential for a successful life (Trujillo 2015). Acquiring vocabulary is a fundamental aspect of learning language and a very essential aspect of language proficiency which avails most of the preliminary building blocks that determine how well learners listen, speak, read, and write (Richards & Renandya, 2002 as cited in Khoshsima & Saed, 2016). In another study, Decarrico (2001) reiterates that, learning vocabulary takes center stage in language teaching irrespective of whether it is a first, second or foreign language. According to the National Reading Panel report, (NICHD, 2000), vocabulary is identified as one of five major components of reading. These have been identified as phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary development and reading comprehension. Sustainable development as a global agenda has centered lifelong learning on UNESCO's 2030 Framework for Action (Declaration, I. Framework for Action, 2015). The agenda is captured by the proposed SDG4, which focuses on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education that fosters lifelong learning opportunities for all. It is important to note that learning outcomes are among UNESCO's main areas of focus, which are viewed in a lifelong learning approach. Despite the efforts to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education, for a long time, the accountability movement in schools has focused on higher scores and become curiously oblivious to the unintended damage this causes to the learning environment. It will be interesting in this vein to

attempt to unveil the lifelong outcomes of emerging trends in vocabulary acquisition among teachers and their students.

The 2010 Common Core State Standards (CCSS) stipulate that for English Language Arts (ELA) and Literacy in Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects (http:// www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/), all teachers are expected to teach reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language in their respective disciplines. The essence behind this approach is to help students in acquiring the necessary "literacy skills and understandings required for college and career readiness in multiple disciplines" (National Governors' Association Center for Best Practices 8i Council of Chief State School Officers [NGA/ CCSSO], 2010, p. 3). According to Gibson (2002), mainstream teachers are obliged to learn to look at as opposed to look through language that is dominantly utilized in the classroom. If followed this strategy helps teachers to understand the linguistic demands of the content areas and in turn carefully structure the learning tasks with respect to their students' literacy needs. Castro-Garcí (2017) reiterates this point by noting that vocabulary acquisition is "one' of the key elements for language teachers and researchers" (p. 81) when tracking their learners' language progress. Meara (2009) emphasizes the importance of putting into consideration the diversity between native and non-native speakers as pertains to vocabulary acquisition.

Often, different academic vocabulary terms are employed in each content area e.g., convergent in science and literal in ELA and social studies, (Giouroukakis & Cohan, 2014). These divergent academic vocabularies compound the setbacks teachers encounter in teaching vocabulary to high school students who may be confused by the various terms used to define situations, types of questioning and the overlaps that exist. As a result,

quite a substantial percentage of students are not learning to become competent readers and writers. They advance from grade to grade as struggling readers and this inability builds into a burden that they carry along their entire academic journey (MacGillivray & Rueda, 2003).

On the other side, students are faced with in-school factors as pertains to instructional practices, inadequate funding, poor administrative decisions, underdeveloped counseling, and psychological services, not forgetting curricular opportunities. The out-of-school parameters include but are not limited to family income, education levels of parents and primary caregivers, family structure, and the daily living conditions. The above parameters are key players in students' schooling experiences (Milner, 2013; Noguera & Wells, 2011).

For many years, a well-developed vocabulary has been viewed as an essential component for success in reading and comprehension. Evidence from literature indicates that one of the strongest predictors of reading development is vocabulary size (National Reading Panel, 2000 cited in Moody, 2018). Researchers opine that larger vocabulary sizes facilitate access to richer semantic resources that activate background knowledge, the ability to integrate new information with the existing knowledge and enhance comprehension of read materials. Research highlights that repeated exposure to words, explicit awareness on learning strategies and adequate time to engage with and internalize new vocabulary will help to close the existing vocabulary gaps between students (Ganske, 2018).

In the U.S., the results from the 2014 National Assessment of Educational Progress - NAEP established that, vocabulary is one of the leading barriers to reading

comprehension with only 36% of eighth graders reading at basic level (Fields, 2014). Since many youths in learning contexts struggle with vocabulary, research suggests the use of multifaceted instruction on context clues and morphology, as well as availing opportunities for students to actively use new words (Ford-Connors & Paratore, 2015). According to the authors, literacy conversations have moved from viewing comprehension as simply the ability to read. Literacy components have in turn grown increasingly complex and amorphous which calls for literacy scholars' obligation to bear the consequences of their success among them fluency, comprehension, and analysis of complex texts.

Syverson (2008) refutes the persisting ideology that "literacy learning is a linear, sequential process best broken down into small steps that can be taught mechanically to produce timely, quantifiable 'outcomes" (p.109), without consideration of the vast diversity among learners, teachers, institutions of learning, communities, cultures, media, and languages. Syverson shares her evidence in support of an alternative view, an ecological perspective that considers the complex ecosystems within which teachers and scholars learn, adapt, interact, communicate, and connect. However, in this era of standardized and achievement tests, there is less room for the above-detailed interactions. It is in this vein that the proposed study explores emerging trends in literacy development.

Statement of the Problem

On paper, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) policy appeared to have the potential to empower millions of school-age children. The voices of these very learners were lost in this NCLB framework of empowerment (Horn, 2017). Shalem et al. (2018) report that,

despite the good intent of the standardized curriculum, it has received recurring criticism since the 1970s and 1980s for deskilling teachers. Administration in schools has added standards, accountability, and high stakes testing which diminish teachers' range of choices on what to teach, how to teach, and how much time to spend on the content. As a literacy teacher with hands-on experience utilizing a scripted curriculum with diverse literacy learners, the researcher recalls lacking the autonomy to innovatively modify lessons to accommodate students. The curriculum requirement was to teach parallel as co-teachers and keep up with pre-structured and dated lesson plans. This entailed religiously following the script and ensuring that all grade level students were on the same topic. The researcher (literacy teacher then) always had a feeling of uneasiness knowing that some students were slipping through the cracks. It is for this purpose that this study was proposed to unveil perceptions of teachers utilizing emerging trends in vocabulary acquisition and literacy development and voices of their students as consumers.

In an era of accountability and declining literacy standards, critics of curricula opine that, narrowing occurs during scripted lessons resulting in fragmented and decontextualized curriculum which translates into instructional tasks that lack a clear connection to the course (Stuggart, 2016). The content that is taught highlights only basic knowledge and skills as opposed to complex or elaborate ideas and critical skills building in learners. As a result of the above accountability demands, K12 proficiency in reading texts has taken a downward trend in terms of difficulty in the last half century (CCSS, 2010).

MacGillivray et al. (2004) align scripted curricula programs to neocolonialism practices. They subsequently support their assertions with the neocolonial theory to describe the classroom experiences of elementary grade teachers through a critical lens. Valdez (2018) challenges this stance by focusing on '*Flippin' the Scripted Curriculum: Ethnic Studies Inquiry in Elementary Education, Race Ethnicity and Education'* which drew from De-colonial theory to examine pedagogical strategies with the aim of challenging the normalized colonialism within education standards and curricula. This researcher blended autoethnography and portraiture to collect data for two academic calendar semesters, which consisted of observations, classroom artifacts, and field notes from a private high school in Connecticut. The main aim was to explore how teachers navigate the world of teaching vocabulary and literacy lessons to high school students.

Theoretical Frameworks

Researchers opine that a conceptual framework is essential when conducting educational research since it guides the research process (Creswell & Clark, 2011; Evans et al., 2011). This study leaned on schema theory as the principal theory supported by critical race theory, whole language theory, and reciprocal model. The theories are explained as follows: -

Schema Theory

In previous research, schema theory is documented in 76% (n = 58) of article reviews. This high prevalence is an indicator that a large percentage of classroom instruction and vocabulary acquisition revolves around the students' ability to activate background knowledge, their mental organization of words, and the interconnectedness of words (Stahl, 1986, as cited in Moody, 2018). The current study aims to explore

vocabulary development utilizing emerging trends in the curriculum based on schema theory, which points towards "the cognitive and conceptual structure and the representation of knowledge" (Unrau & Alvermann, 2013; p. 47–90). Schemas allow students to process their thoughts, encode what they are thinking, organize the concepts into groups, and retrieve the details (Anderson, 2013) in such a way that the reader's background knowledge interacts with conceptual abilities and processing strategies to produce linguistic comprehension (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983).

Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory (CRT) is embraced in this study based on Turselli (2019), who asserts that the critical ideological paradigm explicitly aims to effect meaningful adjustments to preset inequalities ingrained within societal constructs. Turselli contends that qualitative inquiry is carried out under the guise of power inequity and oppression and therefore, purposes to foster dynamic relationships with research participants as an avenue for empowering them towards action to overcome the inequities. Turselli cites Freire (1970), who believes that, as long as those oppressed remain cognitively incognizant of the causes of their circumstances, they basically succumb to their prevailing circumstances.

It is along the same vein that CRT is incorporated into the current study, leaning on its emphasis on the importance of legal context and situational authority, not forgetting the relationship between the powers that be and social identities (Turselli, 2019). Delgado and Stefancic (2017) highlight ultramodern scholars in the field of education for instance Gloria Ladson-Billings, William Tate, and Tara Yosso who

attempt to understand issues related to school discipline and hierarchy, curriculum, multicultural education, access, and opportunity.

The notion of unique voices and personal narratives cannot be discounted, and it was critical to analyze how emerging literacy programs support students' vocabulary development and with-it literacy skills. Teacher interviews were envisioned to capture their experiences, histories, and interactions with curricula. The researcher hoped teachers would unveil insights into student experiences and perspectives of the literacy curricula. The extent to which literacy curricula enhance or crash authentic student engagement or the lack of it was explored through lesson observations, surveys, FGDs with students and personal narratives from teachers (Turselli, 2019).

Reciprocal Model

Researchers in education posit a very interesting perspective towards vocabulary acquisition in which vocabulary knowledge compliments text comprehension and text comprehension supports vocabulary learning (Nagy, 2005; Stanovich, 1986, as cited in Cervetti et al., 2016). The reciprocal model echoes the Mathew Effect (Morgan et al., 2008), which points to patterns of increasing advantage or disadvantage brought about by an initial advantage or disadvantage. In such a scenario, students with high vocabulary levels comprehend texts better because they are more likely to understand the meaning of words used in texts. These students also read more frequently and in so doing incidentally gain more vocabulary from extensive reading. Contrary to this hypothesis, students with a limited vocabulary knowledge base struggle to gain meaning from texts. Feeling frustrated during reading, they tend to read less frequently and subsequently learn fewer new words from text as compared to their peers with more vocabulary (Cunningham &

Stanovich, 1997; Sénéchal et al., 2006 cited in Cervetti et al., 2016). In this vein, Stallman, (1991) cites Anderson and Freebody (1991) who have proposed that (a) The aptitude hypothesis whose proposal states that vocabulary and comprehension relate to an underlying factor (general aptitude) which has an impact on both outcomes. (b) The knowledge hypothesis postulates that knowledge of vocabulary is a representation of background knowledge for instance a student who knows the word *icing* most likely knows something about decorating a cake and such knowledge inspires how well students understand texts. This hypothesis has been explored by several studies with evidence that knowledge and vocabulary may make distinct contributions to comprehension (e.g., Stahl, Hare, Sinatra, et al., 1991 cited in Cervetti et al., 2016). (c) Most studies have attributed it to the instrumentalist hypothesis which is of the view that knowing the meaning of a word directly influences reading comprehension. The researchers have an interesting strategy for improving text comprehension and believe that "one must either lower the vocabulary demands in a text or ensure that readers know the meanings of most of the words in a text before reading (p. 204). (d) Mezynski (1993, cited in Cervetti et al., 2016) proposed a hypothesis that focuses on speed of access to word meaning, a perspective which holds that the goal of vocabulary instruction does not entail only knowing the word but also the ease of access to the meaning of the word in memory. This hypothesis generated interventions involving depth in the processing of word meaning e.g., Stahl and Fairbanks (1986, cited in Cervetti 2016) suggested a hierarchy in which associating a word with its definition reflects a limited level of processing whereas comprehending the meaning of a word is an indicator of a greater depth of understanding

and when students generate a new response (i.e., use a word in an original sentence), it is evidence of their greatest level of understanding.

Whole Language Theory

Language has been studied variously, and its role serves as a prominent transversal in the teaching and learning process (Pavon & Perez, 2018). The authors note that there have been attempts to conceptualize the structure of the elements that make up the whole-language project. The perceived scope of a whole-language perspective has been queried over time, and a Piagetian extension poses the question, 'Is it an approach that enhances the construction or transformation of knowledge about the world?' On the other hand, a Vygotskian extension asks 'Does it attend, in addition, to how this construction of knowledge about the world involves transformation of knowledge about oneself and one's capacity for self-direction? (Pavon & Perez, p. 224).

Whole language advocates for the participation of the active, constructive, re-constructive learner in a dynamic interplay with activities and educators who are also learning through the activities they engage students. In so doing, whole language model lays prominence on the inclusion of learning that is not smooth and explicit and students owning the learning objectives and strategies. The authors are prominently concerned with the type of opportunities educators avail to students and the type of thought process they want students to engage in as they develop and acquire incremental competence. On the other hand, the whole-language model discusses the inappropriateness of seeking success for its own sake and equating success with learning or motivation. The inherently social nature of the zone of proximal development is one distinction between Piaget and Vygotsky that informs the whole-language theory. According to Vygotsky, the learner is

guided by and participates in a supportive, social-instructional environment" (Pavon & Perez, p. 255).

Significance of the Study

Literature on literacy and vocabulary development has prominently focused on lower grades of schooling, especially emergent readers. This study purposed to shed light on how high school teachers and their students navigate literacy development. This is a schooling level where learners are confronted with adolescent and puberty challenges while also navigating a phase that prepares them for college and the job market.

Although scripted curriculum was adopted by most states in the NCLB movement and it is the dominant curriculum in most public schools, little research describes the detailed interactions that take place during the teaching and learning while utilizing other literacy trends. This research utilized case study data collection methods to capture the messages that students and their teachers shared about their lived experiences in a literacy development environment. A case study allows for the use of varied data sources including interviews, Likert scale and open-ended surveys, observations, documents, and teaching and learning artifacts among other sources (Gay et al. 2011). The researcher anticipated that the voices of how teachers and their students navigate multiple learning environments as youth (Farrugia, 2011) will inform the knowledge base in this area. When other teachers, administrators and policy makers read about the reactions to the interview and survey questions, they may also join the conversation and have their voices heard.

Administrators who firmly monitor and evaluate what teachers teach, when they teach and how they teach will interact with the findings and have an informed point of

view on their positionality about the decision-making process on curricula. This study will enlighten administrators on the notion that flexibility within a curriculum is beneficial to all education stakeholders. The findings might bring administrators to the realization that scripted curriculum is not needed at all.

As mentioned earlier, students' voices were lost in the NCLB movement. This study will be beneficial to the students in that providing them with an opportunity to share their literacy development experiences and to tell their story will give them a voice. This will foster in them a sense of belonging as they will feel their viewpoints are valued and with this, their self-reverence will be boosted. To high school seniors, participation in the study might motivate them towards transitioning to institutions of higher learning.

Berninger et al. (2010) note that, although many studies have been carried out on morphological awareness, very few deal with older cohorts of learners (middle and high school). From the reviewed literature, we can assert that morphological awareness is a valued cognitive skill that can support the development of reading comprehension skills among students.

Although this study is not completely generalizable to larger populations, the researcher is optimistic that the quantitative results and qualitative findings will inform policy on the prevailing trajectory of literacy skills development in education. This can necessitate replication of this study on a larger scale leading to revised curricula and best practice in teaching and learning methods for vocabulary acquisition.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to understand how high school youth negotiate, acquire, and build their vocabulary while utilizing literacy lessons. Existing literature on vocabulary acquisition, research and policy have focused on several areas including choice of school, common core standards, alternative routes to teaching, scripted curriculum mandates, professional development and performance tagged pay. This study focuses on high school students and how their current literacy programs enhance vocabulary acquisition (Milner IV & Lomotey, 2014). In this regard, many studies have focused on vocabulary acquisition for ESL, L1, L2 learners and scripted curriculum in elementary classrooms. This study aims at unveiling the perceptions of high school teachers and their students on emergent literacy teaching-learning trends as relates to vocabulary development.

Research Questions

1. How do high school students navigate literacy lessons to acquire new vocabulary?
2. What are senior high school students' perceptions of themselves as literacy learners?
3. What are the teachers' experiences of handling literacy lessons in senior classrooms?
4. What vocabulary/learning strategies do teachers use during language lessons to strengthen learning?
5. How do teachers support struggling readers in senior high school classrooms?

Definition of Terms

Achievement tests: Tests designed to measure students' knowledge and skills level at specific grade levels after exposing them to a prescribed curriculum or content material in a classroom setting.

Acquisition: The act of unconsciously and passively obtaining/receiving linguistic input through implicit learning.

Scripted literacy curriculum: Education materials that have been commercially prepared and touted to schools. They require teachers to read from a script during lesson delivery. They reflect a focus on explicit, direct, and systematic skills instruction without considering learner differences and individual academic needs.

Vocabulary acquisition: The process of learning new words (intentionally through instruction and incidentally from the environment), their meanings and how they are used with respect to context.

Assumptions

1. The teachers (who are the experts in their field) would be willing to participate in the study and be part of the data collection personnel.
2. Parents of students in the study would see the significance of the study and give consent for their children to participate.
3. The participants would be willing to respond to survey and interview guide items.
4. The research participants would give honest responses to the interview and survey questions.

Limitations

The current study hosts several limitations, among them: -

1. Many studies have looked at the effects of scripted curriculum on the learning development of students in general, but no known study has looked at other trends and how they influence the vocabulary acquisition of high school youth.
2. This study is limited to senior high school students. The researcher will, therefore, work with only high school teachers and their students.
3. Although many in-school and out-of-school factors affect the literacy skills development of learners, as highlighted in the literature review, this study will be limited to how senior high school teachers support their students to acquire vocabulary.
4. Due to a lack of funding and time constraints, the study will be limited to one high school.
5. Since this research will be limited to one school, complete generalizability can only be achieved if it is replicated on a wider scale.

Delimitations

1. Although this study was limited to senior high school students from a single school, the literature draws from other school districts and different levels of schooling globally.
2. This study leaned on several theoretical frameworks; schema theory which is the main theory in the study which is supported by the critical race theory, whole language theory and reciprocal model.

3. Future researchers should feel free to replicate the current study on a larger scale to make it completely generalizable.
4. The researcher's sequential explanatory mixed methods approach delimits the study were it to utilize only a quantitative or qualitative method.

Summary

Despite the merits of employing scripted curriculum, the disadvantages outweigh the advantages by far too much. Expectations of raising standardized test scores, high-stakes evaluations which are dominantly based to the larger part on students' test scores narrow the curriculum by pushing out the non-test subjects, knowledge, and skills (Mathis, 2012). In so doing, scripted curriculum robs learners of their engagement in other disciplines which offer avenues for them to develop vocabulary, creativity, and social skills. The content and learning opportunities that students miss when the curriculum is narrowed make it difficult for them to transition into other subject areas, into middle, high school, and tertiary institutions. Broader learning opportunities, complex curricula activities and tasks leave students frustrated and demoralized leading to truancy and drop-outs (Cawelti, 2006). The concerted effort on matters of equity in schools by education stakeholders can only be achieved with evidence-based solutions. It is in this context that this study looked at vocabulary acquisition of high school students whose teachers utilize heterogenous literacy programs during the learning processes.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview of Literacy Development

Most research on the development of literacy has leaned more toward elementary schooling and emergent readers. High school teachers, therefore, encounter challenges in finding effective and efficient strategies for integrating literacy development into the general curriculum (Wendt, 2013). The importance of literacy skills cannot be overlooked since they act as a bridge between the content learners engage with and their understanding of the subject matter. Morrell (2017) emphasizes that education stakeholders have an ethical and moral compulsion to ensure every student receives a humanizing, impactful literacy education. Despite this known fact, there is evidence that an alarming percentage of youth lack the skills to do so (Fang & Schleppegrell, 2010). Concerted efforts are therefore needed to ensure that our youth in high schools receive a strong foundation on which they can build their vocabulary skills throughout their schooling (Fang & Schleppegrell). Educators on their part have a moral imperative that every student's literacy education increases his/her capacity for intercultural awareness. This calls for interactive accountability for developing literacy curricula and literacy policies which will lead to more engaged and empathetic global citizens, (Morrell, 2017).

Delineating Vocabulary Acquisition

Vocabulary per se is the body of words in a specific language and vocabulary knowledge is considered as all the words an individual knows and uses in that language (AbManan et al., 2017). Vocabulary acquisition is part and parcel of every content area that a learner interacts with. Acquiring a rich and meaningful vocabulary is, therefore,

essential for learners (Spencer, 2015). It serves as a vital tool used during communication and acquiring knowledge in all learning environments, more so when English is used as a medium of instruction (AbManan et al.,).

Consequently, learning vocabulary means knowing and understanding the lexical items, most often, the meaning of words. Deeper knowledge of the learned vocabulary, however, entails syntactic information; more specifically the sub-categorization of words (i.e., the syntactic frames that words fit into) which leads to varying facets of vocabulary knowledge. During vocabulary development, a learner undergoes the process of recognizing the spoken form, written form, and meanings of words necessary for communication (AbManan et al.,). According to Alahirsh (2014), vocabulary acquisition is a complex process comprising multi-faceted aspects.

The Value of Vocabulary Acquisition to Students' Reading Comprehension

Literature affirms that an individual's vocabulary size is one of the strongest predictors of the development of reading and comprehension. A well-developed vocabulary has been recognized as the backbone for successful reading (Castro-García, 2017). Learners' vocabulary size is directly connected to their ability to successfully complete different academic tasks ranging from basic oral communication to reading novels/storybooks in the target language. Vocabulary knowledge, therefore, serves as the cornerstone for language acquisition having a direct impact on students' learning process. Vocabulary acquisition is then, a key element for teachers and researchers (Castro-García). Elsewhere, (Aitchison, 2012) reiterates the importance of vocabulary by cautioning that words are precision instruments which need to be utilized carefully and accurately.

In Nation and Webb's (2011) perspective, "measures of lexical richness should allow us to distinguish between the language of more and less proficient learners" (p. 245). Having access to this information provides educators with the tools required to promote practices that can assist learners in the language learning process. However, the current education settings are prominently data-driven to keep the education system in check.

Castro-García (2017) asks why in real sense is, vocabulary so important. She goes on to explain that in recent decades, the topic of vocabulary has gained prominence. Scholars outline the role of vocabulary as a cornerstone in second language (L2) acquisition. Read (2000) notes that "words are the basic building blocks of language, the units of meaning from which larger structures such as phrases, sentences, paragraphs and whole texts are formed" (p. 16). Nation (2001) emphasizes the value of high-frequency words, otherwise referred to as academic words in high school, and their essential role in learners' language development. He urges teachers and learners to invest time in them. Vocabulary also strongly relates to one's language skills (Schmitt, 2010).

