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About the Journal

Founded in 2013, the Journal of Teacher Action Research (ISSN: 2332-2233) is a peer-reviewed online journal indexed with EBSCO that seeks practical research that can be implemented in Pre-Kindergarten through Post-Secondary classrooms. The primary function of this journal is to provide classroom teachers and researchers a means for sharing classroom practices.

The journal accepts articles for peer-review that describe classroom practice which positively impacts student learning. We define teacher action research as teachers (at all levels) studying their practice and/or their students' learning in a methodical way in order to inform classroom practice. Articles submitted to the journal should demonstrate an action research focus with intent to improve the author's practice.

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ACTION RESEARCH IN AN ETHIOPIAN CLASSROOM: INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS THAT IMPROVE VOCABULARY RETENTION

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Abstract In the fall of 2017, this action research study was conducted to examine the vocabulary retention of 19 kindergarten students who are English Language Learners (ELLs) in an elementary school in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Prior to the study, the kindergarten teacher was asked to report student's vocabulary knowledge as a baseline measure. Next, three instructional activities were used daily with the students: (1) a worksheet, (2) a jazz chant, and (3) a picture book read-aloud. Data were collected for three days and analyzed to determine which activity yielded higher levels of English vocabulary retention. Descriptive statistics and the Friedman test were used. The results revealed statistically significant differences across days for the worksheet and the picture book read-aloud. The picture-book read aloud activity was the only method that had an increase in vocabulary retention scores. Hence, this method is a recommended instructional activity to increase vocabulary retention in students in this Ethiopian classroom.

Keywords: teacher action research, Ethiopia, kindergarten, vocabulary retention

Introduction

In Ethiopia, challenges in primary education include gender gaps (more males than females in schools in rural areas), high dropout rates, and educational quality. To address these challenges, Ethiopia's Ministry of Education, in collaboration with UNICEF, implemented

new initiatives such as the O-class School Readiness Program. At the primary level, the number of primary schools increased from 12,089 [in 2001-2002] to 33,373 in 2014-2015. During this same timeframe, student enrollment increased drastically from 54% to 94.3% (MoE, 2017).

One goal of the Ministry of Education is for educators to design a comprehensive curriculum to facilitate the holistic development of the child (MoE, 2017). Authors of the Ministry of Education 2017 Report conveyed the need to

- Contextualize the content of the curriculum by using local learning and play materials such as games, stories, songs and puzzles, and organize technology supported learning and reading corners;
- Include activities that promote national identity and unity within diversity with particular focus on mutual respect, cooperation, inclusiveness, values of patriotism, through children's literature games, stories, music and experience sharing programs and moral education (p. 14).

In Ethiopia, across school levels, educators have integrated English and Amharic into the curriculum (CIA, 2017; Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2010). The instruction of a second language in the schools involves the implementation of an English language curriculum (USAID, 2018).

Learning a New Language. English as a Second Language (ESL) denotes the form of teaching wherein English language learners receive specialized instruction to assist with the development of English language skills (McFarland, 2017). Language One (L1) is the first language an individual knows, typically their native language (The Condition of Education, 2017). Language Two (L2) is the second language or target language of an individual (McFarland et al., 2017). Specialized instruction in ESL classrooms includes a conversational aspect, whereas a teacher asks students questions and the students answer. Other techniques involve using visual displays, encouraging conversations with peers, using academic language in the classroom, and teaching challenging content and vocabulary (Lara-Alecio, Tong, Irby, & Mathes, 2009).

Learners concentrate on, process, and retrieve information differently (Bas, 2008; Dunn & Dunn, 1992; Ghosn, 1997). Relatedly, Gardner (2011) described eight types of intelligence (e.g., verbal-linguistic, musical-rhythmic) in Multiple Intelligences Theory. While everyone possesses these intelligences, Ghamrawi (2014) asserts the development varies among people. For example, some people are stronger in the verbal-linguistic domain, while others are stronger in musical-rhythmic intelligence. It is essential to implement varied teaching techniques to ensure students are taught in a way that they learn best (Ghamrawi, 2014).

