

# Improving English Vocabulary Size of Elementary Tutees Through Word Attack Skills (WAS)

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## Abstract

*Vocabulary size was germane in reading comprehension, particularly to second language learners of English. This action research aimed to develop Word Attack Skill (WAS) lessons for elementary tutees with limited vocabulary. The WAS lessons bent on seven main topics and twelve sub-topics composed of Auditory Discrimination, Consonant Sounds, Consonant Combinations, Vowels, Compound Words, Contractions, and Affixes. Determined during the planning phase and pre-test using Version A of the Vocabulary Test at 1000 Level developed by Laufer and Nation (1999), 13 out of 31 tutees were given WAS lessons right after their regular tutorial activities. A post-test using Version B of the Vocabulary Test was administered to find out the progress of the vocabulary size of the tutees. Based on the T-test results, the mean score of 35.9 (89.8%) in the post-test was significantly higher than the mean score of 30.4 (75.9%) in the pre-test. This indicated an increase in the vocabulary size of the tutees after they took the WAS lessons. Based on the findings, the areas to improve vocabulary size included Auditory Discrimination, Consonant Blends, Prefixes, and Suffixes.*

**Keywords:** *vocabulary, vocabulary size, word attack skills*

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## 1.0 Introduction

The known living languages in the world were about 7,000, and most people had more than one language while growing up. Countries have various policies regarding their official languages in societal and governmental transactions. This diversity posed linguistic issues and concerns among different sectors, especially the academe. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2016 reported that 40 percent of the young learners across the globe suffer from the adverse effects of not having an education using their language. Studies related to these matters flourished for better policy-making and curriculum modifications.

Filipinos use English as a second language at home, in school, and in other places where social intermingling is a must. The introduction of English was done as soon as an individual entered school for early recognition and immediate absorption of learning the second language at a very young age (Lagnada, 2002). This study focused on vocabulary mainly because comprehension improves when one knows what the words mean. Knowledge of vocabulary was related to reading comprehension as both interact during the learning process. Being able to comprehend depends on knowing the meanings of words, and such correlation and interaction have long been established (Anderson & Freebody, 1981; McBride-Chang et al., 2005; McKeown & Kucan, 2009; Clarke et al., 2010).

Acquiring a second language may be naturalistic when the speaker had the urgency to express or respond to a situation. When migrating to a different country, one needed to ride on a bus, ask for direction or shop for groceries. Communication played a significant role in a person's Second Language Acquisition (SLA) as exposure and the necessity to use the target language (TL) was inevitable to thrive. SLA in the classroom was a formal way of teaching and learning a language. This setting usually provided the opportunity for individuals to learn a second or foreign language. Much focus on research and debates on SLA were directed in this prescribed setting in the past decades up to the present. For one, Dahl and Vulchanova (2014) indicated that naturalistic acquisition of vocabulary was realistic in a classroom setting. Although input is critical in SLA, modest exposure of learners to the TL was sufficient.

A rich vocabulary was vital for a second language learner to facilitate meaningful communication. In acquiring a second language, Schmitt (2000) stressed that lexical knowledge was paramount in achieving communicative competence. Vocabulary was an immense volume of information comprising the number of words, unknown words encountered in reading, vocabulary growth, and individual differences (McKeown & Curtis, 1987). The goals of vocabulary learning, as discussed by Nation (2001), include:

much vocabulary did learners need to know; how many words were there in the language; how many words did native speakers know; and how much vocabulary was required to use another language.

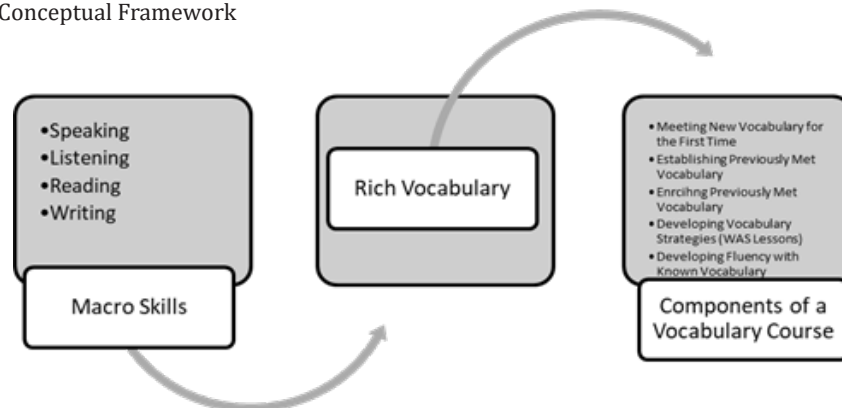
Triggered by the relevant issues and concerns stipulated above, the study aimed to develop Word Attack Skill lessons as an intervention for grade 2 to grade 6 elementary learners with limited vocabulary size. It sought to find out the increase in the vocabulary size of the tutees based on the First 1,000 Words of English. It also intended to point out areas required to increase vocabulary size. The relationship between vocabulary size and reading comprehension in the English as a second language (ESL) context was extensively researched; however, using the Word Attack Skills (WAS) as intervention was a less explored. Thus, the present study was conducted.