Statistically speaking, vocabulary has been quantified to gauge the number of words one needs at a certain point in time to perform certain tasks. Pursuant to Adolph and Schmitt (2004), cited in Garcia (2014), a vocabulary size of approximately 2000 words is essential for a basic conversation while other researchers opine that in order to obtain a good grasp of comprehension of a text, a passive vocabulary of 3000-word families is required to understand 95% of a text (Laufer, 1989, 1992**)** and between 8,000 to 9,000-word families for a 98% text coverage (Hu, & Nation, 2000; Nation, 2006). When it comes to listening comprehension, lexis of between 6000-7000-word families

are required to comprehend oral texts competently (Nation, 2006). The above information is pertinent to educators and students as they navigate the teaching and learning process.

Essential Programs and Skills for Vocabulary Development

Automatized decoding skills enable language abilities to serve as a critical determinant of learners' reading comprehension (Adlof et al., 2006, cited in Hogan et al., 2011). Therefore, language skills serve as 'pressure points' during listening comprehension. This leads to individual differences in skilled reading comprehension or reading comprehension difficulties (Perfetti, 2009). According to the Simple View of reading (Gough & Tunmer, 1986), which is illustrated in Fig 1 adapted from Hogan et al. (2011), language skills that support reading comprehension are a key aspect for successful language comprehension as learners rely on them to understand complex directions, stories, and conversations. The authors report that longitudinal studies on children with reading or language difficulties support the above viewpoint. Hogan et al. avow that, beyond decoding, educators and researchers have largely ignored the profound role language skills play in the achievement of learners' skilled reading comprehension. The researchers find this surprising because "skilled reading comprehension is critical for modern life; success in education, productivity in society, and almost all types of employment require rapid and thorough assimilation of information from the text" (p. 2).

After posing the big question "How should teachers deal with vocabulary acquisition?" Schmitt (2000) speaks about the need to develop learning strategies that can aid students in their vocabulary development. Several of the programs and skills are outlined below.

Executive Functioning Skills

As defined by Diamond (2013) and Zelazo (2015), executive functioning (EF) skills are a caucus of neurocognitive skills that anchor the conscious, top-down control of thought, actions regulating emotions, and complexities in social functioning. The study of EF skills dates to the historical work of Vygotsky and Luria, whose research in the first half of the 20th century focused on the self-regulatory role of language in controlling behavior provided a baseline for later developments on the importance of rule use (self-directed speech) for EF. They support self-regulated learning and the ability to adapt to circumstances as they unfold. Findings from a cross-sectional study with 2,395 children aged 6–12 years indicate that the role of EF skills in learners' developmental pathway is a consequence of the important role they play in learning and adapting across social to non-social environments, the apparent plasticity of EF skills from early childhood to early adulthood (adolescent) and the hierarchical nature of EF skills in conjunction with the neural systems that support them (Martel et al., 2017).

Considerable neural and behavioral evidence has revealed that EF skills fall on a continuum ranging from cool EF (working memory) to hot EF skills. Cool EF refer to skills assessed in an emotionally neutral context, and they rely more on neural networks, whereas hot EF refer to skills needed when situations that are motivationally significant prevail and rely more on neural networks (Fonseca et al., 2012; Manes et al., 2002; Nejati et al., 2018).

It is worth noting that the hot and cold EF skills play a pivotal role in intentional actions, deliberate learning, emotional regulation, and social functioning (Zelazo, (2015). A study by Willoughby et al. (2011) with more than 750 children aged 4-5 years found

support for hot and cool EF factors. Montroy et al. (2019), also carried out a study with a diverse-SES sample of 1,900 children aged 2-5 years and established the support of hot and cold EF skills across several direct behavioral assessments of every construct. However, despite the above findings, Allan and Lonigan (2014) in their study on Exploring Dimensionality of Effortful Control Using Hand Tool Tasks in a Sample of Preschool Children found results that were contradictory.

When individual differences in EF skills are behaviorally measured in early childhood, they predict a continuum of developmental outcomes including academic performance, social competence in adolescents (Mischel, 1989 cited in Zelazo, 2020), college grade point average (GPA) and graduation. From the information shared here, it is evident that EF skills play a fundamental role in the learning process and deficiencies or difficulties with EF have been documented in a broad range of conditions whose onset can be during childhood or adolescence. They include learning difficulties and learning disorders (Toll et al., 2011), externalizing or disruptive behavior disorders (Petrovic & Castellanos, 2016) and oppositional defiant disorders (ODD) (Rubia, 2011), and internalizing disorders such as anxiety and depression (Nelson et al., 2018; Shi et al., 2019). These findings are important to the current study as they will help to further conversations on how teachers circumnavigate these EF difficulties in learning environments.

Extensive Reading

Pigada and Schmitt (2006) advocate for extensive reading as a remarkably effective way of acquiring vocabulary. The authors reason that extensive reading enhances vocabulary acquisition in terms of spelling, understanding the meaning, and

grammar of words. It provides learners with a large vocabulary input as it exposes them to a wide variety of texts outside of class time (Alsaif & Masrai, 2019). The study revealed substantial vocabulary growth from extensive and intensive reading groups. This was indicative of the scores observed on a Vocabulary Level Test (VLT) which initially measures vocabulary knowledge from "five frequency levels: 2,000, 3,000, 5,000, the Academic Word List, and 10,000-word bands" (p. 40). Nation (2006) points out that, while the 2000 high-frequency words should be assigned class time, for low-frequency words, teachers need to utilize strategies like guessing the meaning of words from context, using flashcards, use of memory or dictionaries to avail opportunities for learners to acquire more words outside the classroom. Although there has been a lack of consensus on defining the vocabulary learning strategies, Alsaif and Masrai (2019), investigated the relationship between extensive reading and incidental vocabulary development and assert that extensive reading avails opportunities for a large vocabulary input leading to more incidental vocabulary learning. The authors quote studies that have explored the positive effects of extensive reading among them "writing and reading skills (Hafiz & Tudor, 1989), vocabulary development (Al-Homoud & Schmitt, 2009; Grabe & Stoller, 1997; Horst, 2005; Pigada & Schmitt, 2006), grammar (Yang, 2001), reading comprehension (Bell, 2001), reading speed (Masrai & Milton, 2018b), general L2 proficiency (Cho & Krashen, 1994; Mason & Krashen, 1997), and attitude towards reading (Al-Homoud & Schmitt, 2009; Pigada & Schmitt, 2006" as cited in Alsaif & Masrai, p. 40).

Alahirsh (2014) also carried out a 9-week study with a pre-test and post-test using only the words found in the books read by the subjects. The scores revealed vocabulary

growth by the experimental group compared to the control group. The mean scores for the control group were 0.47 (SD = 0.14) in the pre-test and 0.49 (SD = 0.11) in the post-test. While the mean scores for the experimental group were 0.52 (SD = 0.14) in the pre-test and 1.52 (SD = 0.30) in the post-test" (P. 41). These scores indicate the significant effect of extensive reading on incidental vocabulary acquisition.

It is, therefore, important to understand how these learners navigate reading comprehension and to set apart the components of language comprehension that rely on it. As learners advance in grade levels, the percentage of emphasis placed on acquiring knowledge from texts goes higher and higher. These demands make reading comprehension a fundamental skill that pertains to school success for monolingual and bilingual minority students (Spätgens, 2017). One of the components that has attracted attention is vocabulary size.

School-to-home Collaborative Interventions

Collaborative discourse, as one of the teaching-learning techniques, has been the center of research for the past few decades and is closely associated with Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory. Ahmadian et al. (2014) carried out a quantitative study on the effect of collaborative dialogue on vocabulary acquisition and retention of EFL learners utilizing a collaborative group and another group of learners who worked independently on tasks. The findings revealed that collaborative teaching techniques had significant, immediate, and delayed effects on vocabulary acquisition and retention of the collaborative group compared to the individual group. In another quantitative method study investigating the impact of collaborative and individual tasks on L2 vocabulary acquisition by Korean learners who were randomly selected, the analysis of the test

results showed that the collaborative group acquired more vocabulary items (Kim, 2008). On the other hand, in their quantitative study, Swain and Lapkin (2001) concluded that "collaborative tasks (questioning, repeating, and negotiating of language that occur in collaborative tasks) might be more beneficial for L2 vocabulary acquisition than the individual tasks" (ibid, p.124). The authors concluded that a collaborative learning environment facilitates learners with opportunities to construct their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) collaboratively during interactions with peers with the same proficiency level and conceptual understanding. A Vygotskian learner is guided by and bound to participate in a supportive and social-instructional environment (Pavon & Perez). One set of influences on learners' vocabulary competency comprises exogenous child-and-family level factors that help to shape the context within which a child's reading growth occurs (Morgan et al.). One of these factors is the family's social class background **(**McCoach et al., 2006), which leads us to language and literacy-related actions of a learner and primary caregivers during early years. Literacy and language related resources that are available to each learner out of school context play a vital role in vocabulary development. These include but are not limited to the extent to which the learner engages in shared book reading or visits the library, accesses books for leisure reading at home, and or frequently interacts with primary caregivers who avail instruction using concepts about print and letter knowledge (Martin & Bennett, 2010). Besides these, interest in reading (print motivation), inattention (attention deficit), level of reading motivation, family environment that offers literacy support, and group reading activities avail extensive vocabulary to emergent readers (SEZGİN & Leyla, 2017).

According to Morgan et al. (2008), the collaborative reading related resources, activities, and instruction highlighted above make up a specifically appropriate conceptualization of the learner's reading related wealth. Parents and families in search of better economic opportunities make sacrifices for their children's literacy education because they believe literacy is a pathway and a means to an end (Morrell, 2017). In an article on Importance and Types of Parental Involvement in Education, Oranga et al. (2023) highlight the types and components of parental involvement in education which include but are not limited to "volunteering at school, guiding home-based learning, constant communication with the school, participating in school decision-making processes, provision of learning resources, creation of safe home environments for children (environments that encourage learning at home) and modeling/encouraging good behavior" (p. 1). Another qualitative study carried out in Kenya guided by Jane Epstein's postulates revealed that parents were not involved in their children's school activities, they did not expose them to educational environments, and they never volunteered at school. They also did not provide sufficient learning, resources/subsistence and they did not enlist as members of school committees and associations. Communication with the school to enquire about their children's academic progress and well-being was also absent (Oranga et al., 2022).

Creative Teaching and Learning

As Sawyer (2004) asserts, teaching has always been perceived as a creative art. Classrooms that utilize teacher creativity encounter improvisational teaching as a collaborative and emergent nature of effective classroom practice. Sawyer further states that conceiving of teaching as improvisational helps us to understand how curriculum

content aligns with the classroom practice during teaching. Critics of scripted curriculum are of the view that outstanding teachers apply high levels of creativity and profound content knowledge to their teaching. Bereiter (2005) argues that although creative teaching is a strategy that is more difficult to assess quantitatively, it leads to a deeper understanding of content among learners.

Unlike the scripted curriculum which emphasizes the activities and actions to be carried out by teachers during the teaching process, creative teaching perceives teachers as knowledgeable and expert professionals who have autonomy in their classrooms (Florida, 2002). However, Sawyer (2004) is quick to warn that the implementation of creative teaching calls for serious long-term investment in professional development of teachers, administrators, and rudimentary improvements in preservice teacher education. If implemented, it has the potential to lead to students with deeper understanding, higher order thinking skills and improved creative and social skills. Sawyer, (2003a) adds that creativity as an improvisational strategy is hinged in constructivism which views learning as a co-constructed endeavor. This leads us to neo-Piagetian social constructivists and the Vykotskian socio-culturists' focus on how knowledge is learned by and in groups (Palincsar, 1998; Rogoff, 1998).

Morrell, (2017) stresses that we need to critically emulate the works of Paris and Winn (2013) who strongly advocate for utilizing decolonizing methodologies in literacy research. This calls for embracing the courage to tackle complexity and difference and exploring the diverse ways that literacies are practiced in neighborhoods and communities at large (Brandt, 2015) with maximum respect to classroom

cultures/practices. Doing so will aid us in questioning what is working and what is not and assuming that success is possible.

Learner Contributions, Engagement, and Creative Thinking

Positive learning outcomes can only be achieved by students. So, along the process, learners are compelled to contribute to the learning process. Grifith (2004), believes that when learners have autonomy, it gives them some control over the learning process. This makes them responsible for their learning (Scharle & Szabó, 2000). Responsibility has the potential to raise learner motivation, which is a particularly important factor in successful language learning. Fleming et al. (2016) explored authentic learner engagement by encouraging imaginative thinking as an avenue through which students can 'connect with the world.' The qualitative findings revealed that students get more engaged and academically successful with imaginative and creative thinking opportunities. The findings also revealed a relationship between creative thinking and the learner's higher order thinking skills, reflexivity, and self-regulation.

Teacher Engagement and Discussions

Besides learner creativity, engagement, and contributions, teacher discussion facilitation techniques are of significant interest to researchers exploring student engagement or the lack of it. As a seasoned educator, I know teacher engagement is key during the development stages of a lesson plan. Finn and Schrodt (2016) explored how teacher-facilitated discussion techniques directly and indirectly impact their students' classroom engagement and interest. They carried out a pilot study with a smaller group and the main study with a larger group and both groups focused on freshmen and sophomore students at a private university in the southwestern U.S.A. They defined

teacher behavior using five distinct characteristics expressly the organizational structure of discussions, affirmation of student contributions, question led discussions and corrections of misinformation. The researchers bring to the fore the impact teacher facilitation of meaningful discourse channeled through authentic rather than ritualistic teacher-student engagement can have on learners.

Murphy et al., (2009) affirm that research literature is filled with evidence that highlights the critical role of discussion in comprehension and learning from reading. Discussion questions direct the attention of students to important information in a text, aid learners in forming connections across different parts of a text, and support students in monitoring their comprehension (Hartman, 1995 cited in Cervetti, G. N., & Hiebert, 2015). Elsewhere, Beck et al., (2013) laid emphasis on active processing of word meaning based on the thesis that the most viable way to promote fluent retrieval can best be promoted with active student engagement with a word and its meaning, for example comparing and contrasting meanings of words as opposed to receiving information directly from the teacher (e.g., Beck & McKeown, 1991 cited in McKeown & Beck, 2014).

Application of Morphological Knowledge

Morphology guides how we communicate in written and oral language, and evidence from research shows how morphological knowledge contributes to spelling, vocabulary, decoding, and reading comprehension measures (Carlisle, 2000, 2003; Goodwin, 2011; Kieffer & Lesaux, 2008; Kuo & Anderson, 2006; Siegel, 2008, cited in Goodwin et al. (2017). Like any other language, English is a language that has an exception to typically every rule given that it is a morphophonemic writing system

(Chomsky & Halle, 1968; Venesky, 1999 as cited in Goodwin et al.,). The exceptions are, therefore, morphological in nature, and the authors state that, for generations, teachers and their students have continuously complained about the difficulties associated with reading and writing in English. Stems, derivational affixes, and grammatical inflections are all cited as cues that learners use during the process of learning vocabulary.

Aziz et al. (2019) observe that reading is an avenue to knowledge, which makes it a valuable tool in the learning process, yet to master reading comprehension, there are essential intellectual abilities that learners need to internalize to an automaticity level. Vocabulary comes at the top of the list of these abilities because learners must understand the vocabulary in the text to read and comprehend it (Aziz et al.,). This is clearly brought out by Goodwin et al. (2017) study which examined the "overall trends regarding morphological instruction with the goals of determining whether morphological instruction supports literacy achievement and present a clear picture regarding what effective morphological instruction looks like in K–8 classrooms" (p.461). They note that there exist small differences in how groups of students get support from morphological knowledge in that for the typically achieving students, the knowledge augments their existing skills by adding a component of meaning to their literacy engagements.

On the other hand, morphological awareness can act as a compensatory mechanism that relies on meaning knowledge to overcome areas of deficit like phonological processing for learners with reading disabilities (Arnbak & Elbro, 2000 as cited in Goodwin et al.,). It can also act as a bridge from the English learners' native language to second language by identifying similar units of meaning within both languages. This in turn supports reading in content areas where texts are culturally

decontextualized. When it comes to learners with reading disabilities, morphological awareness avails a compensatory mechanism that heavily relies on meaningful knowledge, which in turn helps to overcome areas of deficit.

Aziz et al.'s study worked with a sample size focused on morphological awareness and its correlation with the reading comprehension of senior high school students. Data to measure morphological awareness and reading comprehension was collected using a test of morphological awareness and the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). The results revealed that 85% of the students answered the test satisfactorily at reading Achievement Level 4. This showed t significant relationship between morphological awareness and reading comprehension with a 0.527 correlation and a significance level of 0.01. This meant that, although the students answered many questions correctly, they seemed to struggle with questions containing challenging content.

These findings align with a longitudinal study (Berninger et al., 2010) which focused on the growth of phonological and morphological awareness whose findings show that phonological awareness is different from morphological awareness. The researchers argue that although it hits peak during fourth to sixth grades, the development maintains a rapid growth which continues through senior high school. On the other side, the more learners grow and develop higher order literacy skills, the less important phonological awareness becomes. Berninger et al. therefore recommended the inclusion of morphological awareness in reading models.

Elsewhere, more studies have been conducted to investigate the relationship between morphological awareness and reading comprehension (Curinga, 2014; August &

Calderon, 2013; Kieffer & Box, 2013). In the 2014 study by Curinga, morphological awareness had an impact on reading comprehension only for learners' higher proficiency as they were aware of the importance of morphological structure to language learning, an ability their counterparts with low proficiency lacked. A study by Deacon et al. (2014), also showed consistent results with morphological awareness and phonological awareness facilities complementing each other. It is noteworthy that all the above studies focused on L1, L2 and ESL learners with extremely limited literature on how the presence or lack of morphological awareness impacts literacy development of high school youth in general classrooms. Carlisle (2010) is of the view that morphological awareness has the potential to support literacy achievement more so in the areas of phonology, orthography and word meaning based on data from 16 studies focusing on different languages.

Use of Semantic Relations

In their study on The Semantic Network, Lexical Access, and Reading Comprehension, an Individual Differences Study, (Spätgens & Schoonen, 2018) used semantic priming, the influence of lexical access and semantic relations on reading comprehension with Dutch monolingual and minority students. Reading comprehension and the control variables such as vocabulary size, decoding skill, and mental processing speed were tested through standardized tasks. Only vocabulary size significantly contributed to the reading scores. This emphasized how the number of words known by the learner impact reading comprehension. This concept is reinforced by (Hogan et al., 2011) who assert that language weaknesses serve as well documented precursors to comprehension difficulties.

Various studies have established that knowledge of semantic relations contributes to reading comprehension. Among them, Cremer and Schoonen (2013) targeted the relevance of contrast between context-independent and context-dependent semantic knowledge for reading comprehension. The researchers employed "The Word Associates Test" (Schoonen & Verhallen, 2008), which required their 10-11year-old participants to distinguish subordinates, superordinates, synonyms, meronyms, and define characteristics from contextually related distractor items, such as *banana–slip*. The results revealed that learners who thrived at selecting the context-independently related items also obtained higher reading scores. This suggested that the items might be particularly important for reading comprehension and that more extensive semantic knowledge contributes to reading comprehension. They opine that widespread activation in well-developed semantic networks supports reading comprehension by allowing the reader to connect related concepts within the text more easily and quickly. They used a semantic classification task namely, animacy decision, in which children were required to decide for each word whether it represented an animate or inanimate concept.

Sentence Level Grammar (Syntax)

Learners rely heavily on sentence-level grammar as the key to lexical comprehension, and several studies on reading comprehension have highlighted language skills responsible for decoding and comprehension. According to the multi-component perspective of reading comprehension, language skills fall into lower and higher-level skills (Hogan et al., 2011). Lower-level skills essential for understanding words in a text and sentences include decoding, vocabulary, and grammar. Therefore, they serve as a foundation for developing higher-level language skills. In this streak, higher-level skills,

which include inferencing, comprehension monitoring, and using prior knowledge, enable the learner to go beyond single-word (vocabulary level) and sentence comprehension to construct an integrated representation of the meaning from the text. This is referred to as the mental models that learners use to develop higher-level language skills and their ability to construct accurate mental models also enhance their word recognition skills, vocabulary, and grammar. Although the two skills are at different levels, they complement each other (Hogan et al., 2011; Silva & Cain, 2015). According to Hu (2010), as students advance to higher grades of schooling, the importance and emphasis on lower-level reading skills gradually decreases. In this vein, Chi and Chiou's (2015) study, which employed think-aloud tasks and questionnaires, provided empirical evidence to support the claim that word recognition and elliptical sentences posed major difficulties for students during reading.

Explaining the Meaning of Words Within Context

Phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension are five key pillars that the National Reading Panel (NRP; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000) identified as essential components during reading instruction that lead to a very high chance of success in reading instruction and policy.

Castro-García (2017) affirms that there are many strategies teachers and learners can employ to acquire vocabulary, including creatively coming up with their own strategies. On the other hand, Morrell (2017) states that it is nonelective to consider multiliteracies and multilingualism as desired ends of a critical literacy education. We cannot afford to shy away from conversations about the [politics of language in the literacy field nor can we hold onto language and literacy ideologies that do harm to many

of our children] (p. 461). Tang and Sun (2013) observe that contextual clues, phonetic and semantic components are often utilized to infer the meanings of ambiguous words and sentences in Chinese Classical texts.

We cannot turn a blind eye to the inequitable material, distribution of teachers, texts, digital tools, and technologies. We should work towards the necessary tools for critical literacies education, one that privileges students, their local languages, and literacies, and that creates opportunities for them to use their literacy skills to develop a love of self and a sustained engagement with the world (Morrell, 2008). This needs to be viewed in the same way as intentionally withholding food or water from a starving person. The inaccessibility to critical literacies education anywhere impoverishes us everywhere. Access to critical literacies is not just a civil right; we must reimagine critical literacies as a human entitlement, and teachers, researchers, policymakers, and advocates across the globe must come together as a community if we are going to make this happen.

How is Vocabulary Acquisition Measured?

Research shows that learners' vocabulary size is linked directly to their ability to accomplish different assignments effortlessly. This stems from basic oral communication to reading extensive texts in the target language (Castro-García, 2017). Vocabulary knowledge has a direct impact on how students learn, and it is one of the key elements of language teachers and researchers in tracking students' vocabulary acquisition and language progress. Campano et al. (2013) reiterate this by noting that "the 'successes' of a school, teacher, or student is to a large extent tangled to the notion of literacy" (p. 314), which are measured with comprehension tests that operate on the assumption that

students' social and authentic practices can be measured or captured in institutional testing and accountability situations. With reference to vocabulary measures, Nation, and Webb (2011) are of the view that measuring lexical richness gives us affordances to distinguish between the language of more and less proficient learners. To measure vocabulary is to establish what students know and use this knowledge to map the relationship between vocabulary size and language use (Castro-García, 2017). Schmitt (2010) contends that "vocabulary has strong relationships with language skills" (p. 4).