Teaching Vocabulary Words. Learning a new language involves acquiring new vocabulary (Lin & Hsu, 2013; Ramachandran & Rahim, 2004). Vocabulary is involved in the four components of language: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. According to Lin and Hsu

(2013), teaching the vocabulary of a new language contributes to language fluency. Vocabulary acquisition is the process of learning and understanding new terminology to such a degree that it can be used accurately in oral and written communication. Meanwhile, vocabulary retention is the continued understanding and use of mastered language (Snow, 2008).

In the ESL context, a limited vocabulary impedes language learning. Therefore, vocabulary is critical to the learning process (Karakoç & Köse, 2017; Lin & Hsu, 2013). Language acquisition techniques in English language classrooms have relied heavily on methods that combine social skills with language development. These techniques include songs, skits, conversation circles, and storybook readings. According to Ghosn (1997), repetition alone was ineffective at increasing vocabulary retention. However, repetition was more effective when used with several engaging activities, rather than one monotonous activity (Ghosn, 1997).

Ghamrawi (2014) used the Multiple Intelligences Theory as a framework for ESL research at a preschool in Lebanon. Students in the classroom where the teacher utilized multiple intelligences (e.g., drawing, acting, and musical performance) had higher vocabulary acquisition compared to the control group that received traditional teaching. In their experimental study about vocabulary acquisition, Lin and Hsu (2013) examined the efficacy of hierarchy vocabulary exercises to copied vocabulary exercises. The experimental group retained more vocabulary compared to the control group, which indicated that varied vocabulary exercises that required more mental processing increased language learning.

Scholars have discussed the varied ways of teaching another language and the related aspect that different learning styles affect vocabulary acquisition (e.g., Collins, 2005, 2010; Lin 2014, McFarland et al., 2017). For instance, Collins (2005) indicated that increased exposure to read-alouds increased vocabulary retention. Similarly, Lin (2014) studied semantic explanations and determined that receiving explanations for new terminology increased vocabulary knowledge in English Language Learners. Children who received these explanations in conjunction with new vocabulary retained more knowledge (Collins, 2005; Lin, 2014). The purpose of this action research study was to investigate which instructional method was the most effective at increasing students' vocabulary retention.

Literature Review

Vocabulary development requires learning new words (Shintani, 2012). In this literature review, we focused on three methods of instruction: (1) worksheets (2) jazz chants and (3) picture book read-alouds. There is a description of each instructional strategy and relevant empirical literature.

Worksheets in Instruction. When teaching English as a Second Language, standard practices include utilizing worksheet methods with challenging exercises. These practice exercises were designed to evaluate and monitor comprehension (Bas, 2008; Hansen, 2006). Capable students benefit from routine worksheet use. However, this has encouraged memorization skills rather than the acquisition of language skills (Hansen, 2006). Students who solely used

textbooks for language acquisition were less able to speak fluently in that language compared to students exposed to altered instructional techniques (Ghosn, 1997; Lin & Hsu, 2013). Worksheet instruction involved the students observing the teacher and copying proper grammar usage and vocabulary on paper. Students did not have an opportunity to showcase creativity or lead the class (Bas, 2008). English worksheets limit the vocabulary students acquired because of their teacher-centered nature (Cianca, 2012).

Curtin (2005) reported that Spanish speaking ESL students preferred to learn by writing an example simultaneously and engaging interactively with their teacher. This instruction was better than just listening and observing the teacher lecturing from the textbook. As these studies indicate, worksheets and textbook instruction are insufficient and not interactive teaching methods. Trisnarningsih (2015) determined that using worksheets to teach English to Indonesian students was an effective and efficient practice. The researcher found that students had improved pronunciation and grammar as well as increased vocabulary after utilizing the worksheets as compared to their baseline.