Eudaimonia Learning Center (ELC) is an institution that offers tutoring services to children from preschool, elementary and high school. Believing in the importance of the role of the English language, ELC implements the use of English among teachers and learners within the center. Tutees are dropped in every Monday to Friday for at least one hour a day to review or be advanced in their lessons in all subjects. One of these is English, regarded as a main learning area in their schools. As observed, some pupils misspelled ordinary words, some had difficulty pronouncing simple words, and still, some did not comprehend what they were reading. Other tutees waited for the tutor teacher to read English-related readings and answer comprehension questions for them. Worst of all, there were pupils in grade 1, grade 2, and grade 3 who could not read at all.

The researcher believed that this study would greatly benefit students because their receptive and productive vocabulary would have a broader range. Significant results would guide teachers in selecting words for instruction, developing student-friendly explanations of new words, creating meaningful learning activities, and getting students involved in thinking about using and noticing new words. Subsequently, the findings would provide information to school administrators to help them improve or develop vocabulary programs and make policies to stress the importance of learning and using English. The research further sought to guide curriculum designers in creating a workable vocabulary strategy curriculum that capitalizes on the strengths of a vocabulary development program suitable for learners of English at the elementary level.

## 2.0 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Vocabulary was not an end in itself (Nation, 2013). It needed constant practice from the beginning, intermediate or advanced level, especially in the case of second language learners like the Filipinos. Figure 1 shows the theoretical and conceptual framework designed by the researcher.

**Figure 1.** Schematic Diagram and Conceptual Framework

The major components of a vocabulary course were meeting new vocabulary for the first time, establishing the previous vocabulary, enriching the previous vocabulary, developing vocabulary strategies (WAS Lessons), and developing fluency with known vocabulary (Nation, 1994). The tutees experienced the first three components in the Discussion, Enrichment, and Reinforcement Exercises of the WAS lessons which were part of developing vocabulary strategies. The fifth was developing fluency with known vocabulary, which happened when the tutees answered the Evaluation section of each WAS lesson.

Jean Piaget presented four stages of intellectual development in his theory of child language acquisition known as the Cognitive Stages Development. These include sensorimotor (Birth through ages 18-24 months), preoperational-Toddlerhood (18-24 months) through early childhood (age 7), concrete operational (Ages 7 to 12), and formal operational (Adolescence through adulthood). Thus, the researcher felt that children under the concrete operational stage or elementary age (Grade 2 to Grade 6) were the most suitable group for this study. According to Piaget, children demonstrate logical and concrete reasoning about objects and events; they also develop operational thinking or the ability to perform reversible mental actions.

### 3.0 Research Design and Method

This study was anchored on the principles of action research under a descriptive quantitative research design. Kemmis and McTaggart (2000) described action research as participatory research which involves spiral cycles which include planning a change, acting, and observing the processes and consequences, reflecting on these processes and consequences and replanning, and vice versa. In a more recent perspective, Bryman and Bell (2018) posited that action research was an approach to diagnosing a problem and developing a solution based on the diagnosis through the collaboration of the researcher and the clients, which in this study were grade 2 to grade 6 tutees. They comprised the most number of learners enrolled in Eudaimonia Learning Center, which the researcher owned and managed. The phases undertaken in the study are discussed below:

**Planning Phase.** The researcher oriented the teacher-assistants about the study as part of the initial task. A total of thirty-one tutees took the pretest using the Vocabulary Test Version A with 40 multiple-choice items (Appendix C) constructed and validated by Laufer and Nation (1999). Finding the proportion of the first 1,000 words known by learners determined the results of the vocabulary test. The total score was multiplied by 2.5, which gave the same outcome as Percent rating = number of correct answers x 2.5. The thirteen pupils who scored below 83% in the pretest were the subjects of the study.