One of the ways vocabulary acquisitions gets measured is through English reading comprehension (Castro-García, 2017). As pertains to measuring vocabulary, research suggests that the ways to evaluate an individual's vocabulary level are limited and new innovations are required. However, to date, various tests have been widely used (Pignot-Shahov, 2012). Some of the tests developed for research and educational purposes are English as a Foreign Language Vocabulary Test (Meara, 1992), the Vocabulary Size Test (Nation & Beglar, 2007), Tests of English for International Communication (TOEIC), Assessment of Communicative English. Terraza et al. (2009) and Alonso (2013) reviewed more than 30 studies that dealt with native and non-native English speakers' vocabulary size. The participants ranged from primary to university level students whose vocabulary sizes were measured using the Vocabulary Levels Test - VLT (Webb & Nation (2017).

Aizawa and Nadasdy (2017) point out that as educators and researchers develop vocabulary tests, it is exigent to decide the precise definition of knowing a vocabulary. The researchers carried out a study to measure the gaps between Visual Test (VT) and Aural Test (AT) of students' receptive vocabulary knowledge. They sampled 140

participants who were lower-intermediate Engineering students taking English as part of their course. The findings revealed that the VT scores were statistically significant as compared to those of AT.

In another study, Doddapaneni and Senkamalam (2018) looked at the differences in receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge in terms of word frequency level and vocabulary size in 90 undergraduate learners of English as a Second Language (ESL). They utilized two quantitative vocabulary tests; Receptive Vocabulary Levels Test (Schmitt et al., 2001) and the Productive Vocabulary Levels Test (Laufer & Nation, 1999). The findings revealed that receptive word knowledge is higher than their productive word knowledge and receptive vocabulary size is larger than their productive vocabulary size, with a vocabulary gap size of 27%.

Conclusively, we can state that vocabulary tests are developed with respect to what the examiner aims at testing from expressive, receptive, productive, passive, visual, auditory speed, and frequency.

The Role of the Teacher in Vocabulary Development

Motivational Importance of the Teacher to Students

The concept of how teachers contribute to the learning environment and mood might go unnoticed or better still overlooked given the rigor and mandates of the curriculum. Baten (2019) emphasizes that tasked with the responsibility of creating a stimulating learning environment in which children can use, refine, and extend their skills, it is easier said than done. Miller et al. (2019) carried out a classroom-based study on mediating mechanism which afforded teacher practices connected with mathematics identity through motivational beliefs (i.e., expectancies, task values, and cost value). The

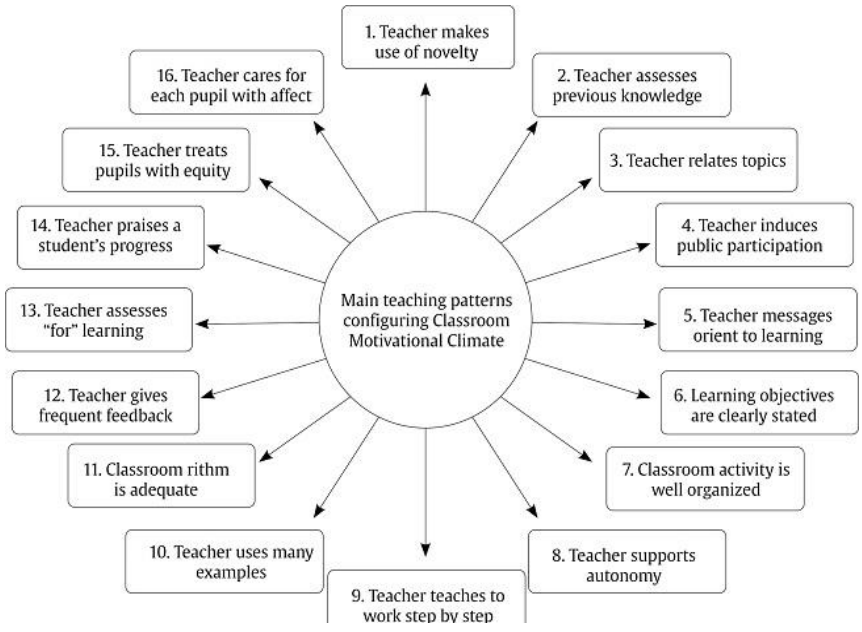
study participants comprised 525 sixth-grade students (48.6% male; 64% European American, 34% African American, 2% other races; 58.6% free-or-reduced lunch) in the United States. The findings suggest that competence beliefs and task values, except for cost value, mediated the association between teacher practices and mathematics identity. It is noteworthy that these pathways differed by student's race.

Research highlights the importance of previous learning experiences in shaping the teachers' personal theories and beliefs about language teaching and learning. Alonzo-Tapia et al. (2019) explored Teacher Motivational Knowledge and Goals and Expectancies Related to their Students' Contribution to such Differences and, consequently, on the Effects of Classroom Motivational Climate (CMC). Using a multilevel model of relationships, two of the questions they explored are (a) *teachers' knowledge and motivational characteristics* and (b) *student's attribution of perceived motivational improvement to teachers (APMIT).* They had a total study population of 2,223 high school students and 95 teachers. The findings divulged that the teacher motivational quality (TMQ) has an indirect significant effect on the differences between classrooms in CMC attribution of perceived improvement in motivational variables to teachers. They also indicated that teachers' characteristics vary in the way they contribute to TMQ and CMC. Alonzo et al. (2012) cite several validation studies (Alonso -Tapia & Fernández, 2008; Alonso-Tapia, 2017; Alonso-Tapia, Nieto et al., 2013; Alonso-Tapia & Villasana 2014; Villasana & Alonso-Tapia, 2015) which show that the higher the degree at which students perceive the CMC as learning oriented, the higher their degree of attributing it to their teachers in relation to their perceived improvement in the following motivational attributes: interest, perceived ability, disposition to effort, success

expectancies, self-regulation, resilience, satisfaction with teacher work, and greater achievement. Alonzo-Tapia et al. (2019) correspondingly note that teacher created CMCs differ from one teacher to the next and it is dependent on the degree to which they (i) know how to do it, (ii) expect to be able to do it, (iii) create such an environment if they have a personal objective (iv) they have a personal deep-rooted interest in the student as a person (v) have developed automaticity in behavioral patterns which conform to a learning-oriented CMC. They explored perceived CMC as an individual student characteristic and after averaging CMC as a group characteristic concluded that they are central and related variables in the model because the latter variable is estimated from the former.

Figure 1

Classroom Motivational Climate (CMC) adopted from Alonzo-Tapia et al. (2019)



Importance of Vocabulary Acquisition to Struggling Readers

It is of vital importance to first understand the operational definition of the term 'struggling readers as pertains to the current study. The term has been used in the past to describe a learner who is not successful in reading at school (Triplett et al., 2016). The authors further this argument by noting that the use of the term struggling reader in the U.S.A. might communicate less about the reader and more about the curricula and policy context used to frame constructions of literacy proficiency. He sets out to examine the perceptions of pre-service teachers in relation to the term 'struggling readers.' Moreau (2014) carried out a phenomenological case study which identified common themes that included teachers' difficulty in defining the term struggling learners and tended to associate the difficulties beyond the students' control. Gándara et al. (2003) note that students attending schools in urban settings rarely experience the same opportunities to develop their literacy skills as their counterparts in suburban settings. Inner-city schools located in large city centers are often characterized by the high concentration of students of color and those from low-income backgrounds. Students from inner city schools disproportionately demonstrate below-average outcomes on large scale assessments due to this discrepancy. An analysis of NAEP data from large city districts demonstrated that 10 of the 11 participating districts had high to very high proportions of learners scoring below established proficiency levels (Lutkus et al., 2007). In six of the 11 districts studied, more than 50% of students scored *below basic* in reading as compared with the national rate of 34% (p. 196). According to August and Shanahan (2006), a large percentage of this group of learners exhibit reading comprehension difficulties more so as they transition into high school. It is in this disposition that the current study explored

perceptions of high school students and their teachers as relates to emerging trends in vocabulary development. The researcher hopes that the findings will shed light on other avenues teachers can embrace to improve the current trajectory.

One of the key factors that influences the ability of readers to make meaning of their texts is their understanding of the words in those texts. Studies carried out in the past century focusing on this area established a robust relationship between vocabulary knowledge and texts comprehension. The findings revealed and affirmed that a person's vocabulary size is a very strong predictor of the quality of one's reading comprehension (Ricketts et al., 2007; Sénéchal et al., 2006; & Thorndike, 1917 cited in Cervetti et al., 2016). Despite the robust and consistent relationship, there is evidence to show that schooling has a limited impact on students' vocabulary development. This is an indicator that students who join school with low levels of vocabulary size and knowledge will continue with the same trend and they are more likely to struggle with text comprehension across their schooling years (Christian et al., 2000 cited in Cervetti et al., 2016).

The reading comprehension difficulties stem from limited vocabulary knowledge especially among older struggling readers irrespective of whether they are language minority learners or native English speakers (Stahl & Nagy, 2006). Whereas skilled readers encounter much of their new vocabulary while reading more texts (Sternberg, 1987), learners with low vocabulary levels do not rely on learning new vocabulary through wide reading. Struggling readers therefore encounter fewer words, especially low frequency words than their skilled counterparts (Stanovich, 1986). This is what Morgan et al. (2008) referred to as the Mathew Effect. It describes an increasing advantage or

disadvantage that follows an initial advantage or disadvantage. Over time, better readers get better while poor readers get poorer because they avoid reading. Vocabulary acquisition is therefore important for struggling readers because it is believed to close the achievement gap that exists between learners from impoverished economic backgrounds and their counterparts from suburban neighborhoods (National Institute for Literacy, 2003).

Creating Successful Learning Experiences in a Conducive Learning Environment

Classroom management is widely conceptualized as the learning relationship between teachers and their students (Wubbels et al., 2015). The authors used a relational approach to interrogate classroom management in lower secondary schools. They focused on what classroom activities teachers report when asked to discuss classroom learning situations, what activities they undertake while participating in classroom management initiatives for skills improvement and finally explored the teachers' perceptions of their learning outcomes. The target population was lower secondary school teachers since classroom management had been identified as one of the areas of improvement. According to Pianta et al. (2012) classroom management model or quality classroom management is a prerequisite for successful learning.

Teacher educators have persistently argued that classroom management is the most critical pedagogical skill that teachers are obliged to equip themselves with to get the best out of classroom interaction with and among their learners (Solheim, 2018). Their study aimed at adding to the understanding of how lower high school teachers learn and improve their classrooms in the context of a known educational intervention plan. The researchers addressed three aspects of classroom interaction: instructional support,

emotional support, and classroom organization with a sample of 18 teachers from 14 Norwegian lower high schools. The teachers utilized digital logs to report on their teaching experiences and the specific activities they implemented. The research findings indicated that successful classroom experiences were highly dependent on their individual or their colleagues' deep-rooted knowledge of classroom interaction and teacher ongoing reflexivity. Solheim et al. recommended integration of research-based interventions and teacher learning strategies which would support teachers towards achieving full teaching potential. Eyal and Roth (2011) believe that principals who enact transformational leadership dimensions tend to involve their teachers during decision-making process and avail open channels of communication between them. This strategy increases teacher motivation and with it positive perceptions of their profession.

Tamim (2020), carried out a qualitative study on Blended Learning for Learner Empowerment: Voices from the Middle East in which synchronous virtual classrooms, asynchronous self-study, and face-to-face sessions were used. Students had the autonomy to give their suggestions for course design preferences that would suit their needs and enhance their learning experiences. A sample of 21 graduate students took part in the study and the strong salient themes for successful instructional strategies pointed to the importance of student-centered practices, especially collaborative projects, and learner-led projects.

The Teacher as a Policy Developer

Language education policies, unlike other policies, do not move from policy into the classroom for implementation. Instead, negotiations that occur at each institutional level create avenues for interpretation and reinterpretation which leads to policy

manipulation (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007). For the past few decades, researchers have highlighted the role educators play in the language policy making process. Garcia´ and Menken (2010a) state that, teachers just like bureaucrats, have the responsibility of making policies at the local or classroom level. Therefore, as key players in the policy-making process, teachers, literacy coaches and administrators should not be viewed as mere conduits of curricula policy development. It is important to note that teachers are an integral part of the language policy-making process as they interpret and modify the policies they receive (Evans & Hornberger, 2005). During the teaching process, educators engage in meaningful and generative activities as they make sense of the policy initiatives in ways that draw on, reflect, and contribute to their identities, relationships, and understandings (Hargreaves, 2003).

The Teacher as a Transformer

Teaching as a way of making a difference in the lives of students is education for growth purpose nurtured through intentional creative action and purposeful teacher-student engagement in forming identities (Shigo, 2016). The key aim of teaching as outlined in education policies is to make a difference in the lives of students, and a commitment to the pursuit of excellence as expressed in the language of hope which aims at creating a good life within a relationship of care between teachers and their learners' lives. Shigo's narrative research project investigated *The Impact of Transformative Teaching on the Teacher Identity Formation of Undergraduates Pursuing Certification in the School of Education.* It sought to explore how students perceived teachers they described as transformative. Shigo collected student's narratives of teachers who made a difference in their lives and concluded that,

> "Transformative teaching is a significant alternative to the test-driven status quo of American educational theory because, although it is a practical and theoretic struggle, it allows for a renewed emphasis on personal excellence for students through the guiding relationship of care with a teacher committed to making a difference in students' lives" (p. iii).

Inner-city Classroom Dimensions, Issues, and Struggling Readers

A report from The Annie E. Casey Foundation observes that, youth from marginalized, racialized, and underrepresented groups form nearly half of all children in the United States of America (Kumasi, & Hughes-Hassell, 2016). These racialized children have been labeled as 'at risk' or 'high risk' by educational institutions including but not limited to schools and libraries. Youth who enroll in and attend inner-city schools become a litmus test for the health of the entire education system in the United States. These youth become performance indicators of the quality of education stakeholders are providing for our future generation (Kumasi & Hughes-Hassell, 2017). Previous studies have laid blame on the marginalized youth for low performance. Kumasi and Hughes-Hassell are of the view that the struggles of this group should be viewed as a warning that the problem lies with the institutions and not the students.

According to Ricketts et al. (2007), the data used to report scores does not always reflect the day-to-day interactions that take place in the classrooms between teachers and their students. Although mandated states assessments and benchmark tests do provide useful data about student achievement, the role of classroom-based formative assessments, the informal assessments of how the students navigate their vocabulary acquisition during lessons need to be captured (Ford-Connors et al., 2016). The emphasis

of CCSS is on skills acquisition where even kindergarten learners are required to master 90 plus skills that develop towards mastery such as studying the character, comprehending the key idea in a story, rhyming, patterning, and identifying the elements of a story (Union, 2014).

> *CCSS has underemphasized the importance of pleasure reading and significantly overemphasized the use of standardized tests, broadening the curriculum, scripted teaching, and long hours of didactic instruction. The overwhelming demand for the mastery of skills in K–3 has resulted in significant inconvenience and a call to withdraw the requirements from these grades (UNION, p.41).*

The investigation and collection of such data will play an important role in writing the next chapter as it offers essential feedback for teachers to assess their students' progress towards the acquisition of vocabulary, content, and achievement of grade-level benchmarks (Valencia, 2011). Teacher and student talk are therefore one of the richest sources and tools that are the most accessible as they provide a firsthand glimpse into the level of how students develop understanding of new content (Auckerman, 2007; Johnson, 2019). In a classroom situation, the challenges that students encounter stem from the lack of cognitive strategies and metacognitive skills necessary for efficient study in all curriculum areas (Kozulin, 2007). This study attempts to shift the blame game pointers beyond the notion of risk and failure to investigate how learners navigate their literacy development while utilizing emergent instructional trends in classrooms.

The Scripted Curriculum

Overview of the Scripted Curriculum Policy. According to Beatty (2011), in the 1960s and 1980s, contemporary models of the scripted curriculum like 'Direct Instruction' and 'Success for All' were created to address the needs of at-risk and 'disadvantaged' students as part of comprehensive school reforms. In the 1990s, the above models became the center of reform strategies at a time when New York City and Los Angeles mandated the use of scripted curricula in reading, among them Success for All and Open Court in all schools that were classified as low-performing (Milosovic, 2007). The two strategies were funded and expanded by the controversial Reading First Program which was created as a response to the National Reading Panel's (NRP) report (c), large-scale review of research that focused on how children learn to read. It was set up by No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2001), a U.S. Act of Congress that required states to develop assessments in basic skills (i.e., on annual testing, annual academic progress, report cards, and teacher qualifications).

The scripted curriculum was therefore imposed on schools as an effort to meet the 2001 federal No Child Left Behind Law (NCLB) to improve students' academic achievement (Nicholson et al., 2016). It aimed at ensuring that all students, regardless of race, creed, color, or social status, had access to and received a fair and equal high-quality education (Kena et al., 2016). This curriculum was geared towards instructional uniformity in all classrooms with demands on continuous monitoring of high-stakes testing, and consequences for teachers and students if they did not meet the set standards (Crocco & Costigan, 2006). It was marketed as the most effective literacy program for improving literacy skills among economically challenged youth who exhibited the lowest

test scores. Curriculum publishers took advantage of these changes in the curriculum and responded promptly to the demand for materials aligning with the new and rigid requirement. It displayed explicit and systematic content by scripting word for word what the reading teachers would say at every step of their teaching. This strategy limits teachers and learners alike from exploring to intensify vocabulary acquisition and reinforcement which in turn affects learner's competency in reading comprehension (Fitz, & Nikolaidis, 2019).

The researcher shares one of the CCSS learning materials in the picture below. It shows that teachers get ready-made teaching-learning content contrary to old times when the teacher had to read through content and prepare lesson plans and teaching-learning resources. At the bottom left corner, it reads, "No preparation, print and go.....friendly."

Figure 2

Ready-made Teaching Resources Extracted from CCSS Classroom Teaching Materials

The questions that arise from the picture above are, how equipped are teachers if they do not take time to prepare for their lessons? Without prior preparation, how do teachers navigate the content during teaching? How do they handle shortcomings related to the teaching-learning aids, and delivery time?

Similarly, Noddings (2013) asks Deweyan questions about the purpose of education in a democratic society. "Is it to supply every child with a pre-specified body of knowledge and skills, or is it to help each child find out what he or she is good at and would like to know and do?" (Noddings, p. 6). She, however, believes in the moral purpose of transformative teaching whose endeavor is to support and nurture each child to be who they most want to become.

It has become the accepted norm in schools worldwide for educators to use standardized curricula and lesson plans as a teaching and learning strategy to support and improve instructional practices with the aim of closing achievement gaps (Shalem et al., 2018). In 2009 the scripted curriculum was accelerated in many states by the introduction and implementation of the CCSS (Brown & Kappes, 2012).

Effects of Scripted Curriculum on Vocabulary Acquisition. In a classroom situation, social interactions activate stored schemas to facilitate building new ones. This process can only take place with the mediation of vocabulary (McVee, Dunsmore & Gavelek, 2005). The social and instructional interactions avail opportunities for teachers and students to develop collaborative learning partnerships as they work together to build a trustworthy understanding of students' capabilities as well as weak areas (Ford-Connors et al., 2017). However, in classrooms utilizing scripted curriculum, the dynamics change and Dresser (2012) asserts that scripted reading programs have had a negative impact on

teachers and students all over the nation. When the teachers become too limited, they fail to make choices that are beneficial to the students and fail to meet their student's learning needs (Edwards, 2011). According to Carl (2014), scripted curricula often limit teacher autonomy pushing them to act as robots instead of professionals. The consequents are teachers' and students' expectations that are shaped by someone else (Milner, 2014). Standardized curricula only train students to take tests instead of involving them in engaging and meaningful learning experiences (Carl, 2014).

Why is a Scripted Curriculum Used with Struggling Readers? One might question how the scripted curriculum became so popular and fully adopted, given its nature of rigidity. It did succeed as the federal government used the Reading First initiative embedded in the NCLB (Coles, 2012) and discontinued federal funding to programs that did not follow the ideas of 'good reading instruction.' This mandate pressured schools that served students from 'low-income' backgrounds to implement the scripted curriculum because they relied highly on federal Title 1 funding.

In a 2018 study by Knight et al., on *Scripted and Unscripted Science Lessons for Children with Autism and Intellectual Disability,* efficacy, efficiency, and teacher preference of scripted and unscripted task analyzed lessons were investigated. The findings revealed that the scripted and unscripted lessons were equally effective with all students, but the unscripted lessons appeared to be more productive and favored by the teachers.

Critics of Scripted Curricula. Since its inception, scripted curriculum has been variously criticized. Majority of the school districts adopted these curricula in compliance with the state mandates (Griffith, 2008; Milosovic, 2007 cited in Dresser, 2012). The

authors assert that scripted reading and comprehension programs have negatively impacted teachers and their learners across the U.S. The critics assert that scripted curricula de-professionalized teaching which led to "shrinkage space" for teachers in terms of decision-making. Another criticism was depersonalizing the human connections nurtured by a more student-centered curriculum and pedagogy. In addition, the emphasis on fidelity, uniformity, control, and monitoring resulted in reduced play time for students. Monitors who wander from classroom to classroom ensuring that teachers are on the mandated pages create a lot of anxiety among teachers.

Shalem et al. (2018) report that, despite the good intent of the standardized curriculum, it has received recurring criticism since the 1970s and 1980s for deskilling teachers. Critics of scripted curriculum opine that narrowing occurs during teaching resulting in fragmented and decontextualized curriculum which translates into instructional tasks that lack a clear connection to the course. The materials that are taught highlight only basic knowledge and skills as opposed to complex ideas and critical skills building (Altwerger, 2005; Au, 2011; Gerstle-Pepin & Woodside-Jiron, 2005; Land & Moustafa, 2005 cited in Bausell & Glazier, 2018). More so, at high school levels, educators are faced with an uphill task in their struggle to produce high achieving students within a very rigid limited time frame (Lobascher, 2011). Au (2011) argues that teachers' classroom practices have increasingly become standardized by high stakes testing and scripted curriculum which offer teachers a pre-packed and rigid curriculum aimed specifically at teaching for tests.

Strauss (2012) cited in Gunes (2020) notes that, schools have been turned into "test-prep factories that ironically fail to live up to the "No Child Left Behind" concept,

especially having a negative impact on the educational ladders of Latino and underserved Black students while inconveniencing the education system" (p. 41). The opponents similarly assert that neither the architects of the CCSS nor the teachers who are the implementors understand what should be taught in which grades ("What's Wrong with Common Core ELA Standards?" 2013).