Within language textbooks and other learning resources, words, and images usually held a contextual relationship (Lin, 2014; Weninger & Kiss, 2013). For example, a textbook accompanied the word *friend* with an image of two boys in school. The same word was shown with a picture of two boys at a restaurant (Ghosn, 1997). For a non-English speaker, representing the word with two different images was confusing. Moreover, resources should illustrate vocabulary words with images in their most rudimentary form (Ghosn; 1997; Li, 2014; Weninger & Kiss, 2013). Scholars recommended that words and images be culturally relevant (Birrell & Tinney, 2008). Culturally-relevant materials increased learning by decreasing social and cultural barriers, resulting in more student-teacher collaboration (Birrell & Tinney, 2008; Eusafzai, 2015).

Jazz Chants in Instruction. Another communicative approach to language teaching that helps students understand semantics was a jazz chant. A jazz chant is a rhythmic expression of Standard American English displaying situational contexts (Graham, 2006). In Kung's (2013) study, varying jazz chants were conducted before instruction took place for 12 weeks in a Taiwanese English as a Foreign Language (EFL) intermediate class. First, the students performed the chant with the instructor and repeated the instructor's words. Next, the students conducted the chant without the help of the instructor, and lastly, they performed in a group. During the chants, the teacher would tap along and play music to create more rhythm. Following the jazz chants, the teacher taught vocabulary and grammar. Also, the teacher encouraged students to rehearse the chants outside of class every day (Kung, 2013).

Kung (2013) found that jazz chants enhanced the students' listening and speaking abilities and their comprehension. The students also noted that the jazz chants made learning more exciting and motivated them to learn English on their own time. Lastly, after the 12 weeks, the students remarked that they were more courageous and confident in their speaking in general and in a public setting. One student stated that chanting as a group decreased their speaking anxiety. The statistically significant results indicate that jazz chants are an effective technique for teaching English (Kung, 2013). Indah and Putri (2016) supported Kung's (2013) assertion of jazz chants being effective. Researchers found the related methods of

incorporating music by singing or listening and performing poetry useful in the language classroom (Alisaari & Heikkola, 2017).

Picture Books in Instruction. Collins (2005) examined vocabulary acquisition in 70 Portuguese preschoolers learning English. The subjects in the experimental group listened to stories three times a week for three weeks, and new vocabulary words were explained by pointing out context clues and giving synonyms and definitions. The control group had the same conditions except new vocabulary was not described to them. The experimental group had higher vocabulary scores compared to the control group. In two separate studies, Collins (2005, 2010) demonstrated that explaining new vocabulary while reading a picture book increased vocabulary acquisition in ESL learners.

Introducing new vocabulary during read-alouds is useful because the language is more diverse than textbooks, making it authentic and meaningful (Shintani, 2012). Lin (2014) demonstrated the usefulness of context clues in language acquisition. Lin's (2014) study consisted of 45 ELL fourth-grade students who were native speakers of Mandarin Chinese. The teacher read a book and pointed to a picture, defined it, and acted out the word where applicable. At the end of the five-week study, children took a multiple-choice vocabulary test. Children who received vocabulary explanations scored higher on the examination compared to those who did not. Other researchers have demonstrated that picture books increase vocabulary acquisition (Penglia & Puttasem, 2017). Also, picture books are more effective than textbooks in teaching vocabulary Hashemifardnia, Namaziandost, & Esfahani, 2018), and picture books increase vocabulary and student interest in the learning material (Kalantari & Hashemian, 2016).

Methodology

The purpose of this action research study was to investigate English vocabulary retention using three instructional methods in an Ethiopian elementary classroom. The study occurred in December 2017. The research questions were

1. For each instructional practice, was there a statistically significant difference in vocabulary retention by day for students?
 - worksheet
 - jazz chant
 - picture-book read-aloud
2. Which instructional method increased students' vocabulary retention the most?

Research Design. This action research was a systematic inquiry conducted by teachers interested in improving the teaching and learning process. Action research enables us to gather information about how schools operate, how teachers instruct, and how students learn (Mills, 2007). In classrooms, action research allows teachers to study their instructional methods, students, and assessments—"to better understand them and be able to improve their quality or effectiveness" (Mertler, 2017, p. 4). Action research involves educators working together to focus on the unique characteristics of the population in which a practice is employed and with whom action can be taken (Mertler 2017) to inform

future methods (Creswell, Hanson, Plano Clark, & Morales, 2007; McNiff & Whitehead, 2011).