**Development of Word Attack Skill Lessons Phase.** With the supervision of her research adviser, the researcher crafted the WAS lessons. There were seven main topics and twelve sub-topics composed of Auditory Discrimination, Consonant Sounds (Initial,

Medial, Final), Consonant Combinations ( Blends and Digraphs), Vowels (Short and Long), Compound Words, Contractions, and Affixes (Prefix and Suffix). The first section of each lesson included a brief introduction and discussion of the topic limited to five minutes. Enrichment Exercises succeeded which pupils must finish in fifteen minutes. It was further comprised of reinforcement, evaluation, and intervention activities.

**Administration of the WAS Lessons.** The identified thirteen tutees were given WAS lessons right after their tutorial activities. Those who scored below 83% percent in any of the Enrichment Exercises underwent intervention lessons composed of a series of exercises to measure their mastery of the topic. They must get an average of 85% in each activity; otherwise, they undergo another Intervention Phase and Reinforcement Exercises. The evaluation section, composed of fifteen-item comprehension exercises on each topic, was the next to-do activity. There was also a space for the teacher's observations and reflections on the pupil's performance in each vocabulary lesson. The learners undertook as a post-test (Appendix D) the vocabulary test version B at 1000 level (Laufer & Nation, 1999) after doing the entire WAS lessons.

## 4.0 Results and Discussions

### 4.1 Development of Word Attack Skill Lessons and Intervention

This study supported Paul Nation's idea that opportunities for vocabulary learning could be achieved by language learners when there is an introduction of vocabulary components. The first component was meeting a new vocabulary item for the first time. There was a Picture Identification section containing repetitive pictures in the WAS Lessons. The Discussion section introduced new vocabulary, which included a brief introduction, discussion, and topic samples limited to five minutes.

The second component was establishing and enriching previously met vocabulary. The tutees experienced these components in the series of Enrichment Exercises. Pupils who scored below 83% in any of the exercises in this section need to undergo intervention and take reinforcement exercises set for fifteen minutes. Pupils who scored above 83% would proceed to answer the Evaluation.

The third component was developing vocabulary strategies. Using Word Attack Skill (WAS) lessons to improve vocabulary was the main focus of the study. Pupils who scored below 83% in any of the Enrichment Exercises underwent Intervention Phases with interventions composed of Word Documents, Games, PowerPoint Presentations, and Online-related sources.

The final component was developing fluency with known vocabulary. Pupils who underwent the Intervention Phases took the Reinforcement Exercises. They must get at least 85% in the exercises to proceed to the evaluation section. Otherwise, they undertook another Intervention Phase and a set of Reinforcement Exercises. The time allotment was ten minutes.

Consequently, the tutees answered the overall achievement test or the Evaluation section of each WAS lesson. It had a fifteen-item comprehension exercise. The allotted time was 15 minutes.

There was a Teacher's Reflection section where the teacher could write observations or reflections on the student's performance in each WAS lesson. The teacher may also include thoughts for improvement in the presentation of each topic.

#### 4.2 Vocabulary Size of the Pupils

Thirty-six participants took the pretest; however, five tutees quit attending tutorial sessions due to certain circumstances. Thirty-one tutees took the pretest and were coded from T1 to T31 for efficient tabulation and interpretation. Thirteen pupils scored below 83%, and they were the study subjects. There were three grade 2 tutees, eight grade 3 tutees, and two grade 4 tutees composed of nine boys and four girls. Table 1 below shows the scores and ratings of the participants who took the pretest.