Fitz and Nikolaidis (2019) conceptualize scripted curriculum as a product of an extended and complex movement towards greater traditionalism and standardization in education arenas. They assert that scripted curricula fail to satisfy the democratic values that should be inherent in our educational practices. Instead, it advocates for a further infringement on the democratic potential of public education in the United States of America. Fitz, and Nikolaidis, recognize that despite the rise of scripted curricula to popularity, teaching materials have utilized varying degrees of scripting to manage the delivery of content dating back almost 200 years.

It is noted that early versions of the scripted curricula were designed specifically for the above populations in mind. According to Beatty, (2011), it was assumed that these modes of instruction would help to overcome cultural and material 'disadvantages' students experienced.

Mathis (2012) asserts that predetermining and narrowing the curriculum pushes aside non-tested subjects, the knowledge, and skills to be learned. Subsequently, students are robbed of engagement with other disciplines which reinforces creativity and skills building in diverse areas. Mathis reiterates that, in urban schools where the scripted and narrowed curricula is emphasized, students lack exposure to broader and more sophisticated curricula.

Although the metaphor of scripted teaching emphasizes important skills for teachers such as presentation, delivery, voice, movement, and timing, it is seen as problematic as it aims at a solo performer reading from a script with the students as the passive and observant recipients of knowledge (Timpson & Tobin, 1982 cited in Paez, 2018). The performance metaphor therefore conclusively suggests that an excellent performer could pass as an excellent teacher even without comprehending any of the content being taught. However, this should not be confused with performance pedagogy where the teacher is responsible for sustaining discussion with a constantly changing role of expert to discussion facilitator and mentor (Paez). In this model, a natural power dynamic exists between the teacher and students due to the teacher's role shifting throughout the lesson.

According to sociocultural and social constructivist theories, for teaching to be effective, it must be improvisational because when teaching is scripted and directed by the teacher, the students lack opportunities to co-construct their own knowledge (Erikson, 1982). This occurs when the teacher controls the flow of lessons, strictly limiting when to respond and the impact of their contribution on the flow of the lesson (as in the Initiation Response Evaluation (IRE) sequences studied by Mehan, 1979).

Table 1

Initiation-Response Model of Classroom Interaction

Teacher role: Initiation	**Students' role:** **Responses/discussion**	**Teacher role:** **Evaluation**

The teacher asks a question and randomly selects students to reply.	The teacher avails numerous chances for students to respond while trailing all responses	The teacher synthesizes and evaluates only the correct answers.

Bottom-Up Model of Learning in High School Classrooms: The Good and the Bad

In her study on Teaching across Semiotic Modes with Multilingual Learners: translanguaging in an Australian Classroom, Ollerhead (2019) observes that understanding the depth and diversity of linguistic resources and funds of knowledge that students bring to the classroom and how these can enrich classroom learning experiences of all students is scanty. In this qualitative ethnographic case study, Ollerhead and her research team collaborated with teachers to enact a language policy that involved utilizing translanguaging (Garcia, 2009) to enhance communication and classroom instruction among learners from migrant backgrounds. Their main objective "was to draw upon students' observable languaging practices from their full repertoire of languages, and to tap into their existing cultural and linguistic funds of knowledge to support their academic language development and foster their linguistic and personal identities in the classroom."

Norton reiterates that "teaching practices that tap into students' diverse cultural and linguistic funds of knowledge hold a mirror up to students that reflects their identity in a positive light. Such experiences are crucial to ensuring learner engagement and investment in the practices of the classroom" Ollerhead emphasized the concept of multiliteracies (The New London Group 1996; Cope & Kalantzis, 2000) and how teachers could use classroom texts to draw upon multiple modes of meaning making and

communication "including visual (images, photos, drawings, color); audio (sound effects, music); gestural (gesture, movement, facial expression) and spatial (layout, organization of objects). This is underscored by Hull and Moje's (2012) notion of funds of knowledge which refer to the bodies of cultural/indigenous knowledge that occur within the students' households or social networks. One teacher explored the potential of multilingual and multimodal strategies to support her students during interaction with texts they traditionally found problematic. This is in line with Norton (2000) who hypothesized that teaching practices that support educators to tap into diverse cultural and linguistic funds of knowledge of their students provide a mirror for learners to get a reflection of their identity.

On the other side, Ledder et al. (2004) are of the view that abstract cognitive challenges, as well as conceptual, complex, and multidimensional stimuli, require an extension of previous approaches to empirical aesthetics. It follows therefore that depending on one's schema, some learners face challenges of seeing past certain channels of information based on their connection to their memories of past experiences. These have the potential to impact/influence the elements of vocabulary development. They opine that a top-down executive model is confronted by a bottom-up model where, the perceptual and contextual elements uncovered in the bottom-up processing are met with a more top-down executive consideration in which viewers attempt to locate and combine all information collected in the prior processing stages in order to form one coherent meaning, matching this to initial schema and expectations, and then attempt to formulate an appropriate evaluative or physical response, culminating in the creation of meaning, associations, evaluations, and initial outcomes.

Contribution of Proposed Study to the Extant Literature

Despite all the above developments, (McIntyre et al., 2008) report that there exists limited quantitative research on the achievement outcomes of curricula. They observe that most studies have focused more on specific reading curricula, for instance, Direct Instruction, Success for All, or Open Court. This creates a gap in the literature that necessitates further research on this topic to hypothesize the impact literacy curricula programs have exerted on the education system in its entirety. It is on this basis that the researcher proposed a mixed methods study to explore what teachers and learners perceive of the avenues they utilize to navigate vocabulary acquisition and literacy skills development.

On the other hand, qualitative research and available literature in the same area is grounded in teacher's opinions on its adoption. To this effect, their views are split where some observe that the curricular is supportive in structuring the education standards while others are of the view that scripts deprive them of their professional autonomy (Barrett et al., 2018) subsequently preventing them from appropriately addressing the literacy needs of their students (Carl, 2014) redefining the teachers' roles, restricting their autonomy, and naturalizing their dependency on scripts.

Elsewhere, Pease-Alvarez and Cifka (2010) note that the top-down, one-size-fits-all policy mandate did not factor in an understanding of the English Learners' (ELs) literacy instructional needs. The authors support policies that empower teachers to provide a quality education that addresses the needs, interests, and the understanding of all learners especially the ELs who are more often underserved. Such policies should promote the development of reflective, inquiring, and knowledgeable teachers who are

key players in the policy-making process. This study will therefore bring to the fore what students are missing in terms of vocabulary acquisition and literacy skills development considering that the researcher will have an opportunity to interact and listen to their experiences and those of their teachers.

Under Title 1 of the No Child Left Behind Act (2001), each state was charged with the task of demonstrating, based on academic assessments, what constitutes adequate yearly progress toward enabling all public elementary school and secondary school students to meet the state's student academic achievement standards. Each state was required to produce a set of "annual measurable objectives" (AMOs) in mathematics and reading or language arts, which are still being used today. Within these standards, 95% of students must "meet or exceed [the] objectives in any particular year" for the school to make its adequate yearly progress (AYP). If a school does not achieve AYP for two consecutive years, it was deemed a school "In Need of Improvement" and was required to make certain changes to the school system, including allowing students to transfer from the building, offering supplemental services, taking corrective action, and restructuring staff and program implementation. At the end of every school year, public schools were required to file reports with their states, to be used to generate the School Report Card, and published by the state Education Department for public consumption. Essentially, the law requires each state to use a standardized system for assessing whether its schools are educating students properly, and then advertise the outcomes of the schools' assessments for all to see. This study set out to explore what teachers and students are doing differently in their quest to navigate literacy development.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

The Constructivist and Positivist Paradigms

This study leans on a constructivist paradigm (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017) to understand the subjective world of human experience (Guba & Lincoln, 1989) as cited in (Kivunja & Kuyini). On the other hand, the positivist paradigm is limited to data collection and interpretation from an objective viewpoint (Park et al., 2020).

The constructivist approach aims at getting into the heads of study participants to make sense of what they are thinking (mental processes) or the meaning they make of the world around them. It is, therefore, imperative to note that the researcher endeavors to understand the viewpoint of the subjects being observed, rather than the viewpoint of the observer. Heather (2020) views constructivism as striving to analyze the language acquisition process, as opposed to Chomsky's ideas of innate grammar, and studying the final state of language acquisition devices (LAD).

In this study, the researcher attempted to demystify the term 'paradigm' because as (Kivunja & Kuyini) assert, students and early career researchers find it not only elusive to articulate but particularly challenging to apply in research proposals. The authors adopted an ethnographic and hermeneutic methodology drawing on their experience as research methods lecturers to highlight the key aspects of research paradigms that researchers should internalize to be able to adequately address it in their research. They cite Kuhn (1962) who propounds that the word paradigm means a philosophical way of thinking with its etiology in Greek where it refers to a pattern (Kivunja & Kuyini). The term is used in educational research to describe a researcher's world perspective (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006 cited in Kivunja & Kuyini). A research

paradigm "constitutes the abstract beliefs and principles that shape how a researcher sees the world, and how s/he interprets and acts within that world" (p. 26). A paradigm is therefore the conceptual lens through which a researcher examines the methodological aspects of their research project to establish the research approaches that will be used and how the data is analyzed. It is worth noting the importance of paradigms in providing beliefs and dictates, which influence what is studied, how it is studied, and how the results of the study are interpreted by scholars in each named discipline. A paradigm has essential elements namely epistemology, ontology, methodology, and axiology. Each element is bound together by foundational assumptions, beliefs, norms, and values deeply held by each independent paradigm. Remarkably, the methodology of a paradigm refers to the research design, methods, approaches, and procedures the researcher employs in an investigation or exploration. They include data gathering, participants, the research instruments, and data analysis (Keeves, 1997 cited in Kivunja & Kuyini). The constructivist paradigm "assumes a subjectivist epistemology, a relativist ontology, a naturalist methodology, and a balanced axiology" (Kivunja & Kuyini, p.33).

Mixed Methods

The choice of a research method is guided by the type of data one hopes to capture, the purpose of the research, and the projected type of analysis (Smith, 2012). Consistent with Teddlie and Tashakkori (2012), the key component of a mixed methods framework is to seek for "great convergence on basic issues that exist in the field as they are argued" (p. 2814). The mixed methods approach is hinged on the premise that there is a relationship between theory and practice, and they align in discussing a research study (Long & Rodgers, 2017). This makes mixed methods research very convenient for action

research in education (Ivankova & Wingo, 2018). The authors put forward that it has the capacity to intersect with other approaches (e.g., action research) with the addition of a solid methodological foundation and an integrated approach for addressing complex practical problems. At this point, "it is important to understand the perceived value of combining two distinct methodologies, especially given the added resources, time, and expertise required to conduct a mixed methods study (McKim, 2017). Mixed methods research requires additional time due to the need to collect and analyze two different types of data sets (Creswell & Clark, 2011).

This study adopted a sequential mixed methods approach. Creswell and Creswell, (2017) proposed that a strong mixed methods study should demonstrate the need to answer research questions that include clearly interconnected qualitative and quantitative components. Vogt et al., (2012) support the viewpoint that the process of refining, clarifying, and formulating answers to research questions based on the results of the study is more manageable when a researcher(s) utilizes qualitative and quantitative approaches in the same study.

Research Design

It is on the strength of this framework that the researcher chose to adopt an explanatory sequential mixed methods approach (Creswell & Plano, 2011; Onwuegbuzi, 2004) to maximize the data that was gathered at varied time periods, the analysis and converged reporting of findings. Terrell (2015) emphasizes this by noting that, "situations where both qualitative and quantitative strands are needed to answer a research question it calls for a mixed methods approach" (p.196). Creswell and Clark (2018) point out that data collection procedures in an explanatory sequential research design involve collecting

quantitative data, analyzing the quantitative data, and using the results to inform the follow-up qualitative data collection" (p. 190). In this case, sampling for this design was done at two time periods: in the quantitative and qualitative phases.

The researcher gathered views of teachers and pupils on literacy development by way of surveys, focus group discussions, one-on-one interviews, classroom observations, and artifacts shared by teacher participants. Creswell and Clark (2018) attempt to demystify the mixed methods approach saying that although most researchers view it as a complex route to research, mixing methods is an intuitive way of carrying out research that is constantly availed to us in everyday lives. The authors note that the many ways of interweaving quantitative and qualitative information pervade numerous aspects of professional life. Creswell (2012) asserts that user-friendly surveys are a remarkably cost-effective and highly efficient approach to data collection as they eliminate any bias since all the respondents attend to the same number of questions at the same time and in the same order. In addition, anonymity assured to respondents encourages trustworthy and open responses (Munn & Drever, 2004 cited in Mohebi, 2020). Interview participants were selected based on their responses to the survey items and researcher notes. Creswell and Clark (2018) assert that nearly all survey trends are supported by individual stories for instance financial consultants analyze market trends alongside stories about decision-making. It is in this same light that the researcher settled on a mixed method design to look at teacher and student perspectives of vocabulary development in scripted inner-city classrooms. Employing mixed methods in a study therefore gives it breadth, depth, and corroboration (Creswell & Clark, 2018).

Setting, Participants, and Sampling

The target population was from high school youth and their teachers in New Haven County, Connecticut. Although it is possible to assess test scores from the principals' and district offices, without gleaning insights from teachers and students as major stakeholders in education, only half the picture might be painted (Turselli, 2019) hence the researcher's decision to utilize primary data.

The sample consisted of one private high school whose teachers implement emerging trends in literacy development. Due to a low number of teachers willing to take the survey and be interviewed, the research snowballed among colleagues in her workstation – a public high school in Hartford County to get more teacher participants. Eight teachers were purposively selected based on their willingness to participate in the study (Hopper, 2017). Creswell and Clark (2018) hold forth that purposive sampling is used to intentionally select individuals and sites that have experienced a phenomenon and can provide pertinent information. In this study, the researcher aimed at capturing perceptions about vocabulary acquisition in classrooms that utilize alternative strategies to teach vocabulary in a context with struggling readers.

Research Participant Demographics

Student Demographics

The percentages of grade levels of students participating in the study and languages spoken are displayed in Table 3.

Teacher Demographics

The researcher captured the gender of teachers participating in the study, their levels of schooling, their age ranges, years of teaching experience, subjects taught, and participant criteria in Table 6.

The researcher surveyed all students in the selected classrooms whose parents consented to their participation and their subject teachers who were willing to voluntarily attend to the items. The researcher outsourced for more teacher participants from a public school due to a small turnout of respondents in the primary locale. Participants for the semi-structured one-on-one interviews were selected from the quantitative sample dependent on their survey responses. To reduce inconsistencies and inter-rater subjectivity, the researcher independently carried out the one-on-one interviews leaning on researcher reflexivity born from prior knowledge, researcher experience, and course work on this topic. Freeman et al. (2007) assert that the researcher must constantly attend to intentionality and reflexivity as the study unfolds. Terrell (2015) notes that, for a sequential-explanatory design, the researcher should draw samples from the same population. Creswell and Clark (2018) underscore this by pointing out that since an explanatory sequential approach purposes to explain the initial quantitative results, individuals for the qualitative follow-up phase of data collection should be a subset of the respondents in the quantitative data collection phase. The main purpose of this approach was to explore in-depth information about the quantitative results from phase one and the reflections from the observation notes.

Working on an assumption that class enrollment was 20-25 students per class, the quantitative sample consisted of all students from four classrooms who participated in an

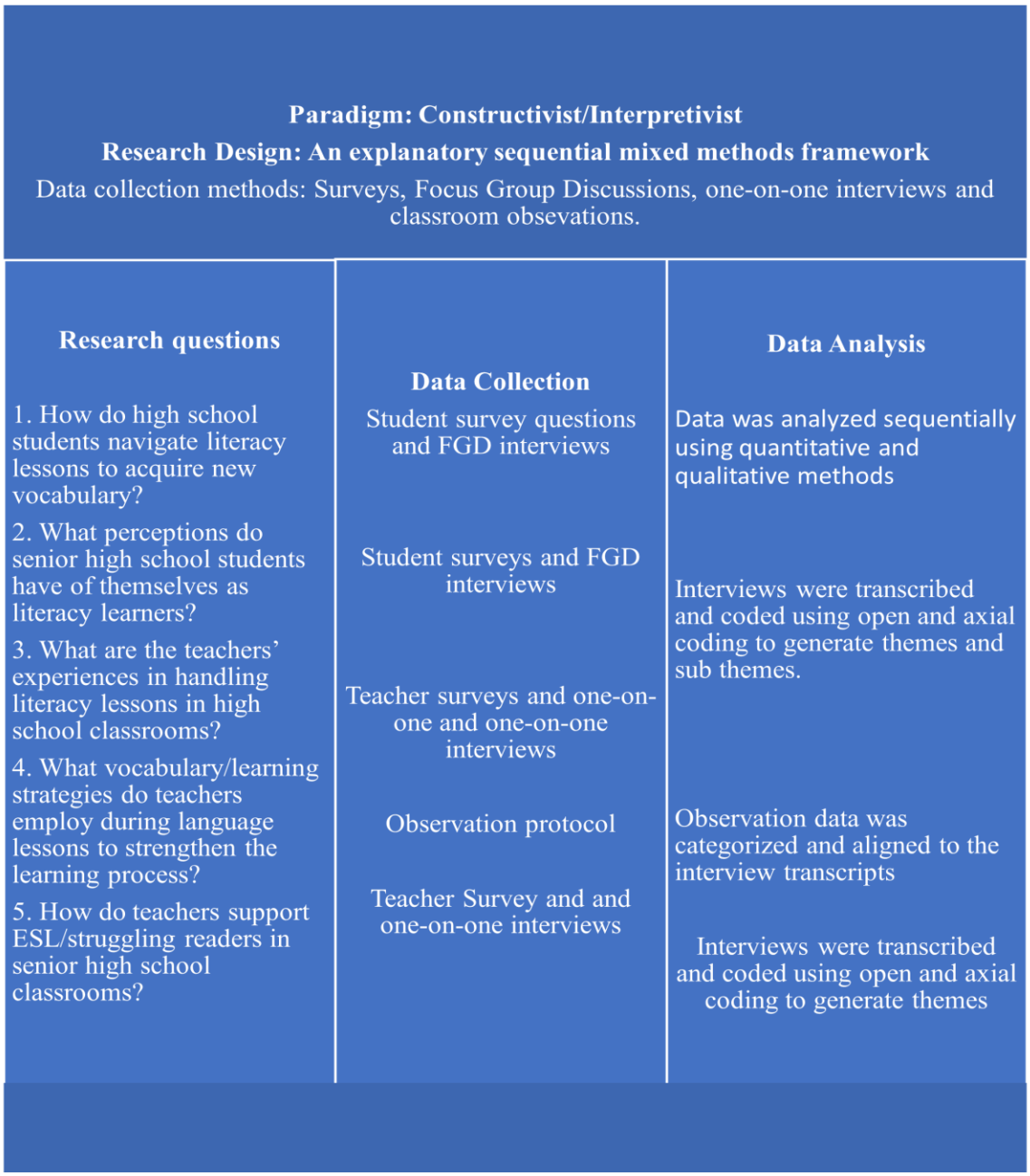
anonymous survey. Creswell and Clark (2018), recommend that the qualitative data collection come from a much smaller sample drawn from the initial quantitative sample. The researcher selected eight students for the focus group discussions with the help of their teacher. All teachers from the participating classes who were willing to be surveyed were involved in the survey, after which the researcher purposively selected four teachers for one-on-one interviews.

Instruments

The research instruments for the quantitative surveys were developed from previous student assessment studies and reviewed literature, whereas the semi-structured interview protocols were generated from the responses to the questionnaires and classroom observations. The Likert scale items, and survey questionnaires were generated from the research questions below.

Figure 3

Constructivist - Interpretivist Paradigm



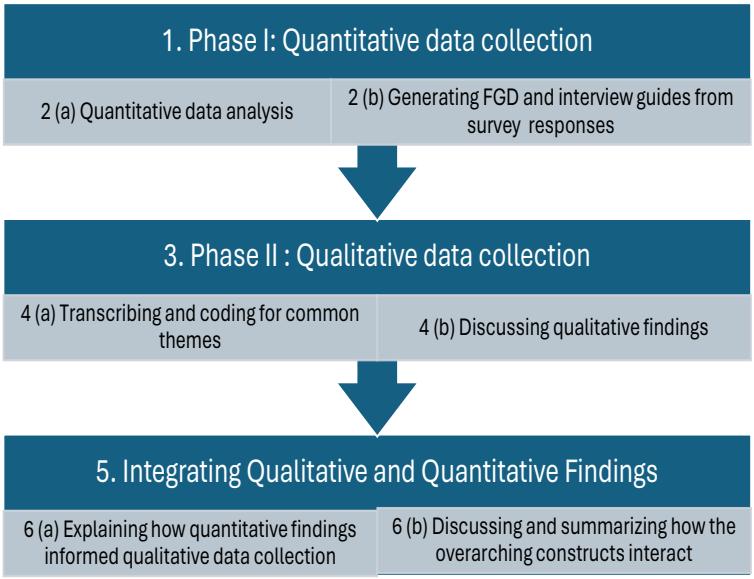
Research Procedures: Measures and Data Collection

Phase I of the study entailed carrying out a quantitative exploration of learning dynamics in a classroom setting using teacher and student survey questionnaires.

Phase II of the study strived to obtain qualitative data on the experiences and perspectives of teachers and learners regarding the literacy curriculum they utilize. The researcher accomplished this using interview guides and classroom observations carried out after the survey data collection and analysis. This helped the researcher to carry out observations while reflecting on the initial responses. Teachers participated in the study by virtue of their classrooms being selected for research and as key players in implementing the literacy curriculum. See Figure 3.

Figure 4

The Six Phases of the Data Collection Process



Data Collection and Analysis

Data Collection

Data for this study was collected during the Spring and Fall 2023 semesters. The Fall Semester marks the start of an academic year in the U.S.A.'s education calendar. Research on the impact of academic calendars on student achievement has been explored in more depth at elementary and secondary school levels (Bostwick et al., 2018). The Fall Semester which precedes a three-month school break, leads to summer learning loss. This learning loss has been exacerbated by the long school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The learning loss led to many students falling behind their grade levels. In a report aimed at supporting education decision making to develop and implement effective education responses to the COVID-19 Pandemic, Reimers and Schleicher (2020) explain why the necessary social isolation measures were bound to disrupt school-based education in majority of countries around the globe. The authors report that this learning disruption causes severe learning losses for students. Due to the abrupt shift in research on human subjects, the researcher borrowed from Bloomberg (2022) who believes greater focus should be placed on ethics, rigor, researcher positionality, and reflexivity on the research process as they are highlighted and interwoven.

The first step of the data collection process was to conduct quantitative surveys and proceed to analysis which aided in formulating a strategy for qualitative data collection. The researcher subsequently gathered qualitative data in relation to either statistically significant or non-significant results, key significant predictors, variables that distinguished categories, and outliers or peculiar demographic characteristics (Creswell & Clark, 2018). Data was categorized as field notes of class sessions, digitally audio-

recorded class sessions collected during in-person classroom observations, and one-on-one interviews with teachers in a private or empty classroom (Horn, 2017). Observations were limited to one English classroom and one Theology classroom to enable each teacher to be observed independently. However, the researcher observed multiple lessons in the same class on any given day. During the observation process, the researcher focused on the participating teachers' classroom actions and teaching strategies, teaching and learning resources available, and general classroom organization. For anonymity, the researcher assigned pseudonyms to study participants (Hopper, 2017).