Participants. In this kindergarten classroom, there were 19 students in total: six boys and 13 girls. The students' native language was Amharic. The students ranged from approximately four to six years of age. The students were being taught English during school.

Setting. This study occurred at a private school located in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. This non-profit school provides education to students from low-income families in Ethiopia who are affected by HIV/AIDS. Students receive a uniform, tuition, stationery supplies, and food. At the school, students learn Amharic and some English (Fregenet Foundation, 2013). In 2004, the school opened with a few teachers and approximately 30 pre-school students. Since then, student enrollment increased to nearly 300 students across various grades and school sites.

In 2015, the secondary researcher visited the school and interacted with the administration, teachers, and students. During the 2015 visit, informal teaching observations occurred. The educators use worksheets to teach literacy and mathematics. A lesson was taught by the teacher, and the students were expected to recreate the strategy modeled independently on worksheets (H. Higgins, personal communication, November 2017). Direct instruction was used across these grades. Every student has a composition notebook used throughout the day. Due to changes, currently, the school consists of students in grades pre-K to 2nd grade (Fregenet Foundation, 2013).

Connection to the Research. The primary researcher was a pre-service teacher who was completing an honors thesis at the University of North Carolina Wilmington (UNCW). The primary researcher made the book that was read aloud as part of her Children's Literature course at UNCW. During the 2017 Ethiopia Field Experience, she collected data for her thesis. The secondary researcher, UNCW faculty, co-led the Ethiopia trip and supervised this research.

First Day at the School. On the first day at the school, intentionally by design, the primary and secondary researcher observed the kindergarten teacher teaching lessons on Amharic, mathematics, and English. Before implementing the instructional strategies and collecting data, one day was spent becoming familiar with the teachers, students, and instruction at the school.

Instructional Methods. The instructional methods used in the study were a worksheet, a jazz chant, and a picture book read-aloud. The worksheet had color words because colors are useful adjectives in any language. Body parts were chosen for the jazz chant because the nouns are familiar despite background. The picture book had vocabulary words that students encountered in their lives. They were selected from photos taken on the 2015 faculty-led Field Experience in Ethiopia organized through the Watson College of Education. There were five words per instructional method. In total, the strategies included 15 English vocabulary words (see Appendix A).

Worksheet. For this activity, the primary researcher passed out a half-sheet of notebook paper with the five colors (red, blue, orange, green, purple) on it to each student. She wrote the five vocabulary words on the chalkboard at the front of the classroom. Using a yardstick, she pointed to each word, said it loudly, and then led to the corresponding color on the worksheet. Students wrote the vocabulary word next to the color. Then, she began the repetition of the vocabulary. She pointed to each word on the board, said it loudly, and the students repeated the word. She did this process three times for each word each day of data collection. Data were collected by removing students individually from the classroom and administering a copy of the worksheet (Fregenet Foundation, 2013). The number of words correctly identified determined the score.