**Table 1.** Scores and Ratings of Participants who took the Pretest

Tutees	Score (40)	Rating %	Remarks
T1	26	65	for intervention
T2	34	85	passed
T3	31	77.5	for intervention
T4	36	90	passed
T5	32	80	for intervention
T6	36	90	passed
T7	36	90	passed
T8	39	97.85	passed
T9	35	87.85	passed
T10	38	95	passed
T11	36	90	passed
T12	32	80	for intervention
T13	35	87.5	passed
T14	29	72.5	for intervention
T15	30	75	for intervention
T16	29	72.5	for intervention
T17	25	62.5	for intervention
T18	32	80	for intervention
T19	29	72.5	for intervention
T20	30	75	for intervention
T21	38	95	passed
T22	37	92.5	passed
T23	39	97.5	passed
T24	34	85	passed
T25	31	77.5	for intervention
T26	38	95	passed
T27	36	90	passed
T28	29	72.5	for intervention
T29	34	85	passed
T30	37	92.5	passed
T31	40	100	passed
Means	33.6	84.1	

Table 2 exhibited the mean score and the mean rating of the participants who took the pretest. Eighteen tutees got 83% and above with a mean score of 36.6 and a mean rating of 91.4%. Thirteen tutees got below 83% with a mean score of 30.4 and a mean rating of 75.9%. The 31 participants got a score of 33.6 and a mean rating of 84.1%.

**Table 2.** Mean Score and Mean Rating of Participants who took the Pretest

Percentage of Score	83% and above	Below 83%	Total Number of Students
Frequency	18	13	31
Mean Score	36.6	30.4	33.6
Mean Rating	91.4	75.9	84.1

#### 4.3 Administration of Word Attack Skill Lessons and Intervention Auditory Discrimination

This lesson was on rhyming words. Exercise A was on matching pictures that rhyme. Exercise B was focused on identifying two pictures that rhyme in each group. Exercise C dealt with identifying words that rhyme in the center of a simple radial graph. Exercise D was on identifying and writing five words that rhyme with a given word.

Based on the findings, T3, T5, T7, and T12 scored 83% and above. In the evaluation, T1, T2, T4, T6, T8, T9, T10, T11, and T13 scored less than 83%. They performed low in Exercises A, B, and C; so, they underwent the intervention phase. They took the Reinforcement Exercises composed of two exercises where T1, T8, and T9 got ratings of above 85% in Exercise A. They proceeded to the evaluation section; however, T2, T4, T6, T10, T11, and T13 scored below 85%, which required them to take another intervention phase.

Three exercises composed the second intervention. It was found out that all tutees got 100% in Exercise B. T4, T10 and T13 got 90% on Exercise B, while the other three pupils, T2, T6, and T11, got 100%. In Exercise C, all tutees once again got 100%. These tutees answered the evaluation section where T3, T5, T8, T9, T10, T11, T12, and T13 got 100%, while T2 and T4 got 93.33%, T1 got 86.67%, and T6 got 80% only.

##### 4.3.1 Consonant Sounds

The first lesson focused on consonant sounds. Exercise A presented pictures with the initial sound of /b/ and /d/. B was about the distinction of soft c /s/ and hard c /k/. C focused on pictures that begin with /f/ and /p/. D fixated on words with soft g /j/ and hard g /g/. E was about /h/ and /j/. F dealt with letters /k/ and /l/. G was on /m/ and /n/. H involved the sounds of /q/ and /r/. J included /s/ and /t/. Exercise J concentrated on /v/ and /w/. Exercise K focused on /x/, /y/, and /z/.

T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T9, T10, and T13 got a rating of above 83%. They proceeded to the evaluation section. T7, T8, T11, and T12 had difficulty in Exercises B, D, E, F, and J. They underwent the intervention phase. On the Reinforcement Exercises, T7, T8, T11, and T12 scored 90% to 100%. In the evaluation, T2 and T6 got 90%; T5 and T7 got 93.33%; T3, T4, T8, and T12 got 96.67%; T1, T9, T10, T11, and T13 got 100%.

The next lesson concentrated on medial consonant sounds, including double medial consonants. Exercises A and B focused on single medial consonants. Exercises C and D deal with pictures whose names have missing double consonants. T3, T4, T5, T7, T8, T9, T10, and T11 got above 83% in the exercises. They took the evaluation where T1, T2, T6, T12, and T13 scored below 83% percent in B, C, and D. T6 got 60%; T2 got 73.33%; T12 got 80%; T1 got 86.67%; T4, T5, and T11 got 93.33%; and, T3, T7, T8, T9, T10, and T13 got 100%.

Another lesson contained final consonant sounds. Exercise A focused final consonants /b/, /c/ and /d/. Exercise B was about the final consonants /f/, /g/, and /l/. Exercise C was on final consonants /m/, /n/, and /p/. Exercise D was about the final consonants /r/, /s/, and /t/. Exercise E was about the final consonants /w/, /x/, and /y/.