Once collected, data were analyzed sequentially using quantitative and qualitative methods. In their research article on "Qualitative Research: Essence, Types, and Advantages" Oranga and Matere (2023) note that the key purpose of qualitative research is to explore and provide a deeper, comprehensive, and detailed description of phenomena of study from non-numeric data, rather than quantifying and testing hypotheses using numeric data as is the common practice with quantitative research. To make sense of the survey, FGDs, observations, and one-on-one interview data, the researcher utilized the latest version of MAXQDA 2024, a software program that performs computer-assisted mixed methods and qualitative data Analysis (Mortelmans, 2019). MAXQDA is a vital tool that helps the researcher gain depth and breadth during the data analysis process since it has triple power that entails data management, data coding, and systematic data analysis. The primary functions of the software include but are not limited to creating a project, coding, using visual tools, conducting text retrieval, and creating models (Marjaei et al., 2019). It does this by querying coded material or developing conceptual models. The researcher utilized open and axial coding

to generate themes that inclined towards the research questions (Hopper, 2017; Vollstedt & Rezat, 2019) and to observe for internal consistency of the items. Tavakol and Dennick (2011) describe internal consistency as "the interrelatedness of the items within a test as it indicates the degree to which the items in a test measure the same concept of a construct" (p. 7). Creswell (2017) views consistency as the degree to which groups of items on an instrument behave in a similar manner. He underscores the importance of items having suitable intercorrelations since they assess the same underlying construct. The researcher utilized Cronbach's alpha (Creswell, 2017) to measure internal consistency in this study. Cronbach's alpha is a test reliability technique that requires only a single test administration to provide a unique estimate of the reliability for any given test (Gliem & Gliem, 2003).

Data Analysis and Integration

In an explanatory sequential mixed method research design, quantitative and qualitative data are analyzed separately after which the researcher makes connections between the two sets of data which Creswell (2017) refers to as integration of data. It is imperative to take note of the seven-stage model of data analysis according to (Onwuegbuzi &Teddlie, 2003). This entails data reduction, display, transformation, correlation, consolidation, comparison, and integration. In the current study, the researcher analyzed the data after each phase using descriptive statistics for the quantitative data and thematic analysis for the qualitative section. The findings from the descriptive and qualitative thematic analysis were integrated before interpreting, discussing, and reporting the findings. Figure 4 highlights the similarities and differences between the two methods.

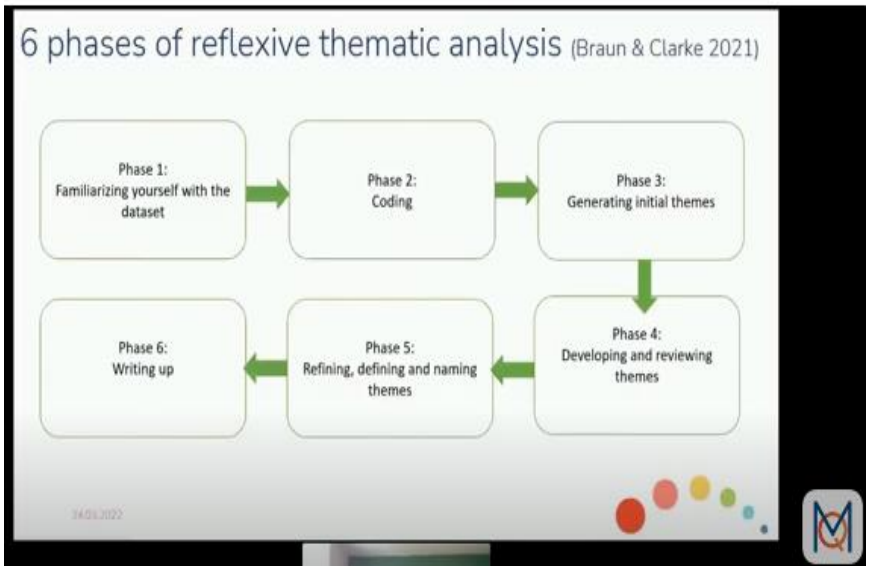
Figure 5

Qualitative Versus Quantitative Data Analysis: Adopted from Stellenbosch University Online Library

Thematic Analysis

Figure 6

The Six Phases of Thematic Reflexive Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021).



Thematic coding involves the use of grounding theory coding procedures to develop themes from data (Virginia & Braun, 2023).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations of a research study are ingrained in the element of axiology and involve generating definitions, evaluating, and having a good grasp of right and wrong behavior as relates to the research being conducted (ARC, 2015). It demands of the researcher(s) the value that will be attributed to the different stages and aspects of the research, participants, data, and the audience of the research findings. Ethical consideration is therefore guided by the following questions: (a) How will the researcher respect research participants' rights? (b) What moral characteristics and issues will the

researcher need to consider? (c) What cultural, intercultural, and moral issues are likely to arise and how do I plan to address these issues? (d) What avenues will the researcher use to secure participants' goodwill? (e) What approach will ensure that the research is conducted in a socially just, respectful, and peaceful way? (f) How will the researcher minimize harm or risk be it legal, psychological, physical, social, economic related or any other that might arise (ARC, 2015).

When carrying out human centered research in which people are the center of focus, research ethical issues must be observed before, during and after the planning stage, implementation, and completion of the research process irrespective of whether it is overt or covert (Van Deventer, 2009). The researcher observed ethical considerations and professional codes of conduct as pertains to carrying out research on human subjects. The items of concern were obtaining institutional review board approval, educating participants about informed and implied consent, maintaining confidentiality and anonymity of participants during and after the research process has ended, and ensuring that the research will benefit society at large (Van Deventer, 2009). Researcher decorum was also key throughout the process. The researcher similarly corroborated that data was analyzed with objectivity and integrity using acceptable analytical techniques and ensured the dissemination of data to all groups of the audience for whom the study was intended while still maintaining the privacy of participants.

A mixed methods design calls for the researcher's ethical consideration in that the qualitative aspect of the study demands of the researcher to closely interact with study participants while maintaining a fair, respectful, and trusting rapport. On the other hand,

the quantitative aspect must exhibit a deductive and value-free model with the researcher serving as an independent and objective observer.

Interpreting and Discussing Study Findings

This section shows the interpretation of the findings and the answers or lack of to the study questions are explained. The researcher first explains the findings from the quantitative data in phase one of the data collection followed by qualitative data in the second phase. The final stage of the interpretation will entail shedding light on how the qualitative results explain the outcome of the quantitative results (Creswell, 2017). It is important to note the caution from Creswell (2017) on avoiding the idea of merging the two sets of data but instead interpreting them independently. Creswell observes that, when the two are merged, it robs the design of its power of qualitative section to provide greater in-depth and insights into the quantitative data. According to Creswell and Clark (2018), analyzing mixed methods data involves separate analysis of quantitative data utilizing quantitative methods and qualitative data using qualitative methods. The two databases are then combined using approaches in MAXQDA which integrate the quantitative and qualitative data results. The authors refer to this as a mixed methods analysis because the procedures involved in every step differ between quantitative and qualitative research. The findings of the study are presented in the report and a copy is shared with the administrators of the participating school(s).

Assertive Remarks

The findings were summarized from the merged data to support discussion, and interpretation, recommendations, and implications for future research.

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher describes analysis of the data, including the practical steps involved in the process. Maguire and Delahunt, (2017) caution that data analysis is central to credible research. Therefore, practical steps were of essence in this analysis to guarantee exhaustive reporting and discussing the results and findings. A quantitative analysis of the data preceded the qualitative data collection. Doing so aided the researcher in constructing qualitative instruments based on the responses to the surveys and classroom lesson observations. The instruments included observation protocols, FGD guide and a one-on-one interview guide. In the qualitative phase, data was analyzed into generative themes then described individually. Beck and Purcell (2013) observe that generative themes are topics people feel strongly about and they are willing to act upon. Through dialogue, people find voice and value. The researcher describes how the themes form patterns, overlap, and link the findings to the literary body of literacy research. Evaluating whether and how the data illuminated the research aim and answered the research sub-questions are discussed in Chapter 5, where the primary question of this study will also be addressed.

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of how teachers are utilizing emerging trends in literacy education to support vocabulary acquisition and development in high school classrooms. The guiding questions were: -

RQ1. How do high school students navigate literacy lessons to acquire new vocabulary?

RQ2. What perceptions do senior high school students have of themselves as literacy learners?

RQ3. What are the teachers' experiences in handling literacy lessons in senior classrooms?

RQ4. What vocabulary/learning strategies do teachers employ during language lessons to strengthen the learning process?

RQ5. How do teachers support ESL/struggling readers in senior high school classrooms?

Buckler and Walliman (2016) discern that it is imperative for a researcher to formulate clear and systematic research objectives and questions that make logical sense as they are central to a credible dissertation. They provide a framework on which to base one's study. Following the logical research questions is the data which is analyzed, presented, interpreted, and discussed. Bloomberg (2022) underscores the importance of intertwined concepts of rigor and ethical standards. This study furthers the narrative by pointing out the current challenges the qualitative researcher encounters while navigating new and unchartered waters because of the Covid19 pandemic. It will be an understatement to say that accessing study locales and the population of interest was overly impermeable and attempt after attempt seemed to lead to a dead end. District and school administrators were juggling the return-to-work/school challenges, therefore wading off 'outsiders' as they attempted to catch up on the education loss necessitated by the pandemic lockdown.

Sample

A total of 70 students participated in the quantitative phase of the study. Based on the data gathered, there were 38 male students (54.3%) and 32 female students (45.7%) who responded to the survey. Furthermore, a total of nine teachers participated in the survey. Among the nine teachers, seven were females (77.8%) while two were males (22.2%). As pertains to the age group, there were three teachers aged 41-50 years (50%), two teachers aged 31- 40 years (33.3%), and one teacher aged 51- 60 years (16.7%). For the subjects taught, five teachers teach English (83.3%) while two teachers were Sp. Ed. teachers (33.3%). Regarding teaching experience, three participants had 21-30 years of experience (50%) while there was one participant in each of the following ranges of experience; 1-10 years, 11-20 years, and 5-10 years.

The interview participants were three high school teachers employed at the study site at the time of data collection. At the time of the interview, Nora had taught History and Special Education for about 10 years. Olivia has 23 years of teaching experience, 16 of which were spent at the study site. She also had experience teaching English in middle school and senior high school, but most of the experience was with high school students. Gina had 10 years of experience as a teacher, 5 of which were spent at the study site. Gina worked with students in special education classrooms, particularly students diagnosed with learning disabilities. On average, the class size had typically 6-12 students.

This study did not include the use of inferential statistics which when used establish relationships or differences between variables that can be generalized from the study sample to the target population (Bettany-Saltikov & Whittaker, 2014). Therefore,

the results and findings of this study may not be used to make inferences about the larger population. The generalizability of results and findings is also limited. To generalize, the research sample must be representative of the population, which is achieved through random sampling. The researcher leaned on a non-random sampling technique in this study which renders the results and findings not generalizable to other settings. Additionally, the generalizability is limited because the study sample was small. However, the transferability of the findings was enhanced by providing a thick description of the research design and procedures presented in Chapter 3.

Demographics of the study sample are included in this chapter along with tables to support data summaries. The data in this study was broken down into four sections as highlighted below.

- ✓ Surveys
- ✓ One-on-one interviews
- ✓ Focus group discussions (FGDs)
- ✓ Classroom/lesson observations

The researcher requested parents to voluntarily consent to participation of their children who were considered minors at the time of data collection.

Appended in this chapter are tables, charts, and excerpts of the conversations between the researcher and research participants. These emphasize connections to the purpose of the study and research questions that guided the surveys, observations, FGDs and one-on-one interviews mentioned above.

Validity and Reliability

The researcher evaluated validity and reliability in this study by: -

i) Triangulating between data collection methods,

ii) Asking the same questions in the survey, FGDs and one-on-one interviews and

iii) Triangulating between quantitative and qualitative analysis approaches.

Phase 1: Quantitative Data Analysis Results

The respondents were asked whether they agreed that school social interactions shape their language development. A total of 44 participants (62.9%) agreed while 20 respondents (28.6%) strongly agreed with the statement. Respondents were also asked whether they agree that students have a responsibility towards their vocabulary development. A larger percentage of the respondents also agreed (n = 38, 54.3%) and strongly agreed (n = 27, 38.6%). When asked if they agree that teachers play a role in vocabulary development, a total of 90% agreed (n = 42, 60%) and strongly agreed (n = 21, 30%). In responding to the question of how satisfied they are with the content and learning material they received during instruction, 27 responded as 'satisfied (38.6%)' while 26 responded with 'very satisfied (37.1%)'.

Table 2

Frequencies and Percentages of Gender of Student Participants (N = 70)

		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Female	32	45.7
	Male	38	54.3
	Total	**70**	**100.0**

Table 3

Frequencies and Percentages of Survey Responses of Student Participants

		Frequency	Percent
School social interactions shape my language development	Strongly Disagree	1	1.4
	Disagree	5	7.1
	Agree	44	62.9
	Strongly Agree	20	28.6
	Total	**70**	**100.0**
Students have a responsibility towards their vocabulary development	Strongly Disagree	1	1.4
	Disagree	3	4.3
	Neutral	1	1.4
	Agree	38	54.3
	Strongly Agree	27	38.6
	Total	**70**	**100.0**
Do you agree that teachers play a role in vocabulary development	Disagree	6	8.6
	Agree	42	60.0
	Strongly Agree	21	30.0
	Total	69	98.6
Missing	System	1	1.4
Total		**70**	**100.0**
How satisfied are you with the content and learning material you receive during instruction?	Not Satisfied	1	1.4
	Neutral	16	22.9
	Satisfied	27	38.6
	Very Satisfied	26	37.1
	Total	**70**	**100.0**

The descriptive statistics of survey responses are presented in Table 4.1. As observed, the mean score for the item *School social interactions shape my language development* is 4.10 (SD = .84) with a range of 1 to 5. The mean score for the item '*Students have a responsibility towards their vocabulary development'* is 4.24 (SD = .81) with a range of 1 to 5. The mean score for '*Do you agree that teachers play a role in*

vocabulary development? is 4.13 (SD = .80) with a range of 2 to 5. The mean score for the item *How satisfied are you with the content and learning material you receive during instruction?* is 4.10 (SD = .85) with a range of 1 to 5. Cronbach's alpha value calculations were done to determine whether the responses of participants can be combined into one measure. However, Cronbach's alpha value was calculated at .330, which is low. Therefore, the items in the survey cannot be combined into one measure.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics of Survey Responses of Student Participants

	N	*Min*	*Max*	*M*	*SD*
School social interactions shape my language development.	70	1.00	5.00	4.10	0.84
Students have a responsibility towards their vocabulary development.	70	1.00	5.00	4.24	0.81
Do you agree that teachers play a role in vocabulary development.	69	2.00	5.00	4.13	0.80
How satisfied are you with the content and learning material you receive during instruction?	70	1.00	5.00	4.10	0.85

99666.7444.4%), 3222.2 For the subjects taught, five teachers are teaching English (55.5%) while two teachers are Special Education teachers (22.2%), and two teachers are teaching Theology (22.2%). In reference to the teaching experience, three participants have 11-20 years of experience (33.3%), and three participants have 21-30 years of experience. There were three participants each with teaching experience for 1-10 years, 11-20 years, and 5-10 years, respectively.

Table 5

Frequencies and Percentages of Teachers' Demographic Characteristics (N = 9)

		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Female	6	66.7
	Male	3	33.3
	Total	**9**	**100.0**
Age Group	31-40	3	33.3
	41-50	4	44.4
	51-60	2	22.2
	Total	**9**	**100.0**
Subjects	English	5	55.5
	Special Education	2	22.2
	Theology	2	22.2
	Total	**9**	**100.0**
Teaching Experience	1-10 yrs.	1	11.1
	11-20 yrs.	3	33.3
	21-30 yrs.	3	33.3
	31-40 yrs.	1	11.1
	5-10 yrs.	1	11.1
	Total	**9**	**100.0**

Teachers were asked a total of seven items to determine their level of agreement or satisfaction. The teachers agreed (n = 7, 77.8%) and strongly agreed (n = 2, 22.2%) that the literacy program utilized has the potential to nurture students with deeper understanding, higher order thinking skills and improved creative and social skills. Four out of the nine teachers selected 'neutral' (44.4%) and another four participants responded 'agree' (44.4%) on the item that the curriculum/program impacts their creativity. A greater percentage of the teachers also agreed that the syllabi content aligns with the classroom practice during teaching (n = 6, 66.7%). A total of eight respondents

(77.8%) agreed and (22.2%) strongly agreed that vocabulary knowledge directly impacts how students learn, while four (44.4%) agreed and one (11.1%) strongly agreed that social interactions shape literacy skills development or the lack of it. Teacher participants were satisfied (n = 4, 44.4%) and very satisfied (n = 4, 44.4%) with the current curriculum. Participants also responded that high frequency/academic words during classroom teaching are important (n = 7, 77.8%) and very important (n = 2, 22.2%).

Table 6

Frequencies and Percentages of Teachers' Survey Responses

		Frequency	Percent
To what extent do you agree that the literacy program you utilize has the potential to nurture students with deeper understanding, higher order thinking skills and improved creative and social skills?	Neutral	1	11.1
	Agree	6	66.7
	Strongly Agree	2	22.2
	Total	**9**	**100.0**
To what extent does the curriculum/program impact your creativity?	Strongly Disagree	1	11.1
	Neutral	4	44.4
	Agree	4	44.4
	Total	**9**	**100.0**
To what extent does the syllabus content align with the classroom practice during teaching?	Strongly Disagree	1	11.1
	Neutral	1	11.1
	Agree	6	66.7
	Strongly Agree	1	11.1
	Total	**9**	**100.0**
To what extent does vocabulary knowledge directly impact how students learn?	Neutral	1	11.1
	Agree	6	66.7
	Strongly Agree	2	22.2
	Total	**9**	**100.0**
To what extent do social interactions shape literacy	Disagree	1	11.1
	Neutral	3	33.3

skills development or the lack of it?	Agree	4	44.4
	Strongly Agree	1	11.1
	Total	**9**	**100.0**
How satisfied are you with the current curriculum?	Unsatisfied	1	11.1
	Satisfied	4	44.4
	Very Satisfied	4	44.4
	Total	**9**	**100.0**
What value do you place on high frequency words during classroom teaching?	Important	7	77.8
	Very Important	2	22.2
	Total	**9**	**100.0**

The descriptive statistics of teachers' responses are presented in Table 4.4. The mean scores of teachers' responses are above 3 for all items. This indicated that participants agree with the statements and are satisfied with the current curriculum (M = 4.22, SD = 0.97). Respondents also determined that using academic vocabulary during classroom teaching is important (M = 4.22, SD = 0.44). A Cronbach's alpha value was calculated to determine whether the responses of participants can be combined into one measure. However, Cronbach's alpha value was calculated at .063. which was low. Therefore, the items in the survey could not be combined into one measure.

Table 7

Frequencies and Percentages of Teachers' Responses

	N	*Min*	*Max*	*M*	*SD*
To what extent do you agree that the literacy program you utilize has the potential to nurture students with deeper understanding, higher order thinking skills, and improved creative and social skills?	9	3.00	5.00	4.11	0.60

To what extent does the curriculum/program impact your creativity?	9	1.00	4.00	3.22	0.971.10
To what extent does the syllabus content align with the classroom practice during teaching?	9	1.00	5.00	3.67	1.120.41
To what extent does vocabulary knowledge directly impact how students learn?	9	3.00	5.00	4.11	0.60
To what extent do social interactions shape literacy skills development or the lack of it?	9	2.00	5.00	3.56	0.8855
How satisfied are you with the current curriculum? Kindly check one box.	9	2.00	5.00	4.22	0.971.17
What value do you place on high-frequency words during classroom teaching?	9	4.00	5.00	4.22	0.44

Phase 2: Qualitative Data Analysis and Findings

To carry out a rigorous qualitative data analysis, they adopted the practical steps by Richards and Hemphill (2017), which seek to capitalize on the benefits of coordinating qualitative data while controlling for some of the challenges that arise during the process. The method includes six phases: (a) preliminary familiarization with and organization of the raw data, (b) open and axial coding, (c) development of a preliminary codebook, (d) pilot-testing the codebook, (e) the final coding process which entails collapsing themes, and (f) reviewing the codebook and finalizing themes. The

importance of utilizing the above steps was to enhance data triangulation and search for negative cases in the coded data.

Interview Participants

The interview participants were three high school teachers employed at the study site at the time of data collection. Nora had taught History and special education for about 10 years. Olivia had 23 years of teaching experience, 16 of which were spent at the current school. English teaching experience of the participants spanned from middle school to senior high school. A greater percentage of the experience was with high school students. Gina had 10 years of experience as a teacher, 5 of which were spent at the current school. Gina works with students in special education, particularly students with learning disabilities. Gina's class size is typically 6-12 students.

Open Coding and Axial Coding

The interview and focus group data were analyzed using open and axial coding. Open coding is an inductive method of labeling pieces of data according to their meaning in the text to form open codes (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Axial coding is the process of identifying connections among the open codes to develop categories (Strauss & Corbin). The steps the researcher undertook in this section were inspired by Clarke and Braun, (2021) who assert that data analysis should strive to give the audience a take-home message brought out in the interpretation stage.

The coding process, though inductive, was guided by the following research questions:

RQ1. How do high school students navigate literacy lessons to acquire new vocabulary?

RQ2. What perceptions do senior high school students have of themselves as literacy learners?

RQ3. What are the teachers' experiences in handling literacy lessons in senior classrooms?

RQ4. What vocabulary/learning strategies do teachers employ during language lessons to strengthen the learning process?

RQ5. How do teachers support ESL/struggling readers in senior high school classrooms?

The students' focus group discussion interview data were utilized to answer RQ1 and RQ2. The teachers' interview data were used to answer RQ3, RQ4, and RQ5. Open coding began with reading each line of the data to search for pieces that were meaningful to the research questions. For instance, a piece of data from Olivia's interview was, *"So, I think as much as you can build their background knowledge about vocabulary, I think that's the strongest thing you can do for [ESL students]."* The properties of this piece of data included meanings in teaching ESL students to determine and use context clues to find the meaning of the word. Thus, this piece of data was labeled, *teaching students to use context clues*. It also communicated the value that background knowledge students bring to the classroom supports teaching and learning. A complete list of codes with sample pieces of data is provided in Appendix K.