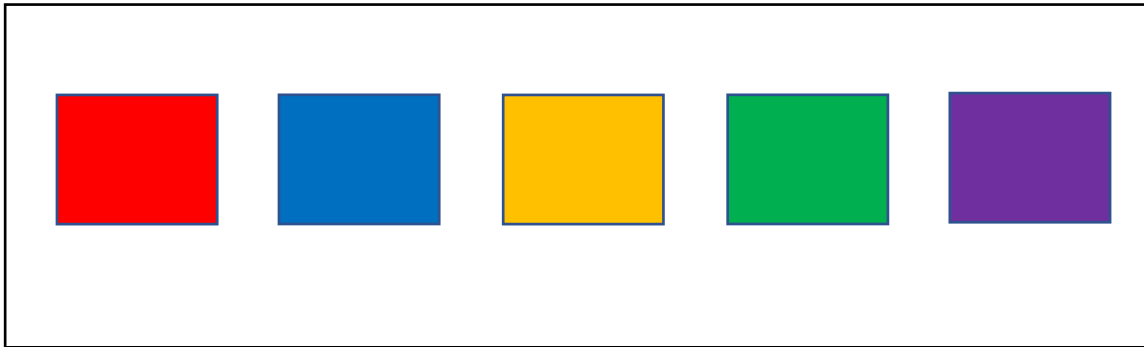


Figure 1: Drawing of worksheet for resource activity

Jazz Chant. For this method, the well-known English language song "Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes" was used. On each of the three days, the primary researcher modeled the song once in front of the classroom. She paused after each of the five vocabulary words (head, eyes, ears, mouth, nose) and repeated the word loudly. Then, the students sang the jazz chant three times with her. This chant included clapping and movements so that students could have fun. Data were collected by individually pulling students out of the classroom. Each of the five vocabulary words was said, and students were asked to point to the corresponding body part. Scoring was based on how many body parts the students correctly identified out of five.



Image 1: Primary researcher and students singing jazz chant.

Picture Book Read-Aloud. For this method, students listened to an English picture book that was read aloud by the teacher. The picture book used was entitled “School in Ethiopia.” The book “School in Ethiopia” was read once to the entire group of students, with emphasis put on the vocabulary words and corresponding images. The primary researcher pointed to the words within the picture book and modeled it when possible. For example, she looked to boys and girls within the classroom for each of those words. When students heard an English word, they identified the corresponding picture. Data were collected by individually pulling students from the classroom and showing each page of the book. Each page had one of the five vocabulary words. The five vocabulary words were said, and students were asked to point to the corresponding image on the page. Scoring consisted of the number of vocabulary words the students correctly identified.

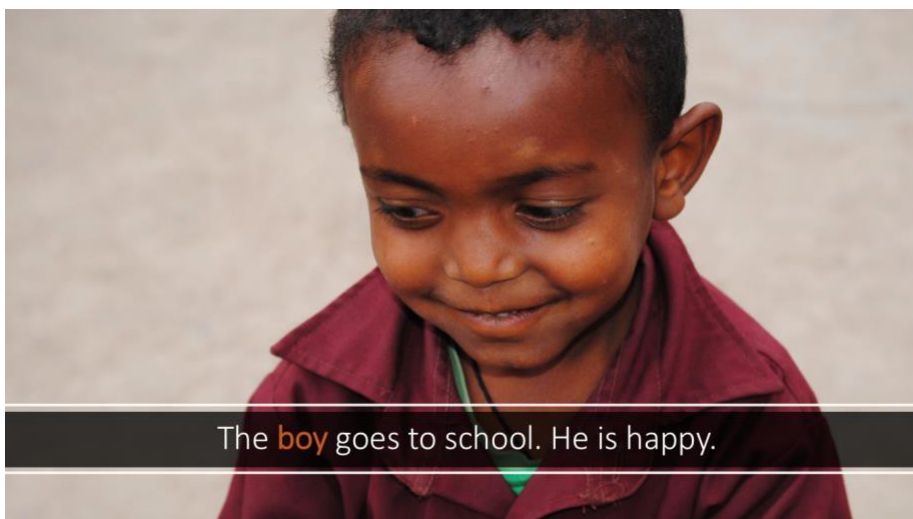


Image 2: Example page showing vocabulary word and image

Procedure. The primary researcher obtained assent, followed by the kindergarten teacher providing a global assessment of each student's vocabulary knowledge. Daily, the primary researcher implemented each instructional method and assessed the kindergarten students' vocabulary retention.

Assent Affirmation. In this study, the participants were Ethiopian students under the age of 18. A modified form of assent was used to ensure that participants were comfortable participating in the research project. First, a letter was sent to the school administrator to verify that data collection was allowed in the classroom. After that, a translator asked for the teacher's permission to conduct the study. Third, students indicated if they wanted to participate in the study with me as a visiting teacher. If they nodded, said "yes," or began active engagement in the activities, this was accepted as a modified form of assent, according to Institutional Review Board at UNCW.