Most of the tutees scored 83.33% to 100%, and they proceeded to answer the evaluation except for T4, who got 75% on Exercise A. The tutee scored 100% in Exercise A and 88.9% in Exercise B in the intervention phase. In the evaluation, T3, T4, and T10 got 93.33%, while T1, T2, T5, T6, T7, T8, T9, T11, T12, and T13 got 100%.



These findings implied that some learners initially had difficulties distinguishing initial, medial, and final consonant sounds. However, with more exposure to other pictures and activities, their skill improved in the reinforcement exercises. Similar implications were manifested in the studies of Linebaugh & Roche (2013) on phonetic instruction.

#### 4.3.2 Consonant Blends

This lesson included two-letter consonant blends, three-letter consonant blends, and ending letter consonant blends. Exercise A had words and pictures with initial L. B had words and pictures with initial R blends. C had words and pictures with initial S blends. D had words and pictures with three consonant blends. E had words and pictures ending in consonant blends with the guide vowel letter /a/. F had words and pictures ending in consonant blends with the guide vowel letter /e/. G had words and pictures ending in consonant blends with the guide vowel letter /i/. H had words and pictures ending in consonant blends with the guide vowel letter /o/. I had words and pictures ending in consonant blends with the guide vowel letter /u/.

Only T8, T11, and T13 scored above 85% on the Enrichment Exercises on Consonant Blends, and they took the evaluation. Ten tutees got ratings below 83%, and they were T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7, T9, T10, and T12. As observed, they scored low in Exercises C, D, E, F, G, H, and mostly in I. They underwent the intervention phase.

T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T9, T10, T12, and T13 scored 88.89% to 100% in the reinforcement exercises. These pupils took the evaluation where T7 scored 77.78% in Exercise B and underwent another intervention phase. Two exercises focusing on initial and final consonant blends comprised Reinforcement Exercises II. T7 scored 100% in Exercise A, and 91.67% in Exercise B. All tutees got 100% in the evaluation, which meant that students achieved complete mastery of the topic.

These results further supported that learners encountered difficulties distinguishing and using consonant blends of even familiar pictures. It was noticeable that after they underwent intervention, their scores in the succeeding activities improved. This progress could be attributed to the study of Afsharrad & Benis (2014) who used dictation as a strategy improve listening skills. The respondent wrote down what was said or read by the teacher which significantly improve the learner's decoding of words.

#### 4.3.4 Consonant Digraphs

This lesson focused on beginning and ending consonant digraphs. Exercise A was on initial consonant digraphs /ch/ and /sh/. Exercise B was on initial consonant digraphs /ph/, /th/, /wh/. Exercise C was on ending consonant digraphs /ch/, /ck/, /ll/ and /ng/ wherein the pupils needed to change the highlighted letter to make the correct spelling of the word. Exercise D was on the ending consonant digraphs /tch/, /th/, /sh/.

Ten pupils scored from 83.33% to 100% in all the exercises, so they took the evaluation at once. T2, T6, and T10 got ratings below 83%. They got low scores in C and D, which focused on ending consonant digraphs. During the intervention, the teacher reviewed the pupils' wrong answers and let them loudly say the names of each picture. There were PowerPoint presentations on consonant digraphs.

There were three exercises in the reinforcement section. Three pupils got 100% in Exercises A and B. In C, T2 and T6 got 91.67%, while T10 got 100%. They answered the evaluation section where T1 got 93.33%; T6 and T9 got 99.66%; moreover, T2, T3, T4, T5, T7, T8, T10, T11, T12, and T13 got 100%. This result suggested that the pupils had a complete understanding of the lesson.

The findings of this topic in the study suggested the importance of pronunciation. Though most of them scored high in the preliminary exercises, some of the learners found ending consonant digraphs challenging. Gordon and Darcy (2016) claimed that instruction on pronunciation should be made explicit as it was effective in English as a Second Language (ESL) settings, such as the Philippines.

#### 4.3.5 Short Vowel Sounds

This lesson presented middle short vowel sounds accompanied by pictures commonly with CVC patterns to represent each sound. Exercise A included showing of images, and pupils needed to identify the mid-short vowel sound they heard by encircling it. In Exercise B, pupils filled the word with a guide illustration with the missing short vowel sound. C involved identifying the correct name of the picture among three given choices.