After breaking down the data into open codes, the researcher reconceptualized and built back up by developing axial codes. Reconceptualizing the data involved reviewing the coded texts to determine the relationships among the open codes (Alhassan et al., 2023). Alhassan et al. suggest creating an illustration to have a visual representation

of the relationships among the open codes. In using MAXQDA to aid in the analysis process, visual representations of the relationships among the open codes were created using hierarchies. An example of a hierarchy is shown in Figure 4.1 Open codes: *repetition*, *integrating visual aids and movement*, and *giving students the responsibility to correct themselves* were reviewed against the teachers' interview data to find that these open codes were all strategies employed by teachers to help students retain newly acquired vocabulary as part of their approach to strengthen the learning process. A higher-level code was created to form a hierarchy in which the three open codes were grouped. The higher-level code was labeled *strategies in retention of new words,* and it was considered an axial code. A complete list of open codes and axial codes that aligned with the research questions is provided in Table 8.

Figure 7

Sample Axial Code Represented by MAXQDA Hierarchy Feature

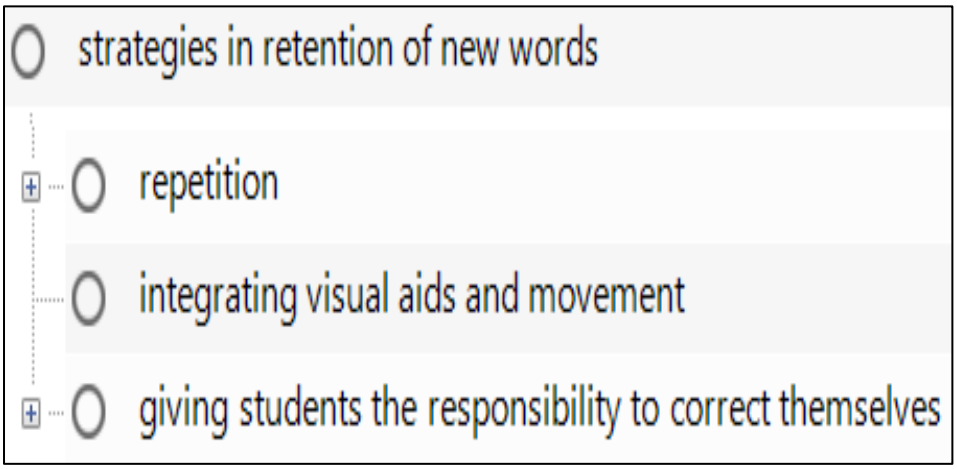


Table 8

Open Codes to Axial Codes

RQs	Open codes	Axial codes
RQ1	Asking for teachers' assistance Encouraged by parents. Guided practice	Learning vocabulary with guidance
RQ2	Learning better if interested Learning from real-life contexts	Connecting vocabulary to relatable contexts
RQ3	Students don't like to read. Teachers lack professional development opportunities. Parents not as involved as in lower levels. Teaching content and vocabulary to ESL students	Facing challenges in teaching vocabulary to high school ESL students
	Evaluating prior knowledge Evaluating progress	Periodically and informally checking students' mastery
RQ4	Introducing vocabulary before lessons Modeling language Using SAT as the basis of teaching vocabulary	Strategies in introducing new words
	Giving students the responsibility to correct themselves. Integrating visual aids and movement Repetition	Strategies in retention of new words
RQ5	Connecting lessons to aspects of life Differentiated instructions Teaching morphology Teaching students to use context clues.	Teaching according to learning needs Teaching reading skills

Findings

This section contains the presentation of the qualitative findings. The findings are in the form of axial codes or categories organized according to the research question they addressed. The categories that emerged from the data were: (a) learning vocabulary with guidance, (b) connecting vocabulary to relatable contexts, (c) facing challenges in teaching vocabulary to high school ESL students, (d) periodically and informally checking students' mastery, (e) strategies in introducing new words, (f) strategies in retention of new words, (g) teaching according to learning needs, and (h) teaching reading skills. The above steps are what Clarke, and Braun, (2021) discussed in their book: Thematic Analysis: A Practical Guide. They were of the view that codes are the building blocks of research data analysis in reflexive reasoning capturing meaning relevant to the research question. It is in this same way that the researcher embarked on a systematic analysis to address the research questions.

Research Question One Findings. RQ1 was, "How do high school students navigate literacy lessons to acquire new vocabulary?" The sources of data relevant to this RQ were the students' focus group interviews. In both focus groups, the participants discussed their experiences of acquiring new vocabulary through the assistance of their teachers. One participant cited the encouragement of their parents. The category that emerged from the data to answer this RQ was: - *learning vocabulary with guidance*.

Learning Vocabulary with Guidance. The students shared how they learned new words with the help of their teachers. During classes, teachers helped students acquire and retain new vocabulary through guided practice. The students shared that guided practice involved the teachers being facilitators of learning as students followed examples given at the beginning. Students were expected to take responsibility for doing the work on their own in the end. Therefore, teachers model the use of a word, emphasize the keyword, and use that keyword as a prompt to encourage interaction among the students. In focus group discussion, Skyla stated that:

> A teacher [would] purposely say a word…We have open discussions such like, you know most teachers give us the questions and there's a helping hand making us talk about it… you are always given an opportunity to try and interact with each other and learn something.

The teachers' facilitation in using keywords was a helpful visual cue for the students as shared in the focus group discussion. Leana shared that, "There is a million different things we are studying, but on the board, [the teachers write] just simple phrases or topics… So even if [teachers] are going over verbally, the visuals will help to avoid [understanding lessons] being difficult." To retain the words, the students shared that the

practice of repetition helped. Owen stated, “The key is repetition.” Owen and Skyla discussed how conversations helped them in repeating and retaining the new words they learned. Skyla stated, “I feel it is more people talking and it is that the more you hear…the more you get versed.” This also echoes the Mathew Effect (Morgan et al., 2008) which mirrors the reciprocal model.

Nonetheless, the students also shared that they had responsibilities as learners to acquire and retain new vocabulary. When faced with unknown words, the students reported three practices that they used. One was to use context clues as taught by their teachers. Leana shared, “It's like you really need to think, like [the teacher] said you need to use context, you need to use text tools to like know the meaning.” Another method was to have the initiative to search for the meaning of the word. Owen stated, “I saw a word in a film, I didn't know what it meant, it led me to researching from resource I got.” The third way that Owen shared was to ask the teachers for assistance. Skyla and Hope referenced their parents’ encouragement as a validation and motivation to helping them learn new vocabulary. Hope shared that growing up she was dyslexic and relied on sign language as a primary mode of communication. However, her supportive mother used to borrow books from the public library and have her read then ask her to explain what she had read. She was very proud of her literacy growth saying, “here I am now, I can read and speak good English.”

Incidental Learning. Results of the survey and interviews revealed various indirect ways high school students shared that support their vocabulary acquisition. These are listening to their teachers as they engage in conversations with colleagues, watching movies, reading comic books, participating in sporting and other social activities, socializing with their peers, and engaging in class discussions. This finding situates with Hustling (2003) who holds that much of the burden of intentional learning can be taken off the shoulders of the language learner by processes of "incidental" learning, involving the "picking up" of words and structures, simply by engaging in a variety of communicative activities, in particular reading and listening activities, during which the learner's attention is focused on the meaning. In his book chapter on Reading and Writing, Sampson (2014) cites Vygotsky (1992) who asserts that social speech is a precursor to good writing skills because beneath social speech lies communicative and egocentric speech tenets. By expressing their needs using egocentric speech, children acquire more literacy skills.

Research Question Two Findings. RQ2 was, "What perceptions do senior high school students have of themselves as literacy learners?" The students' focus group interviews revealed their insights on how they perceived their lives to be related to their literacy learning. The category that emerged from the data was: *connecting vocabulary to relatable contexts*.

Connecting Vocabulary to Relatable Contexts. This category meant that the students saw aspects of their lives as part of their literacy learning experience. The students held in common that they acquired new vocabulary better by applying the words in real-life contexts and when they were interested in the topic related to the use of the

words. Students also shared that they tended to be more absorbed in the lessons if they were interested in the topic or the method of learning. Skyla shared that one of their teachers encouraged them to share "real-life stories" related to the topic they were learning to connect their new knowledge with their existing schemas. Emma spoke about using newly acquired vocabulary to answer "common everyday questions" with the teacher's prompting.

Owen shared that he enjoyed learning new vocabulary from watching films and cartoons. Leana on the other hand enjoys poetry and figuring out symbolic meanings of words. Skyla summarized by noting, "When you have an active interest in the topic, you will likely strategically be interested in learning more."

Research Question Three Findings. RQ3 was, "What are the teachers' experiences in handling literacy lessons in senior classrooms?" The teachers' interview data revealed common experiences in teaching literacy to ESL students and in the importance of student mastery in learning new vocabulary. The categories that emerged to answer RQ3 were: - *facing challenges in teaching vocabulary to high school ESL students and periodically and informally checking students' mastery.*

Facing Challenges in Teaching Vocabulary to High School ESL Students. The three teachers commonly shared that they experienced challenges in teaching literacy to ESL students. The challenges primarily focused on their perceptions of needing to teach both content and vocabulary to ESL students, as well as their experiences of the lack of appropriate professional development to address the learning needs of ESL students. The teachers shared their experiences of how ESL students struggled with comprehension and often had to stop reading to look up meanings of words. Gina stated:

That is something I have heard teachers say they 'really struggle with many students during lessons. The kids are really good at looking like they are reading and know what they are doing, yet they don't know, looking like they are reading when they are actually re-reading. Question, blank, question, blank.

From personal experiences in reading, Olivia shared how the need to stop reading to search for meanings of new words was a disruption in understanding the text. It also implied that students took longer on tasks. Thus, Olivia reported understanding the struggles of ESL students in terms of comprehension. Nonetheless, the struggles of ESL students may not necessarily be in literacy per se, but in learning English as a high school student. Gina described having a Spanish-speaking ESL student who was proficient in reading and writing Spanish, but the same student was a candidate for intellectual disability due to difficulties in reading and writing in English. Gina went on to explain how she tried working with the student to start teaching "phonics decoding," but the challenge was the lack of time to allow for one-on-one instruction.

The teachers also lacked adequate professional development to be prepared to teach high school ESL students. Nora stated, "I have never been provided the professional development on how to specifically teach a student that had a different need of language." Olivia shared that their school provided weekly professional development, but was quick to note that, "You do it necessarily to work. They don't necessarily cater to what we need for our classes… it's not super helpful."

Other struggles in teaching literacy were case to case. Olivia shared having a student who generally did not like to read and emphasized, "We can help but we can't build it up that much. They need to read." Olivia also explained that parents tended to be

less involved in high school students' education than in elementary and middle school students' education. Olivia stated, "I think parents are busy…they don't focus on [reading with their high school kids] as much as [they do with] elementary school and middle school kids."

Periodically and Informally Checking Students' Mastery. To teach literacy, the participants pointed out their practices in checking the students' skill level and mastery. The participants explained that starting lessons by checking the students' prior knowledge was essential in instruction delivery. Gina added that, "It really helps me understand truly how significant the gaps are and student knowledge and it gives me a better picture of what it should impact on their level of vocabulary knowledge base at school." Nora was of the view that in teaching math, when students struggle to respond to questions, the problem might be their lack of prior knowledge about the vocabulary within the content rather than the formula or the computation.

The participants pointed out that they periodically and informally test their students' mastery of the words and the lessons. Testing is therefore a continuous and ongoing aspect of the curricula. Various ways to evaluate the students included written assignments and mini tests. "Like after three tests, like mini tests, and I see they got it, I was kind of like, yep, they mastered it and I move on to the next thing" (Nora).

Olivia:

> *I look at their writing and I look at their word choice when they write and that's how I get a sense of where they are. With vocabulary it is not something that I evaluate with quizzes or tests ever, so it's all through how they write and when they write even short paragraphs for me, we talk about word choice, we talk*

about better words to use and so that really as much as I'm teaching vocabulary as I do.

Research Question Four Findings. RQ4 was, "What vocabulary/learning strategies do teachers employ during language lessons to strengthen the learning process?" This RQ was answered through the teachers' insights on their teaching practices that they believed helped students acquire and retain new vocabulary. The categories that emerged from the teachers' interview data were: - *strategies employed in retention of new words and strategies employed in introducing new words.*

Strategies in Retention of New Words. In helping students to retain vocabulary, the practices employed by the teachers included repetition, the use of non-visual aids, and holding students accountable for their learning. All three teachers perceived that repetition was an effective strategy to strengthen students' vocabulary acquisition. Olivia shared that, "We spend time in the beginning of the year working with those and every time they come up in our practice tests, we return to those words to remind them what they mean." Olivia was referencing practicing vocabulary words that were likely to appear in the SAT exam. Gina preferred to repeat the vocabulary words and their use in oral and written exercises. Nora explained that repeating words helped in storing them in the students' long-term memory.

Another method shared by the teacher participants was the use of visual aids and movement to associate with the vocabulary words. Gina shared how she uses flash cards and charts to help students to associate images with words. Nora expressed the following:

"Especially for math, math is something that is very visual, like when I talk about fractions, the words like numerator I put my hand up… So, I like to do it visually, to make those words make sense for their memory."

The teachers also expected their students to take part in their learning. Olivia said she held students responsible by expecting them to correct their mistakes and learn from them. "They have to go back and fix it, then they understand what they've done is wrong" she stated. On the other hand, Gina contributed that in teaching special needs students, they did not want to focus only on the students' disabilities, accommodations, and modifications. She described using the scaffolding teaching strategy in which they first teach and model the instructions, then proceed to guided practice, and then let the students practice independently while they facilitate.

Strategies in Introducing New Words. The strategy of introducing new words emerged from Olivia's interview. She shared the practice of allowing students to become familiar with the new vocabulary words when introducing a new topic before proceeding with the content to help with their mastery of the lessons. Olivia expressed, "I think like what we talked before, building some vocabulary about the topic before going to the topic is super helpful." She further explained that the students would often recall that the vocabulary words had been mentioned before the start of the lecture and then remember the subject matter better. Olivia articulated that being familiar with the words helped students build on their background knowledge. Olivia elaborated "I think the only thing about background knowledge vocabulary…for example…because juniors have to take the SAT in March, so we spend a lot of time teaching them words that they are going to see in questions."

Additionally, Olivia believed in the strategy of introducing new words and their use through modeling. She shared an example of how the words might be used in spoken and written language. When Olivia sees students using the words, they are praised. Olivia shared, "Mostly in writing, I always try to model academic language when I speak and so I praise them when they use it, but it mostly comes out in the writing."

Research Question Five Findings. RQ5 was, "How do teachers support ESL/struggling readers in senior high school classrooms?" The teachers shared two methods that they utilized to support their ESL and struggling readers. Both methods were used to target the achievement of long-term benefits for the students. One was to focus on improving reading skills and the other was to focus on students' learning needs. The categories that emerged from the data to answer this RQ were: - *teaching reading skills and teaching according to learning needs.*

Teaching Reading Skills. The teachers perceived that imparting reading skills would support struggling readers in the long run. The reading skills cited by the participants were looking at the morphology of the words meaning, looking at the connections and utilizing context clues. According to the participants' descriptions, morphology entailed being familiar with parts of words and how these parts would help them in decoding and inferring the meanings of words. Nora talked about teaching root words, prefixes, and suffixes, particularly how prefixes and suffixes could impact how students grasp the meanings of words. She stated that:

> I'd say, the most beneficial thing to do with morphology is like specifically when you are teaching…when I have taught like reading skills, and we really, really

work hard through word prefixes and suffixes to determine the meanings of words.

Using context clues was also an important reading skill according to the participants. In inferring the meanings of unknown words through the overall meaning of the text, students did not need to stop and search for word meanings and disrupt their reading. Nora shared, “Let's say it's a sentence, they might pick up the words they don't have and stick with them, then next time like, so, I believe it helps.” Olivia described, “In the end that is how we intend to do it. Just as words come up, pick up through context.”

Teaching According to Learning Needs. Teachers also believed that teaching according to students’ learning needs can support struggling readers with long-term outcomes. The participants shared their strategy of differentiating instruction based on the students’ skill levels. Nora talked about falling back on Google Translate to translate words for ESL students as an example of accommodating their learning needs. She stated, “I say overall students are very receptive to any extra support you give them in translating, so we don't call it a problem, but definitely a challenge.” Olivia acknowledged that students have different levels of learning and supporting their needs entailed adjusting how they are taught. Olivia shared, “I say, all right, this student is starting at this level, I can get him to write complete sentences on a regular basis, I will be thrilled! You know, whereas this one should be writing three to four pages.”

In recognizing and using differentiation to support students’ learning needs, the participants also allied that they incorporated aspects of daily life that might be relatable to the students to help them remember their lessons. Gina stated:

The idea is that you are looking at a word that students already know and wrap around them and try and connect it to like what they are interested in, like know what their background knowledge is. It is specifically for students who are ESL students.

Summary of Qualitative Findings

The qualitative findings revealed the diverse contexts students encounter as they navigate vocabulary acquisition and their perceptions of themselves as literacy learners. Additionally, the findings indicate the experiences teachers go through on a day-to-day basis while handling literacy lessons. The strategies teachers employ to strengthen literacy learning and support systems available for struggling readers and ESL students. The importance of guidance through scaffolding was noticeable throughout the surveys and interviews. Students shared that learning occurs best when teachers first model the words and then gradually reduce their guidance to allow them to learn independently. During the classroom observations, the researcher noted this facet about teachers singling out words they knew are new to students and teaching the meanings and uses before introducing the topic. During one of the sessions, the new vocabulary was Euthanasia, and the teacher broke it down into (See Appendix XV). The students perceived that, as literacy learners, they acquired and retained new words best if they were interested in the topic linked with the words.

The teachers were generally challenged in teaching ESL students because of the need to accommodate them, attend to their struggles with English and to deliver the content. The teachers evaluated their students' prior knowledge as the basis of their lessons and then periodically and informally checked their students' progress to evaluate

their mastery of the content. Specific to teaching vocabulary, teachers practiced introduction and modeling, and then applied strategies to help students retain new words. Retention practices included using visual cues and hand movements, repetition, and holding students accountable to learn from their mistakes. For struggling readers, the teachers maintained that they imparted skills with long-term benefits in helping students read. One method was to teach reading skills such as using morphology and context clues. The other method was to address the students' individual learning needs.

Integrating Quantitative Results and Qualitative Findings

Assessing the survey and interview findings from students and teachers yielded a great deal of similarities along with quite a good number of significant differences. In addition, while RQs 1-2 focused on students' perceptions regarding vocabulary acquisition and RQs 3-5 directly considered teachers' views, it is possible to synthesize data from the four sources to achieve a more coherent overall view for each research question.

Regarding RQ1, about how high school students navigate literacy lessons to acquire new vocabulary, students broadly agreed with teachers that engaging in teacher-led instruction was important. Both students and teachers discussed using context clues as taught by teachers, engaging one-on-one with teachers, and accepting accountability for their need to learn new vocabulary. However, students differed from teachers in emphasizing the value of social interactions in acquiring new vocabulary. One student said, "You are always given an opportunity to try and interact with each other and learn something." Given that teachers did not mention student conversation as part of their interviews and given that only 50% agreed that school social interaction was important

for vocabulary acquisition, it could be that students were more inclined to seeing the value in this engagement than were teachers.

For RQ2, about students' perceptions of themselves as literacy learners, it was again the case that students emphasized the degree to which their active learning led to their vocabulary acquisition. At the same time, students described the gradual transfer of ownership from teacher to student as the path through which they learned new words. These insights from student interviews align with the balanced view that students took regarding their role in vocabulary acquisition: While 90% of students agreed or strongly agreed that teachers have a role in vocabulary acquisition, 92.9% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that students have a responsibility to engage in vocabulary acquisition. The students' positive attitudes toward the value of social interaction in learning new words may apply, as students expressed themselves during the FGD interviews that bringing words into "real life stories" was important in helping them to take ownership of new words.

Teachers' perspectives were the focus of RQ3, about their experiences in handling literacy lessons in senior classrooms. In the survey, teachers seemed generally less satisfied than students with the current curriculum. Interview data corroborates this finding, as teachers emphasized their teaching strategies when implementing the curriculum as being central to student vocabulary acquisition. Specifically, teachers explained that checking for students' existing knowledge before a lesson enabled them to tailor instructional content and methods more effectively and said that providing formal and informal assessments was also important. Additionally, teachers focused on the struggles that attach teaching new vocabulary items to ESL students. They mentioned the

need for professional development to build their pedagogical skills, one-on-one time to work with students, and a lack of parental involvement. In this way, teachers may have felt that the curriculum was insufficient in helping them overcome these struggles.

A focus on teacher responsibility also emerged from both survey and interview responses related to RQ4, which concerned the vocabulary and learning strategies teachers employ during language lessons. Specifically, in teacher survey and interview responses, they emphasized their role in students' vocabulary acquisition, using interviews to describe the use of repetition, the use of non-visual aids, and holding students accountable as being effective. Teachers felt that modeling the use of new academic words was useful according to interview data. This finding aligns with teachers' attitudes, expressed in surveys, that students' social interaction was less important (50% remained neutral while 50% agreed). This mixed view about social interaction may indicate that teachers spend less time on student discussions and maybe comparatively more on direct instruction or individual activities to build vocabulary.

Teacher led direct instruction is emphasized in teachers' responses related to RQ5, touching on how teachers support ESL and struggling readers in their classrooms. In the interviews, teachers described the use of morphology, including teaching common roots and affixes to help students in vocabulary acquisition. In addition, teachers emphasized their role in guiding students to use context clues to decode new vocabulary items. These findings align with those from student interviews, where they asserted that context clues were an important way they learned vocabulary. In addition, students generally viewed a transfer in a word's ownership from teacher to student as teacher modeling gave way to repetitive practice and then to social interaction and "real-life stories."

Conclusion

This chapter contains the results and findings of this study that support answering the research questions and demonstrate consistency with constructivist research as the methodology details. The researcher conducted the study independently, and she was situated as an active participant who served in the role of interviewer asking questions and prompting for clarity for in-depth purposes. The researcher also observed participants' body language which revealed the enthusiasm to participate or the lack of it. The researcher observed teachers and students during lessons while taking anecdotal records.

The quantitative phase of the study consisted of survey responses from 70 students and nine teachers. The survey results revealed that 91.5% of students agreed that school social interactions shaped their language development; 92.9% agreed that they have a responsibility toward their vocabulary development; 90% agreed that teachers play a role in vocabulary development; and 75.7% were satisfied with the content and learning material. From the teachers' survey data, the results revealed that 83.3% of teachers agreed that the literacy program they utilized had the potential to nurture students with deeper understanding, higher order thinking skills and improved creative and social skills; 50% of the teachers responded 'neutral' on the item that the curriculum/program impacts their creativity; 33.3% agreed that the curriculum/program impacts their creativity; 83.3% agreed that the syllabi content align with the classroom practice during teaching; 100% agreed that vocabulary knowledge directly impacts how students learn; 50% agreed that social interactions shape literacy skills development or

the lack of it; 83.3% of teachers were satisfied with the current curriculum; and 83.3% agreed that use of academic words during classroom teaching is important.