Global Assessment of Student Vocabulary Knowledge. Based on the literature, one's native language vocabulary knowledge positively correlates to their ability to learn vocabulary in a target language (Droop & Verhoeven, 2003; Lindholm-Leary, 2016). Thus, at the beginning of the study, the primary researcher asked the kindergarten teacher to report the students' pre-existing vocabulary knowledge. The report was a global assessment because no language was specified. The primary researcher created a list and assigned each child a number between 1-19 to maintain confidentiality. The teacher rated the student's vocabulary from 1-3 with one being little to no vocabulary knowledge, two being some vocabulary knowledge, and three being very knowledgeable. The primary researcher recorded the results of this global assessment.

Instructional Method and Assessment. Over the next three days, the primary researcher used three teaching strategies. Each instructional method involved five specific vocabulary words. The three methods were a worksheet, a jazz chant, and a picture book read-aloud. About 20 minutes were spent on each strategy each day. The strategies occurred in the same order every day: worksheet, jazz chant, and read-aloud. The assessment results were recorded manually in a research notebook. The research notebook had individual pages dedicated to participants. Each participant's page had a table with the rows for days one, two, and three; the columns were for the three instructional strategies. Within the instructional strategy columns, the five vocabulary words for each approach were listed. Correct responses received checkmarks next to the respective vocabulary word.

The researcher determined a score for each student assessment. For example, a student who was present for the three days of data collection received nine scores in total. For an assessment, irrespective of the instructional method, the score ranged from 0-5, with 0 meaning no questions were answered correctly, and five indicating all items were answered correctly. These scores comprised the assessment data.

Data Management and Analysis. The data from the teacher's global assessment of student vocabulary knowledge, as well as the daily assessment scores, were transferred from the research notebook to Excel 2017. The assessment data, collected by the primary researcher, were organized by instructional method and day. Upon importing the data to SPSS (version

21), student absences were specified as missing data. Then, the mean and standard deviation were calculated for: (1) the global assessment of vocabulary and (2) each instructional method by day (1, 2, and 3).

The Friedman test was conducted to examine differences across days for each instructional strategy. This inferential test is the non-parametric equivalent of the repeated measures analysis of variance (Corder, & Foreman, 2009). As Corder and Foreman (2009) stated, the Friedman “test is a statistical procedure for comparing more than two samples that are related” (p. 80). Upon checking that the assumptions for the Friedman test were met, the data were analyzed. The number of students, the F statistic Chi-square in SPSS, degrees of freedom, and p-value’s relation to alpha were reported. An alpha level of 0.05 was used to determine statistical significance for each Friedman test (Corder, & Foreman, 2009).

Results

The results are presented in two parts. First, descriptive statistics for the teacher report of the global assessment of student vocabulary knowledge are provided. Then, the results for each instructional method are reported with a summary.

Global Assessment of Vocabulary Knowledge. For the teacher report of student vocabulary knowledge, each student was assigned a numeric value to describe their vocabulary knowledge. According to the report, 1 meant little to no vocabulary knowledge, 2 meant some vocabulary knowledge, and 3 meant a lot of vocabulary knowledge. In terms of prior vocabulary knowledge, the mean was 2.47 ($SD = 0.61$). One student received a 1, eight students received a 2, and ten students received a 3. Most students had some or a lot of vocabulary knowledge.

Instructional Activities. The results for each activity are provided. The findings include descriptive and inferential statistics.

Worksheet. Based on the worksheet activity, the results revealed a decline in correct responses across three days. See Table 1. The Friedman test results for the worksheet activity were statistically significant $\chi^2 (1, n = 16) = 8.11, p = 0.02$.

Table 1: Vocabulary Words and Correct Responses for Worksheet

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Total Correct
	n = 16	n = 16	n = 18	
Red	15	6	7	28
Blue	14	7	7	28
Orange	14	14	16	44
Green	11	7	5	23
Purple	10	8	10	28

Note: n = number of students participating in the assessment.