T1, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7, T8, T10, T12, and T13 got a score of 87.5% to 100%, and they proceeded to take the evaluation. T2, T9, and T11 scored below 83% on Exercise B. The teacher-researcher reviewed to the tutees the words that they got mistaken as an intervention. There were three exercises in the reinforcement. In Exercise A, T2 had 93.75%; T9 had 87.5%; and T11 scored 100%. In B, T2 and T3 had 93.33%, while T11 had 100%. T2 got 86.67 while T9 and T11 got 100% in C. These results led them to answer the evaluation where T6 scored 73.33%; T2, T5, and T9 scored 86.67%; T1, T7, and T8 scored 93.33%; and T3, T4, T10, T11, T12, and T13 got 100%.

#### 4.3.6 Long Vowel Sounds

This lesson contained the five vowels of the English spelling system (a, e, i, o, and u). Each had a matching long vowel sound which included the vowel digraphs. Exercise A was an activity on the long /a/ sound. B focused on the long /e/ sound. C fixated on the long /i/. D was on the long /o/ sound. E was about the long /u/ sound. Lastly, F focused on long vowel sounds with the silent letter e.

Ten tutees scored 83.33% to 100% in all the exercises; nevertheless, T1, T2, and T6 scored below 83%. The reinforcement had five activities. T1, T2, and T6 got scores of 100% in Exercise A. Two tutees, T1 and T6, got 100% in Exercise B and T2 had 88.80%. T1, T2, and T6 got 100% in Exercises C and D. In the evaluation, T1 and T2 scored 86.67%; T3, T5, and T10 scored 93.33%; T4, T6, T7, T8, T9, T11, T12, and T13 got 100%.

The findings for both short and long vowel sounds suggested that the majority of the learners were able to distinguish the phonemes. In the evaluation part of both sounds, the tutees' scores were even higher. This supported the findings of Linebaugh & Roche (2013) that learners perform better after being given instructions. Phonetic training had positive effects on learners since it was related to listening skills.

#### 4.3.7 Compound Words

This lesson fixated on the formation of compound words. Exercise A was administered with accompanying pictures and choices for a possible word combination to make a compound word suggested by the given images. B had 15 sentences wherein pupils must identify the compound word in each. C had a list of compound words that the tutees needed to break to recognize the base words.

Most of the tutees scored 100% in the exercises, and they answered the evaluation. T1 and T5 scored below 83% in Exercises B and C. The tutees took the reinforcement section, which is composed of two exercises. T1 and T6 got 100% in Exercise A and B. In the Evaluation, T2 and T10 got 53.33%; T7 got 93.33%; T1, T3, T4, T5, T6, T8, T9, T11, T12, and T13 got 100%.

Though two of the tutees had low scores in the initial parts of the activities, most got perfect in the evaluation part after the intervention. These results reflected the study of Sim and Lee (2018) on the relationship of vocabulary knowledge and word semantic processing to the semantic processing of learners with problems with comprehension. These children manifested difficulty facilitating the meanings of compound words composed of different morphemes.

#### 4.3.8 Contractions

This lesson centered on the contraction of words. Exercise A instructed the pupil to place apostrophes between the letters. Exercise B tasked the tutee to write the contracted version. C was spelling out the uncontracted form of the words. T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T8, T9, T10, and T11 scored 86.67% to 100% and answered the evaluation where T6, T7, T12, and T13 scored below 83%. The reinforcement had four exercises. T6 and T7 got 100% while T12 and T13 got 93.33%

and 100%, respectively. In the Evaluation, T2 got 53.33% only. Most tutees had high scores: T7 got 86.67%; T6, T8, T9, and T10 got 93.33%; T1, T4, T5, T11, and T12 got 100%.

Though word contractions were not advisable in technical writing, they were still crucial in English grammar. The results of the activities for this topic yielded high scores from the majority of learners in all exercises. In Glende's (2013) study, she explored how instructional strategies contribute to word knowledge and comprehension increase in content areas for poor readers. The researcher suggested that an evaluation of the teachers' instructional processes should be made to identify effective vocabulary strategies. Learners must be provided with varied ways of interacting with words from time to time in different settings.