The qualitative findings unveiled insights into how students navigate vocabulary acquisition and their perceptions of themselves as literacy learners. Furthermore, the results shed light on teachers' experiences in managing literacy lessons, employing strategies to enhance students' literacy development, and providing support for struggling readers and ESL students. In terms of vocabulary acquisition, students emphasized the significance of teacher guidance through scaffolding. They expressed a preference for learning when teachers initially model words and gradually reduce guidance, allowing independent learning. Students believed that their effectiveness as literacy learners hinged on their interest in topics connected to the academic vocabulary.

Additionally, the qualitative findings revealed that teaching ESL students posed challenges for teachers, requiring accommodation for language struggles and content delivery. Teachers based their lessons on evaluations of students' prior knowledge and periodically, informally assessed progress to gauge content mastery. Regarding vocabulary instruction, teachers utilized introducing new words, modeling the words, and implementing strategies to aid word retention. Techniques included visual cues, movement/motion, repetition, and holding students accountable for learning from mistakes. For struggling readers, teachers conveyed skills with long-term benefits, such as teaching word morphology and context clues and using technology to differentiate learning. Addressing individual learning needs was another approach to support students.

While synthesizing the findings from student and teacher surveys and interviews, it emerged that teachers were more likely than students to focus on struggles associated

with vocabulary acquisition. Students had more positive attitudes, describing both teacher and student actions as driving their learning of new words. Both teachers and students described direct instruction, the use of context clues, and one-on-one support as important, but students paid emphasis on the role of social interactions in building their vocabulary. Students discussed bringing new words into their own lives to take ownership over new vocabulary, describing this step as the final one in the process started by teachers through teaching and finished by students through learning and application.

The themes that emerged from the data collected were drawn from the open-ended survey questions, observation notes, artifacts, FGDs and one-on-one interviews included: (a) learning vocabulary with guidance, (b) connecting vocabulary to relatable contexts, (c) facing challenges in teaching vocabulary to high school ESL students, (d) periodically and informally checking students' mastery, (e) strategies in introducing new words, (f) strategies in retention of new words, (g) teaching according to learning needs, and (h) teaching reading skills.

Areas of interest included responses and connections between students and their teachers. In chapter 5, I focus on discussing these results and findings in greater details centered on descriptive statistics and common themes derived after open and axial coding. The chapter also includes the implications and recommendations drawn from the above results and findings.

CHAPTER 5 INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of how teachers and their students perceive and utilize emerging trends to support vocabulary acquisition and literacy development. It sought to explore how the teaching strategies affect vocabulary acquisition of high school students (Milner IV & Lomotey, 2014).

This study therefore aims at unveiling high school teachers and their students' perceptions of other literacy teaching-learning trends as relates to vocabulary development. The discussion centers on the research questions which guided the data collection by way of (a) Surveys with teachers and students, (b) classroom lesson observations (c) FGDs with students and (d) One-on-one interviews with teachers.

Interpretation of Research Results and Findings

In this chapter, the researcher aimed at interpreting the results and findings which give credence to the words and voices of respondents and participants by: -

i) Interpreting results of the study

ii) Interpreting findings from the study

Contribution of the Study to the Research Knowledge Base

Theoretical Contributions

Parker (2014) posits that theory has a dual role of either informing, developing, or reflecting on the methodology employed in the study. This study hopes to contribute to the literacy knowledge base in several ways.

First, the study extends the limited research on vocabulary acquisition as pertains to high school students, the impact on their comprehension skills and with it their overall performance on academic tasks. This study is among the first to focus on vocabulary development while exploring perceptions of high school teachers and their students. Most studies have focused on teacher experiences, but none has interrogated teachers and students in a single study using a mixed method approach. Bergh, et al., (2022) note that a study offers an *incremental methodological contribution* if it presents relatively modest changes that play a key role to the larger audience. This approach makes the current study unique to the field of literacy education. The researcher hopes that the findings will edify school administrators and teachers towards innovative curriculum changes. Parents who have not been conscious of the vital role they play in their children's lives will also learn of the various ways they impact the academic trajectories of their children.

Second, the study explored the perceptions high school students have of themselves as literacy learners. Thus, communicating their day-to-day experiences as they navigate vocabulary acquisition and literacy growth. These perceptions were captured in relation to their school and home environments, what they perceive as positive support from teachers and caregivers, and the social spaces they occupy. It was imperative to note that students did not highlight online social spaces as contributors to literacy development. When educators access the results and findings of this study, they will understand the diverse standpoints their students have of what they consider important avenues to vocabulary acquisition. This will in turn support teachers during their curricular and lesson development to lay emphasis on relevant aspects of teaching and learning. The student perspectives mirror Moll (2013) who advances the key precepts

of Vygotsky's scholarship among them 'the sociocultural outset of human thinking, the consideration of active and dynamic individuals and the power of cultural mediation in understanding and transforming educational practices.' Moll goes on to stress that Vygotsky's theory has the potential to offer a theory of possibilities for positive pedagogical change.

Third, this study weighs in on the perceptions of teachers as curriculum implementers. It brings to the fore assumptions they hold regarding linguistic entry behaviors of students and how they navigate the assumptions to bring out the best in students as language learners. Moll (2000) articulates the importance of interpersonal encounter with advanced theory and tenets that undergird effective literacy teaching can lead to interpersonal transformations in how teachers envision, plan, and implement teaching strategies.

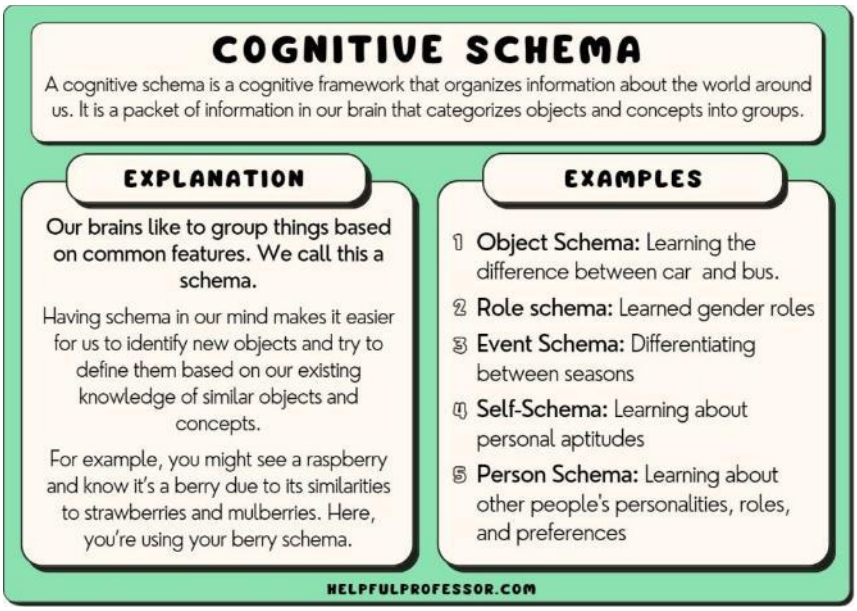
The vulnerability of teachers comes out strongly more so when they seem to have consensus about the feeling of being underprepared despite the availability of frequent professional development sessions. One teacher participant shared. ….." *Like reading now, I have never been provided the professional development on how to specifically teach a student that had a different need of language. Right? So, that I mean, that could be like something to fill in…We can be really great teachers if we have support*." Nora. Teachers also highlighted what works in their classrooms but were also quick to point out that they wish administration and or the district office could do more in terms of preparing them to become better teachers. They pointed out the lack of adequate training that is suitable for the students they teach. The participants were concerned that professional development training sessions they attend do not address the challenges they

encounter in the classrooms. They shared that they take it upon themselves to find ways they can reach their students to enable a better learning experience. One teacher gave credit to her current graduate school program which she felt had opened her eyes to unlimited knowledge, enabling her to be a better teacher.

Fourth, this study adds to the literacy research knowledge base by highlighting the emerging trends teachers utilize in classrooms to avail building blocks that students can easily adapt to foster a conducive learning environment that eliminates discomfort among students. The teachers highlighted teacher-student interactions, guided in and out of class assistance, and use of academic words during teaching and while conversing with colleagues. These align with Anderson, (2013) who is of the view that Schemas allow students to process what is in their immediate environment, encode their thoughts, organize the details into groups, and retrieve the categorized information in such a way that the reader's background knowledge interacts with conceptual abilities and processing strategies to produce comprehension (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983). The figure below simplifies what schema grouping looks like (Drew, 2022).

Figure 8

Grouping Cognitive Schemas - Adopted from (Drew, 2022)



Fifth, under strategies, students emphasized that if teachers utilize the different learning styles (visual, verbal, and kinesthetic, see Appendix section) during teaching, they will reach more learners. Social structures among them extra-curricular in-school and out of school activities like sports clubs, debating clubs, collaboratively working on assignments, cultural activities, and talks (for instance a student being asked to explain the steps followed in preparing certain foods in their community and or household, how they celebrate festivities and special holidays and rites of passage or how they welcome a newborn). The above activities are believed to give students power dynamics which help to develop speaking skills and build their self-esteem. Since these conversations revolve around family members, community or linguistic culture, peer-to-peer exchange of

vocabulary is experienced where students pick up vocabulary they might not have encountered through direct instruction.

Sixth, this study revealed insightful and innovative ways teachers support struggling readers and the challenges they encounter in their attempts to include all learners. The teachers shared their efforts they undertake during literacy lessons to prevent struggling learners from falling through the cracks. One challenge that stood out was that learners do not have enough language to express their literacy needs to their teachers and subsequently ask for academic support; for instance, the challenges they might be dealing with at home that hinder their vocabulary acquisition. Teachers therefore find it difficult to offer intervention to these students who come from family backgrounds of parents who are speakers of other languages with limited or no English and/or education. This finding will support future research on what school district administrators should do to support students who come from households with speakers of other languages with limited or no English and/or education. This also closely mirrors Milner, (2013) and Noguera & Wells, (2011) who highlighted out-of-school parameters that include but are not limited to family income, education levels of parents or primary caregivers, family structure and the daily living conditions that are key players in schooling experiences of students.

Methodological Contributions

A research paradigm constitutes abstract beliefs and principles that shape how a researcher sees the world, and how s/he interprets and acts within that environment at any given point in time. In this study, the researcher leaned on a sequential mixed methods approach to collect primary data born from Kivunja and Kuyini's (2017) constructivist

paradigm that aims at getting into the heads of study participants to make sense of what they are thinking (mental processes) or the meaning they make of the world around them. The data was analyzed and reported using descriptive statistics and coded themes that leaned on MAXQDA'S grounded theory approach. The researcher acknowledges the richness of thick primary data as experienced throughout the research process. It was very constructive to get the survey data, read through the open-ended responses, and highlight areas on which to focus for the FGDs and one-on-one interviews. Nothing can compare to listening to the lived experiences of the student and teacher participants, watching as their emotions evolved with the messages they were conveying at the time. As highlighted in the methods section, mixed methods research is convenient when carrying out action research as it seeks for "great convergence on basic issues that exist in the field as they are argued" (Ivankova & Wingo, 2018).

Contextual/Practical Contributions

The role of primary caregivers cannot be underscored as evidenced by student voices as they shared the various roles their family members play or do not play in their literacy development. In a paper discussing the contextual factors that shape parenting practices, Kotchick and Forehand (2002) point to the results of empirical studies. The results established that parenting practices that include positive reinforcement, open displays of warmth or affection, involvement in and active monitoring of children's activities, and consistent but not overly harsh disciplinary strategies, they tend to relate to various measures of adaptive child psychosocial adjustment. These include academic competence, high self-esteem, positive peer relations, and fewer child behavior problems (e.g., Baumrind, 1978; Brody & Flor, 1998; Patterson, Reid, & Dishion, 1992).

Students were emphatic in pointing out that context plays a key role in their attitudes towards learning content. They believed context cues are strong determinants in how and what they learn. These findings aligned with Sawyer (2004) who is of the view that classrooms that utilize teacher creativity encounter improvisational teaching as a collaborative and emergent nature of effective classroom practice. Bereiter (2005) argues that although creative teaching is a strategy that is more difficult to assess quantitatively, it leads to a deeper understanding of content among learners. Students attested to being motivated to learn in classes that teachers displayed assorted decoys and varied seating arrangements (in their words …"to break monotony").

Data on students being unable to utilize their learned vocabulary was in consistence with Townsend (2022) who observed that vocabulary instruction and memorization of long lists of vocabulary definitions often resulted in short-lived and narrow knowledge of the words meaning. In this study, one teacher participant noted that they stopped teaching academic words after realizing that students did not retain the meanings of the learned words.

The researcher hopes that the findings will contribute to strategic and structural plans as relates to parents and school partnerships. If put into action, teachers will gain a better understanding of their students' linguistic, socio-economic, and cultural backgrounds. With this knowledge, they will be better placed to tackle the challenges that students face on a day-to-day basis in their living environments. The voices of teachers and their students give us a broader practical context in which learning occurs and the different facets that lead to successful teaching and learning. This study might act as a catalyst for further research focusing on how factors outside the classroom and /or school

environment can shape students' literacy development. If such research is advanced, it may create an awareness among parents of the vital role they play in their children's literacy growth. When parents feel their opinions are valued, they might evolve into more supportive education stakeholders.

It will also be imperative to investigate the comfort zones of subject teachers on handling the content or curricula availed to them vis-à-vis the academic levels of learners. The researcher hopes that school districts can be more practical in allowing teachers adaptability when designing the curriculum since as implementers, they understand the diverse contexts students bring to the classrooms.

Implications for Theory and Research

Among the teachers interviewed, only one strongly talked about utilizing multimedia to differentiate reading content for students. She explained how she uses the program to tailor reading tasks according to the reading skill levels of individual students.

A greater percentage of students indicated that they learned better in classroom environments where teachers took the initiative to use backdrops and constantly change the sitting arrangements.

Future research should investigate the achievement levels of students in different classroom environments regarding lighting, wall hangings, academic charts, comfortable furniture, sitting arrangements, and longer transition breaks between lessons, which students felt will allow for a relaxed learning atmosphere. This reinforces Ortlieb's (2014) assertion that "classroom environment should not only be conducive to learning but also evoke emotional connections with students" (Pg. 6).

Limitations of the Study

The main limitation of this study was the sample size. Having a large sample size brings more credibility to a study by allowing for diversity in terms of linguistic and cultural backgrounds. A larger sample would have enabled more participants to share their lived schooling experiences related to vocabulary development. Although the school had over 300 students, this study only focused on senior students. This allowed the researcher to work with a small sample size to avoid getting overwhelmed with too much data given time constraints and lack of funding.

The study was also limited to a school setting although the perspectives of parents and other primary caregivers on vocabulary development would have added value to the findings. From the findings, two FGD participants confirmed that their parents played a great role in their literacy development through direct support or incidentally where students learned new words by listening to their family members conversations. To this effect one student participant shared that "My parents are college graduates, one with a master's and one with a doctorate in Chem, ……My brother was an academic genius and provided an active role model for who I should strive to be throughout my education." Another participant who is dyslexic was very proud of her literacy development and gave credit to her mother saying, "I am where I am because of my mother's support".

Only high school senior students and their teachers in Connecticut were involved in the data collection process. This was controlled by limited time for a doctoral student and the lack of funding that would have supported additional help with data collection

and analysis. Other studies should strive to reach a larger sample across more schools in Connecticut or nationwide.

This study was also limited to exploring vocabulary acquisition and development. It therefore did not look at how students performed on other subjects. However, students voluntarily brought up how having a larger vocabulary base supported their participation and their success thereof in other subjects. This introduced to the study the transfer of knowledge from one area to another for the benefit of successful learning.

Recommendations for Further Research

During data collection, analysis, and write-up, I kept noting key findings that popped up from what was communicated as well as what was not communicated verbally but was brought out by the body language including shrugging…prolonged pauses between sentences, and many more. A future study should strive to capture more information in the demographic data e.g. cultural/racial background, linguistic culture and number of languages spoken at home, literacy level of primary caregivers, and family generational levels of schooling.

Professional development among practicing teachers was a great concern. Teachers who participated in the study echoed each other on what they deemed as inadequate /and training. It would therefore be beneficial to the academic development of students if the departments of education at district and state levels equip teachers (who appeared ready to work but frustrated over lack of teaching tools) with training that might enhance their preparedness in handling all learners. Sawyer (2004) is quick to warn that the implementation of creative teaching calls for serious long-term investment in

professional development of teachers, administrators, and rudimentary improvements in preservice teacher education.

It was also clear from the teachers that parent-teacher or school collaborations were more active at lower levels of schooling. The teachers therefore knew very little about students' linguistic, economical, and cultural backgrounds to enable support to be directed in the areas where students would benefit from in terms of emotional well-being and academic growth. School-home collaborations as cited in the literature by It is therefore imperative for schools to put in place mechanisms that would support parental contributions to the students' personal and academic growth.

Lastly, interacting with the participants enabled the researcher to realize that given an opportunity, we can learn a lot from students as consumers and teachers as service providers who are responsible for implementing the curriculum. This translates into the need for further research on this topic at a larger scale which may lead to policy changes that will enhance how education stakeholders perceive literacy development. The responses from the surveys, FGDs, one-on-one interviews and observation notes clearly outlined the fact that students at high school level need a lot of support as pertains to vocabulary acquisition and development contrary to the assumption held by their teachers that they come in with adequate vocabulary base to support their learning. The teachers reiterated that when they received new students, they worked on assumption that students at high school level are 'reading to learn and not learning to read' only to realize that many of the students are struggling with reading and spelling. This in turn affects their attention to academic tasks and assessments.

To wind up, this researcher borrows from Spencer (2012) who strongly believes a balanced learning environment, collaboration and a positive teacher-student relationship fosters successful classroom learning communities.

APPENDIX A IRB LETTER OF APPROVAL

Memorandum

Federal Wide Assurance: FWA00009066

Jan 15, 2021, 12:26:07 PM EST

PI: Inviolata Lunani Sore

CO-PI: Dr. Richard Brown

Education Specialties

Re: Expedited Review - Initial - **IRB-FY2021-88** *Vocabulary Acquisition in High School Classrooms Utilizing Emerging Trends in Literacy Development: Perceptions of Teachers and Students*

Dear Inviolata Lunani Sore:

The St John's University Institutional Review Board has rendered the decision below for *Vocabulary Acquisition in High School Classrooms Utilizing Emerging Trends in Literacy Development: Perceptions of Teachers and Students*

The approval is effective from January 15, 2021, through January 14, 2022

Decision: Approved

PLEASE NOTE: If you have collected any data prior to this approval date, the data must be discarded.

Selected Category:

Sincerely,

Raymond DiGiuseppe, PhD, ABPP
Chair, Institutional Review Board
Professor of Psychology
Marie Nitopi, Ed.D.
IRB Coordinator

APPENDIX B PRINCIPAL PERMISSION FORM

Principal Consent Form

Dear Madam/Sir:

Your school has been selected to be used as a site to conduct a research study to learn more about **Vocabulary Acquisition in High School Classrooms Utilizing Emerging Trends in Literacy Development: Perceptions of Teachers and Students.** This study will be conducted by Inviolata Lunani Sore, Department of Education Specialties and Counseling, St. John's University, as partial fulfillment of her doctoral dissertation work. Her faculty sponsor is Dr. Richard Brown, Department of Education Specialties and Counseling.

If you agree to allow your school, teachers, and students to participate in this study, the researcher may ask to gain access to students through interviews and observations. The student participants will respond to survey and interview/Focus Group Discussion items. The study is anticipated to be a minimum of three sessions lasting a minimum of twenty-five minutes per session at least or the full length of the lesson. All sessions will be videotaped and or audio recorded via zoom. The audio and videotapes will be kept in a locked file and destroyed after the study is complete. There are no known risks associated with your site participating in this research beyond those of everyday life.

Federal regulations require that all subjects be informed of the availability of medical treatment or financial compensation in the event of physical injury resulting from participation in the research. St. John's University cannot provide either medical treatment or financial compensation for any physical injury resulting from your school's participation in this research project. Inquiries regarding this policy may be made to the principal investigator (2035071918) or, alternatively, the Human Subjects Review Board (718-990-1440). Although you will receive no direct benefits, this research may help the investigator to understand the teachers' and students' perceptions regarding vocabulary development in classrooms utilizing Emerging Trends in Literacy Development.

Confidentiality of your students' records will be strictly maintained by removing their names from questionnaires and any identifiers will be replaced with a pseudonym.

Consent forms will be stored in a separate location from the interview documentation, and they will be stored in a locked file only accessible to the two researchers. Your students' responses will be kept confidential with the following exception: the researcher is required by law to report to the appropriate authorities, suspicion of harm to yourself, to children, or to others.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may decline your school to participate or withdraw at any time without penalty. For student documents or academic records, you may also decline access by the researcher. Nonparticipation or withdrawal will not affect your professional credibility or rating.

If there is anything about the study or your participation that is unclear or that you do not understand, if you have questions or wish to report a research-related problem, you may contact Colleen Keating, keatingc@stjohns.edu, St. John's University 8000 Utopia Parkway, Queens NY, 11439 or the faculty sponsor, Dr. Richard Brown, brownr4@stjohns.edu, St. John's University, Sullivan Hall 4th Floor 8000 Utopia Parkway, Queens NY, 11439.

For questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the University's Institutional Review Board, St. John's University, Dr. Raymond DiGiuseppe, Chair digiuser@stjohns.edu 718-990-1955 or Marie Nitopi, IRB Coordinator, nitopim@stjohns.edu 718-990-1440.

You have received a copy of this consent document to keep.

Agreement to Participate

Yes, I agree to have my **teachers and students** to participate in the study described above.

_____ _____

Principal's Signature Date

Yes, I agree to allow the researcher permission to **videotape** or obtain **zoom recordings** of sessions with my students and their teachers.

_____ _____

Principal's Signature Date

APPENDIX C EMAIL TO THE SCHOOL GATEKEEPER

Dear Kay,

I hope this email finds you safe and well.

Here is to thank you very much for connecting me with and introducing me to Gwen and Sean. Nice to meet you virtually, Owen and Shaw.

As Kay has highlighted, I am pursuing my doctorate and at that very crucial stage of the program which entails accessing schools and with that interacting with administrators, teachers, and parents (indirectly by seeking their permission to talk to their children) and the students.

Easy as it might seem, the pandemic has not made it easy for me and I had to shift from in-person data collection to virtual to maintain safety during the process.

At your earliest convenience, I am ready to talk so I can give a brief about my research and provide prerequisite letters from my school.