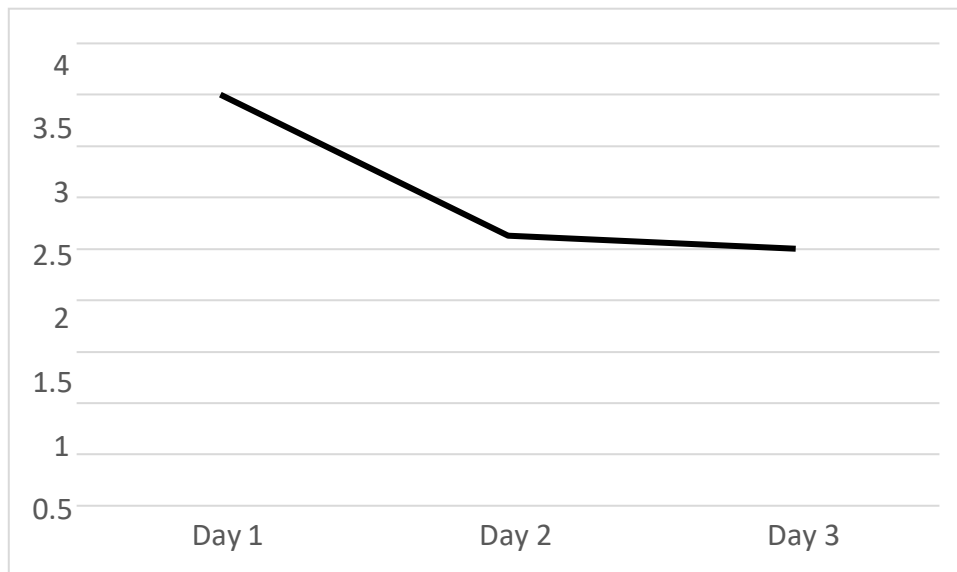


Figure 2. Average Amount of Correct Responses for Worksheet

Jazz Chant. Based on the jazz chant activity, the results revealed a decline in accurate responses across three days. Results for the jazz chant activity indicated a decrease in vocabulary score from day one to day three. See Table 2. For the jazz chant activity, the Friedman test results were not statistically significant $\chi^2 (1, n = 16) = 2.45, p = 0.20$.

Table 2: Vocabulary Words and Correct Responses for Jazz Chant

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Total Correct
	n = 16	n = 16	n = 18	
Head	16	15	11	42
Eyes	15	13	15	43
Ears	11	9	11	31
Mouth	12	12	13	37
Nose	13	12	11	36

Note: n = number of students participating in the assessment.