#### 4.3.9 Prefixes

This lesson concentrated on prefixing. Exercise A was a test on making new words. B was on identifying root words and prefixes. C was about matching the words with affixes with other words associated with them. D focused on determining the word described from jumbled letters. Only T12 scored above 83% and was made to answer the evaluation. Most students got scores below 83%, and they underwent an intervention.

Reinforcement I had two exercises, A and B, that focused on prefixes where T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T7, T8, T9, and T10 got scores of 86.67%. They proceeded to the evaluation, where T6, T11, and T13 scored below 83%. T6, T11, and T13 had another set of interventions. Moreover, reinforcement II has two exercises A and B. T16, T11 and T13 got 86.67% to 100%. Finally, they took an evaluation where T8 scored 66.67%. T1, T10, and T11 scored 73.33%. T2, T5, T6, and T13 got 80%. T4 and T7 scored 86.67%. T3 and T9 scored 93.33%, and only T12 got 100%.

Based on the findings of the study, tutees had difficulty with the use of prefixes as most scored low in the preliminary exercises. It was noticeable that only one of them scored perfectly in the evaluation part after the intervention. This implied that the learners had poor vocabulary in terms of prefixes. Morphemic vocabulary intervention using root words prefixes and instructional components could increase the reading comprehension of learners (Brown, Lignugaris, and Forbush, 2016).

#### 4.3.10 Suffixes

This lesson discussed inflectional and derivational suffixes. Exercise A instructed pupils to form new words by adding a correct inflectional suffix to the given root words. B was on making nouns using suffixes. C was about making adjectives using suffixes. D focused on constructing adverbs and verbs using suffixes. E fixated on identifying inflectional suffixes with given jumbled letters as clues. F had activities on identifying nouns with twisted letters as hints. G is about identifying adjectives with given mixed-up letters. H focused on identifying adverbs and verbs described with given scrambled letters.

Only T7 scored above 85% in the enrichment exercises. This pupil took the evaluation at once. The other twelve tutees took an intervention with four exercises labeled A to D, where the pupils scored above 85%. In the final phase, T5 and T6 got scores below 85% and took another intermediation activity.

Four exercises composed of Reinforcement II. T5 and T6 got scores of 100% in Exercises A and C. They got 90% and 100% in B and D. The tutees answered the evaluating section, where T2 got 46.67%, which is the lowest score. T10 got 66.67%, while T1 and T5 got 80%. T6, T7, T11, and T13 got 86.67%. T9 got 93.33%, while T3, T4, and T12 got 100%.

The researcher firmly believed that the administration of the WAS lessons and interventions enriched the tutee's vocabulary in one way or another. The importance of building word attack in learners' early grades was emphasized by Ramus et al. (2003) in Fitzer and Hale (2015). They asserted that children needed to be trained to read because reading is not learned automatically and not innate. When learners tend to skip or guess words while reading, it

could indicate difficulty; thus, teachers need vocabulary and reading strategies to address these gaps.

#### Increase in the Vocabulary Size of the Pupils

To determine the growth of the vocabulary size of the pupils after the intervention, the researcher administered Version B of the Vocabulary Test at 1000 Level developed by Laufer and Nation (1999) as post-test. Table 3 below shows the results of the pretest and post-test of the pupils.

**Table 3.** Results of the Pretest and Posttest

Pupils	Pretest	%	Posttest	%
	40	100	40	100
T1	26	65	37	92.5
T2	31	77.5	34	85
T3	32	80	39	97.5
T4	33	82.5	35	87.5
T5	29	72.5	34	85
T6	30	75	36	90
T7	29	72.5	36	90
T8	25	62.5	33	82.5
T9	33	82.5	37	92.5
T10	29	72.5	35	87.5
T11	30	75	35	87.5
T12	31	77.5	36	90
T13	29	72.5	36	90
Means	30.5	76.25	35.9	89.8

The tutees' mean score in the pretest is 30.5, and the rating was 76.23%. The pupils' mean score in the post-test is 35.93, with a rating of 69.82%. Table 4 presents the T-Test results of the significant difference between the pretest and post-test.

**Table 4.** T-Test of the Significant Difference between Pretest and Post-test Scores

Mean Difference in Scores	-5.81633
Standard deviation of the Difference in scores	2.216272
t computed	
value	-9.46231
t critical value	-2.179
N	13
D	
f	12

Ho There is no significant difference between the pretest and the post-test scores.