Thank you in advance,

Inviolata Lunani Sore

Subject Matter Specialist and Trainer of Trainers: UREKA Foundation

Literacy Interventionist: Middletown Public Schools

Behavior Technician: All Pointe Care

Mentor

PhD Candidate, St. John's University, NY (ABD)

https://www.credly.com/badges/9672b15e-5af1-4db6-a827-4e43377109b8

If your plan is for a year, plant rice. If your plan is for a decade, plant trees. If your plan is for a lifetime, educate children.

Confucius

APPENDIX D TEACHER CONSENT FORM

Teacher Consent Form

Dear Participant:

You have been invited to take part in a research study to learn about The **Vocabulary Acquisition in High School Classrooms Utilizing Emerging Trends in Literacy Development: Perceptions of Teachers and Students**. This study will be conducted by Inviolata Lunani Sore, Department of Education Specialties and Counseling, St. John's University, as partial fulfilment of her doctoral dissertation work. Her faculty sponsor is Dr. Brown, Department of Education Specialties and Counseling.

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following: Take part in an interview and classroom observations to help the researcher understand how high school students navigate literacy lessons to acquire new vocabulary, what perceptions high school students have of themselves as literacy learners, the teachers' experiences in handling literacy lessons at varying classroom levels, and vocabulary/learning strategies that teachers employ during language lessons to strengthen the learning process.

Your answers to the interview questions will be recorded in writing and via audio and/or video recorders. Participation in this interview will involve a maximum of five minutes and a maximum of 15 minutes of your time per session to complete.

Federal regulations require that all subjects be informed of the availability of medical treatment or financial compensation in the event of physical injury resulting from participation in the research. St. John's University cannot provide either medical treatment or financial compensation for any physical injury resulting from your participation in this research project. Inquiries regarding this policy may be made to the principal investigator (2035071918) or, alternatively, the Human Subjects Review Board (718-990-1440).

Although you will receive no direct benefits, this research may help the investigator understand your perceptions as a teacher regarding vocabulary development in high school classrooms which might influence future policies.

Confidentiality of your research records and your students' records will be strictly maintained by removing your name and any identifiers will be replaced with a number. Consent forms will be stored in a separate location from the interview documentation and will be stored in a locked file. Your responses will be kept confidential with the following exception: the researcher is required by law to report to the appropriate authorities, suspicion of harm to yourself, to children, or to others.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may decline to participate or withdraw at any time without penalty. For interviews, questionnaires, or surveys, you have the right to skip or not answer any questions you prefer not to answer. Nonparticipation or withdrawal will not affect your grades or academic standing.

If there is anything about the study or your participation that is unclear or that you do not understand, if you have questions or wish to report a research-related concern, you may contact Colleen Keating, keatingc@stjohns.edu, St. John's University 8000 Utopia Parkway, Queens NY, 11439 or the faculty sponsor, Dr. Richard Brown brownr4@stjohns.edu, Adjunct Professor, St. John's University, Sullivan Hall 4th Floor, 8000 Utopia Parkway, Queens NY, 11439.

For questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the University's Institutional Review Board, St. John's University, Dr. Raymond DiGiuseppe, Chair digiuser@stjohns.edu 718-990-1955 or Marie Nitopi, IRB Coordinator, nitopim@stjohns.edu 718-990-1440.

You have received a copy of this consent document to keep.

Agreement to Participate

Yes, I agree to participate in the study described above.

_____ _____

Signature Date

APPENDIX E PARENTAL CONSENT FORM

Parental Consent Form

Dear Parent:

Your child has been selected to take part in a research study about perceptions of teachers and their students regarding **Vocabulary Acquisition in High School Classrooms Utilizing Emerging Trends in Literacy Development: Perceptions of Teachers and Students**. This study will be conducted by Inviolata Lunani Sore, Department of Education Specialties and Counseling, St. John's University, as a partial fulfilment of her doctoral dissertation work. Her faculty sponsor is Dr. Brown, Department of Education Specialties and Counseling.

If you agree to your child being in this study, you will be asked to do the following: Allow your child to take part in a survey and interview to help the researcher understand perceptions of students navigating literacy lessons to acquire and develop vocabulary, students' perceptions as literacy learners, and the teachers' experiences in handling literacy lessons in classrooms and vocabulary/learning strategies teachers employ during language lessons to strengthen the learning process.

Their survey answers will be recorded in writing and audio. Participation in this survey will involve a minimum of 10 minutes and a maximum of twenty-five minutes of their time to complete.

Federal regulations require that all subjects be informed of the availability of medical treatment or financial compensation in the event of physical injury resulting from participation in the research. St. John's University cannot provide either medical treatment or financial compensation for any physical injury resulting from your participation in this research project. Inquiries regarding this policy may be made to the principal investigator (2035071918) or, alternatively, the Human Subjects Review Board (718-990-1440).

Although your child will receive no direct benefits, this research may help the investigator understand your child's perceptions regarding vocabulary development in

classrooms utilizing scripted curriculum and to participate in education projects for academic and personal development.

Confidentiality of your research records and your child's records will be strictly maintained by removing your name and any identifiers will be replaced with a number. Consent forms will be stored in a separate location from the survey and interview documentation and will be stored in a locked file. Your child's responses will be kept confidential with the following exception: the researcher is required by law to report to the appropriate authorities, suspicion of harm to yourself, to children, or to others. The researcher can guarantee confidentiality by handling the data collection and analysis single handedly.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your child may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without penalty. For interviews, questionnaires or surveys, your child has the right to skip or not answer any questions he/she prefers not to answer. Nonparticipation or withdrawal will not affect your child's grades or academic standing.

If there is anything about the study or your child's participation that is unclear or that you do not understand, if you have questions or wish to report a research-related problem, you may contact Colleen Keating, keatingc@stjohns.edu, St. John's University 8000 Utopia Parkway, Queens NY, 11439 or the faculty sponsor, Dr. Richard Brown at brownr4@stjohns.edu, St. John's University, Sullivan Hall 4th Floor 8000 Utopia Parkway, Queens NY, 11439.

For questions about your child's rights as a research participant, you may contact the University's Institutional Review Board, St. John's University, Dr. Raymond DiGiuseppe, Chair digiuser@stjohns.edu 718-990-1955 or Marie Nitopi, IRB Coordinator, nitopim@stjohns.edu 718-990-1440.

You have received a copy of this consent document to keep.

Agreement to Participate

Yes, I agree to my child's participation in the study described above.

Parent's Signature	Date

APPENDIX F CLASSROOM LESSON OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

Observation Protocol

Site:	Date:	Start time:	Stop time:
Context			
Activity			
Topic			

Instructor: Department:

Course: Section:

Course Enrollment: Classroom:

Observation Date: 01/11/2022

Checklist

1. Introduction
2. Topic of the day
3. Teacher directions
4. Student interactions/contributions
5. Teacher questions
6. Presence/Absence of scaffolding
7. Student-led activities – What are they doing?

8. Does the teacher utilize higher order thinking skills?
9. In what ways did the instructor engage students in active learning during this class?
10. What are the patterns of student-teacher interactions?
11. How does the teacher use academic vocabulary to support active learning?
12. How did the instructor use instructional technologies in the room (i.e., media, tables, huddle boards) to engage students in in-class activities and instruction?
13. Collaborative Learning in the Active Learning Classroom:
    a. How did the instructor engage students in collaborative learning?
    b. How did the instructor provide directions for collaborative activities?
    c. How did the instructor ensure that all students participated in collaborative activities?
14. Formative Assessment in an Active Learning Classroom:
    a. What artifact(s) of learning did the instructor ask students to produce during (or prior) to class?
    b. How and with whom did students share their artifacts?
    c. How did the instructor provide feedback to students during learning activities or assessments?
    d. How did the instructor facilitate peer feedback during learning activities or assessments?
15. Classroom Management in the Active Learning Classroom
    a. How did the instructor indicate where students needed to focus for various methods of instruction?

b. How did the instructor use the classroom space while engaging the entire class in a presentation or a learning activity? Did they walk around? Could students see, hear, or find the instructor?

c. How did the instructor make transitions between different instructional events (e.g., move from lecture to group activity)?

16. General Observations:

a. What instructional choices worked exceptionally well?

b. What instructional choices do I think could be improved and how would I improve them?

APPENDIX G STUDENT SURVEY ITEMS

1. Kindly check the box that applies to you with 1 being least important and 5 most important.

Questions					
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
i. To what extent do your social interactions shape your vocabulary or language development?					
ii. To what extent does your teacher support your vocabulary development?					
iii. How important is your vocabulary development to your learning?					
iv. How important are your peers as pertains to your vocabulary development?					
v. To what extent does the vocabulary you learn in English support you in other subjects?					

2. How satisfied are you with the content and learning material you receive during classroom instruction?

Totally Unsatisfied	Somehow Unsatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Totally Satisfied

3. List ways the teacher enhances your vocabulary development.

a) ……..……

b) ……..……

c) ……..……

d) ……..……

Is there anything you feel the teachers should do differently to support your vocabulary development?

a. Yes
b. No

Please briefly explain your answer

……

……

……

4. How can you rate your preparedness to navigate college learning materials in relation to your level of comprehension?

Totally prepared	Somehow prepared	Neutral	Unprepared	Totally unprepared

APPENDIX H FGD INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR STUDENTS

i) What role do your teacher(s) play in your vocabulary development? (Open ended)

ii) What environmental influences do you experience in the classroom during literacy lessons that impact your vocabulary (either positively or negatively).

iii) What changes would you like to see in your syllabus that will enhance your vocabulary development?

iv) In what ways does the home environment support/not support your vocabulary acquisition?

v) School social interactions shape my language development: For those who feel it doesn't what is your argument? For those who feel it does, what is your argument?

APPENDIX I TEACHER SURVEY ITEMS

Demographic data

Name (One Initial only): .....

Sex: (F) (M) (Other).....

Age: 20-30 years

31-40 years

41-50 ears

51-60 years

Subject: .....

Teaching Experience:

1-10 years

11-20 years

21-30 years

31-40 years

41-50 years

Question	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Partly Agree	Disagree
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
To what extent do you agree that the vocabulary students encounter in your subject encourage deeper understanding, higher order thinking skills and improved creative and social skills?					
To what extent does the curriculum/program					

impact your creativity of how you deliver the content?					
To what extent does the syllabus content allow you room for adaptations to align with learning needs of your students during teaching?					
Would you affirm or disagree to the notion that students' level of vocabulary knowledge directly impacts how they learn?					
Social interactions in the school setting shape students literacy skills development or the lack of it?					

i) How satisfied are you with the current curriculum you are utilizing? Kindly check one box.

Very Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied

ii) What value do you place on new and complex words during classroom teaching?

Not Important	Somehow Important	Neutral	Important	Very Important

iii) What learning strategies/opportunities do you employ in your subject that aid students with their vocabulary development?

a. …….....

b. .....

c. .....

d. .....

iv) What reading choices/practices do you present to your learners?

a. …….....

b. .....

c. .....

d. .....

v) What intervention strategies do you use on students you may categorize as underachievers or struggling readers?

a. …….....

b. .....

c. .....

d. .....

vi) How often do you use the following strategies to enhance vocabulary acquisition in your subject? (*Likert scale*),

	Never	Very Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
a. Guessing the meaning of words from context					
b. Using flashcards,					
c. Use of their memory or dictionaries/Google searches to avail opportunities for learners to acquire more words outside the classroom.					
d. Other					

vii) What is/are your opinion(s) on the ideology that "different subjects complement each other when it comes to vocabulary acquisition and language development?

.....

.....

viii) There tends to be more attention paid to learning new words by language educators. How do you navigate teaching/learning new words to support vocabulary acquisition among your learners?

.....

.....

.....

Thank you.

Inviolata Lunani Sore

APPENDIX J TEACHER INTERVIEW ITEMS

i. Are there any strategies you utilize to evaluate the vocabulary levels of your learners? What works and what does not?

ii. What opportunities do you give your students to use new words actively?

iii. How do you track your learners' subject-specific vocabulary acquisition and their language development?

iv. How do you handle the linguistic differences/diversity among the students?

Thank you.

Inviolata Lunani Sore

APPENDIX K LIST OF OPEN AND AXIAL CODES

List of Codes Table

RQs	Open Codes	Properties of Open Codes	Axial Codes
RQ1			
			Learning vocabulary with guidance
	Asking for teachers' assistance	Students relying on teachers' support	
	Encouraged by parents	Parents motivating students	
	Guided practice	Teachers facilitating learning	
RQ2			
			Connecting vocabulary to relatable contexts
	Learning better if interested	Learning from relating to subjects enjoyed	
	Learning from real-life contexts	Learning from aspects of life	
RQ3			
			Facing challenges in teaching vocabulary to high school ESL students

RQs	Open Codes	Properties of Open Codes	Axial Codes
	Students don't like to read	High school students uninterested in reading	
	Teachers lack professional development opportunities	Teachers not having adequate training to specifically address ESL vocabulary learning needs	
	Parents not as involved as in lower levels	Lack of parental involvement among parents of high school students	
	Teaching content and vocabulary to ESL students	Teachers needing to teach the subject and new words to ESL students	
			Periodically and informally checking students' mastery
	Evaluating prior knowledge	Checking what the students already know	
	Evaluating progress	Checking developments in vocabulary acquisition	
RQ4			
			Strategies in introducing new words
	Introducing vocabulary before lessons	Teaching new words before content	
	Modelling language	Teaching new words by example	

RQs	Open Codes	Properties of Open Codes	Axial Codes
	Using SAT as the basis of teaching vocabulary	Teaching vocabulary that will be used in SAT exams	
			Strategies in retention of new words
	Giving students the responsibility to correct themselves	Holding students accountable to practice	
	Integrating visual aids and movement	Using non-verbal cues to help students remember words	
	Repetition	Teaching vocabulary through having the words recur	
RQ5			
			Teaching according to learning needs
	Connecting lessons to aspects of life	Applying new words in daily life	
	Differentiated instructions	Teaching based on the students' skill level	
			Teaching reading skills
	Teaching morphology	Teaching words in parts	
	Teaching students to use context clues	Teaching to infer meanings of words	

APPENDIX L COVID GUIDELINES FOR FACE-TO-FACE DATA COLLECTION

1. COVID-19 Human Subjects Research Guidelines Request to Resume Face-to-Face Data Collection. The IRB's mission is to protect Human Research Subjects from any harm that could befall them by participating in research. The CORONAVIRUS pandemic provides additional risks to research subjects beyond those they usually encounter. Since the Spring of 2020, researchers at St. John's University have been prohibited from collecting data face-to-face and have been restricted to collecting all data virtually. As the COVID-19 virus infection rate has reduced, and New York State has opened up, some researchers have sought permission to collect data face-to-face. The IRB has agreed to allow this under certain conditions. The IRB encourages all researchers to collect data virtually when possible. All researchers who wish to collect data face-to-face must explain to the IRB why the data for their project cannot be collected virtually.
    - **a.** IRB COVID-19 Application Requirements
        - **i.** Consistent with the University's global mission, researchers at St. John's University collect data across many jurisdictions. The rates of COVID-19 infections vary widely by location. Therefore, the IRB requests that researchers specify the geographic area where they plan to collect data. Researchers must indicate the country, state, county, and city or town where they intend to collect data and describe the extent of the COVID-19 pandemic disease in that area. One possible source of this information is the Johns Hopkins

University CORONAVIRUS Resource Center (https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/). However, researchers are free to use other sources of information.

ii. Researchers must also describe any statistics indicating the degree of infection or any regulations concerning quarantine or health guidelines provided by the state or local government where they intend to collect data. For example, New York State hosts a website that gives information on the rates of infections, positive test results, and reopening guidelines for ten regions throughout the state (https://forward.ny.gov/). If researchers are collecting data in other jurisdictions, they should consult the local government's websites. If researchers are collecting data in more than one area, their IRB application should provide this information for each location to collect data.

iii. We recognize that the rate of CORONAVIRUS infections varies widely by the type of building or facility where researchers might encounter subjects. All applications should describe the type of facility where the researchers will recruit subjects and whether that type of facility is known to have a higher infection rate or houses people who are at higher risk of infection or mortality.

iv. Researchers must comply with all St. John's University COVID-19 policies based on federal and state public health regulations (e.g., physical distancing, face coverings, cleaning/disinfection, etc.). In

addition to these policies, researchers must obey all the facility regulations where they conduct their study. These policies and how researchers will comply with them must be stated in the application for approval.

v. All researchers must specify how they will comply with any Federal, State, or local government safety guidelines. The researchers are responsible for discovering what regulations exist in any location where they will collect data. The US Government's Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides an extensive website with information on preventing CORONAVIRUS infection (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/index.html). The local jurisdiction where researchers wish to collect data might have additional guidelines or requirements about behaviors that could control the disease's spread. For example, New York State provides a web site that describes the State's re-opening guidelines and regulations to prevent infections (https://forward.ny.gov/). Researchers must describe in detail what procedures they will take to comply with the CDC, State, and any local governmental requirements. Such statements will include the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), social distancing, partitions that separate the researchers and subjects from each other, and any other federal, state, or local restrictions.

vi. All researchers will provide a comprehensive COVID-19 safety plan in the methods section of their Cayuse application.

vii. Our website on informed consent statements includes some elements related to the risks of infections when participating in research at this time.

(https://www.stjohns.edu/academics/research/grants-and-sponsored-research/humanparticipants-irb-animal-use-research a description of any reasonably foreseeable risks or discomforts to the subject). All consent forms in studies with face-to-face data collections must specify that "participating in this study puts me at risk for exposure and contracting COVID-19." Also, informed consent statements should include a section indicating that the study could be terminated if a serious rise in COVID-19 infection rates occurs. Such termination will affect any treatment that the study provides to the subject.

b. IRB COVID-19 Guidelines Following IRB Approval. CORONAVIRUS is an exceptionally infectious disease, and the rates of infection can change quickly in any location. Because of this potential rapid change in infection rates, we ask all researchers to take the following actions. a. The infection rate could change between the time a researcher receives IRB approval to start their project and the time they begin data collection. All researchers must file an Update Report to the IRB on the day they start data collection. This report should specify that the COVID-19 infection rate has not

significantly increased where they are 3 collecting data and that there has been no change in the State or local government regulations since the protocol for their study was approved. (This report will be uploaded to your IRB application in Cayuse.) b. Researchers are responsible for informing the IRB if the infection rate changes significantly where they are collecting data and stopping data collection if such a change occurs or if the State or local government imposes restrictions on social contact. The researcher can file an Incident Report if such an event occurs. c. All researchers should make contingency plans to stop collecting data and switch to virtual data collection if a series of infections arise. d. All researchers must submit notification to the IRB when the F2F aspect of their research is completed. (This notification will be uploaded to your IRB application in Cayuse.) We recognize that the COVID-19 places more responsibility on researchers and that preparing an IRB application involving face-to-face contact will be more difficult. Each study will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

APPENDIX M CERTIFICATE OF SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS TRAINING


Certificate of Completion

ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY

fhi360
THE SCIENCE OF IMPROVING LIVES

THIS ACKNOWLEDGES THAT

Inviolata Sore

HAS SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED
THE IRB COURSE IN THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS

SEPTEMBER 28, 2020

APPENDIX N LEARNING STYLES

APPENDIX O INTRODUCING SUBJECT-SPECIFIC VOCABULARY:

EXCERPT FROM OBSERVATION NOTES

Subject	**Theology**
Topic	The sick and Elderly
Key vocabulary	Euthanasia, Palliative care, assisted suicide, suicide, nuance, moral issue, ageism and circumvent.
What is Euthanasia?	Any act or omission which of itself causes death with the purpose of eliminating suffering (Gospel of Life – 65)
Types of Euthanasia	Active versus passive
Active Euthanasia	Refusal of treatment - a competent adult should have the right to refuse treatment even if the refusal will result in death.
Passive Euthanasia	Under some circumstances, family members can request that life-sustaining machines or treatment be stopped for patients with little or no hope of regaining consciousness.

APPENDIX P CLASSROOM ARTIFACTS

Chart A: Grammer rules.

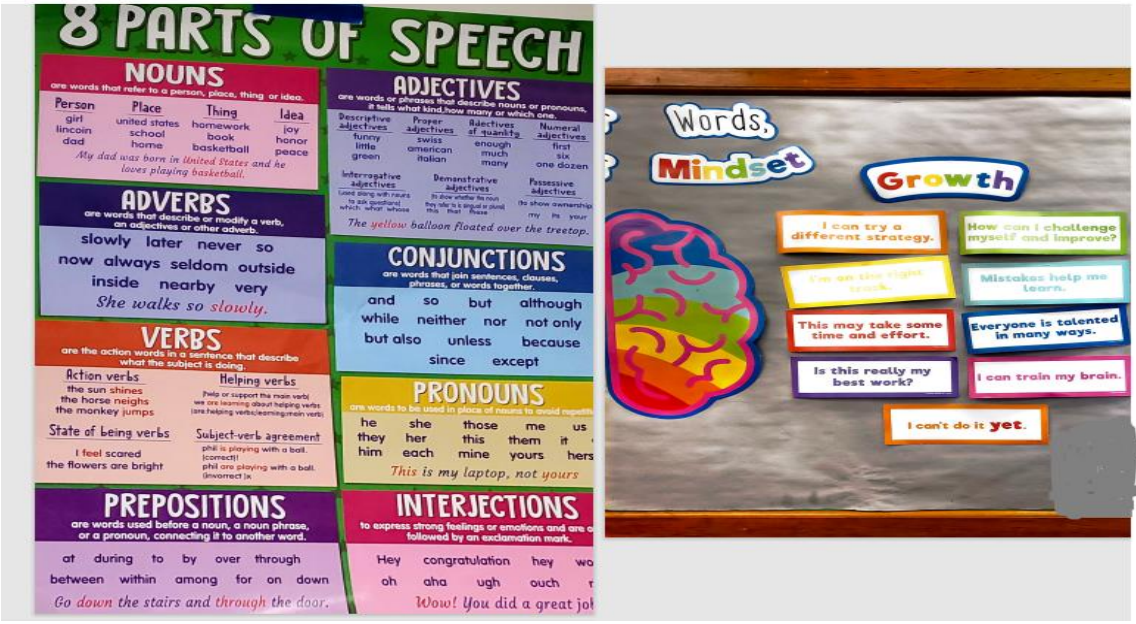


Chart B: Word Spelling reminders.

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VITA

Name	*Inviolata Lunani Sore*
Baccalaureate	*Bachelor of Arts, Kenyatta University, Nairobi, Major: Special Education*
Date Graduated	*12/2004*
Other Degrees and Certificates	*Master of Science, Syracuse University, Syracuse, Major: Teaching and Curriculum*
Date graduated	*05/2015*
	Master of Education, Kenyatta University, Nairobi, Major: Special Needs Education
Date Graduated	*07/2013*
	Professional Certificate-P1 Primary School-Level Teaching Subjects
	04/1991
	Professional Certificates in Antiracist Educator Level 1 Foundational
	05/2021
	Antiracist Educator Level 2 Intermediate
	05/2020