Ha There is a significant difference between the pretest and the post-test scores.

Since the t-computed value was less than the t-critical value, the study rejected the null hypothesis. Hence, there was a significant difference between the pretest and the posttest. This result implied that the mean score of 35.9 (89.8%) in the post-test was significantly higher than 30.4 (75.9%) in the pretest. Further, there was evidence of a significant increase in the vocabulary size of students after they took the Word Attack Skill (WAS) lessons.

These results asserted Nation's idea that vocabulary is not an end in itself. It needs constant practice from the beginning, intermediate or advanced level. As Laufer and Nation (1999) pointed out, it is also imperative that researchers can draw on a variety of vocabulary measures to investigate the nature of vocabulary growth. As supported by Archer et al. (2000), daily 50- or 60-minute lessons

daily 50- or 60-minute lessons increase oral and silent reading rates (fluency), expand students' knowledge of general academic and domain-specific vocabulary, and build students' confidence in their reading ability. The main benefit gained from strategies for vocabulary knowledge is the fact that they enable learners to take more control of their learning so that students can take more responsibility for their studies (Nation, 2001; Lucas et al., 2011).

#### 4.4 Areas to be Developed to Increase Vocabulary Size

Based on the results of this study, grade 2 to grade six elementary pupils who had poor vocabulary size already needed to harness their skills in Auditory Discrimination, Consonant Blends, and Prefixes and Suffixes. As reflected in the study of Sadoussi et al. (2018), among 101 grade four students from four different schools in Kenitra in Morocco, reading scores had a significant correlation with the auditory discrimination scores ( $r = 0.30, p < 0.01$ ). The findings established that the pupils' inability to distinguish words caused a gap in storing them in the mental lexicon, which causes difficulty in determining the words in the succeeding happenstance.

The findings were also supported by Black (1981), who concluded that consonant situations in syllables appear almost evenly distributed between initial and final places in the syllables. Very few consonant conditions exist in the between parts of syllables. Further, more than twice as many consonants and vowel-colored r positions occur in filial syllabic points than in initial syllabic positions. The vowel-colored and consonant r was present at all reader levels, but r in combination with other consonants appears, principally, at the higher reader levels. Subsequently, consonant situations involving silent letters seem most frequently in final syllabic positions and higher levels.

Pittman (2003) deliberated that English vocabulary is enormous and grows steadily with technological and cultural assimilations. He discussed that the majority of the new words introduced were intricate, and that they were made up of basic word parts like prefixes, roots, and suffixes that have their definitions. Students of English can understand these words in context without an exact meaning when they are familiar. On a more recent note, Stowe (2019) considered the relationship of segmenting words into prefixes and suffixes, roots or base words, and the origins of words to morphology. Affixes are connected by spelling which affects word meaning, and contributes to the expansion of a learner's vocabulary.

#### 5.0 Conclusions

The findings of the study revealed substantial implications for educational practice. Word Attack Skill (WAS) Lessons could increase the vocabulary size of the pupils and develop their spelling skills as well. Intervention Phases are necessary for students to achieve mastery of a WAS lesson. There are strategies as interventions in learning new words for pupils. Direct instruction was effective in teaching WAS Lessons to pupils with poor vocabulary. Specific areas like auditory discrimination, consonant blends, and prefixes and suffixes were needed to develop to improve vocabulary size.

A learner's capability or performance in vocabulary development varies from one topic to another. Comprehension was affected by how well a child knows the words in context. Pupils performed better if they read or said the name of a picture aloud to hear themselves and correctly identify the sound they produced. Presenting the learners with more examples would acquaint them with applying rules on how to form a word accurately. They were more interested in interactive vocabulary-building activities, like games with concrete materials or online learning game sources.

Thus, it was recommended for language teachers that WAS lessons be a part of English activities in school as it could address learners with unique decoding, reading, and spelling problems. Individualized instructions are seen as a highly effective strategy in teaching pupils with limited vocabulary. Comprehension exercises can be considered in teaching vocabulary as these two skills are

inseparable. Further studies relating to improving the English vocabulary size of elementary pupils can be conducted by future researchers focusing on other relevant strategies such as gamification or the use of web-based games for vocabulary development, the availability and use of strategic intervention materials in the classroom, and other pertinent strategies to improve vocabulary.

#### 6.0 Reflections

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