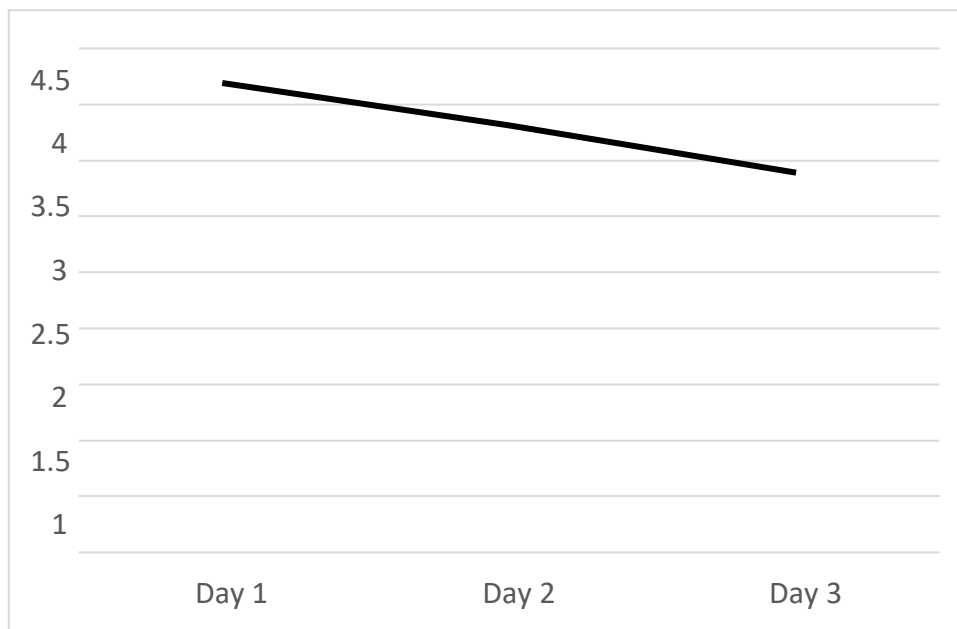


Figure 3. Average Amount of Correct Responses for Jazz Chant

Picture Book Read-Aloud. Based on the picture book read-aloud activity, the results revealed the correct responses declined from day one to day two, and then an increase on day three. Results for the picture book read-aloud indicated a decline in vocabulary score from day one to day two, and then an increase on day three (Table 3). The results from the Friedman test for the picture book activity were statistically significant $\chi^2 (1, n = 16) = 9.27, p = 0.01$.

Table 3: Vocabulary Words and Correct Responses for Picture Book Read-Aloud

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Total Correct
	n = 16	n = 16	n = 18	
Book	6	7	9	22
Boy	13	5	7	25
Girl	16	6	13	35
Basketball	15	14	18	47
Smile	16	12	15	43

Note: n = number of students participating in the assessment.

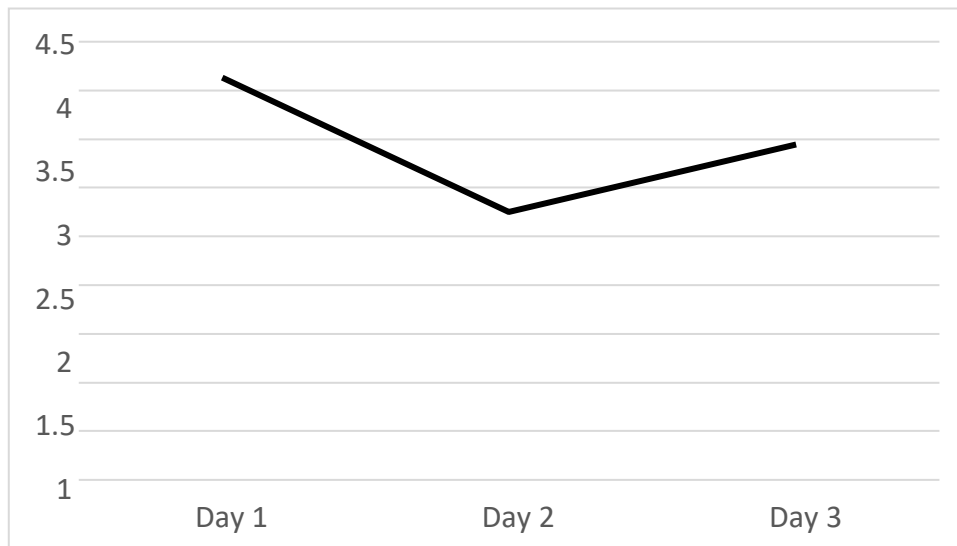


Figure 6. Average Amount of Correct Responses for Picture Book Read-Aloud

According to the results on the third day, the average score for the picture book read-aloud method was 3.44, which was 0.05 points higher than the jazz chant method and 0.96 points higher than the worksheet method. Table 4 provides a summary of the average amount of correct responses for each instructional activity.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for Instructional Activities by Day and Friedman Test Results

Instructional Activity	Day One		Day Two		Day Three		χ^2	<i>p</i>
	<i>n</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>		
Worksheet	16	4.00 (1.59)	16	2.63 (1.96)	18	2.50 (1.65)	8.11	0.02*
Jazz Chant	16	4.19 (1.11)	16	3.81 (1.17)	18	3.39 (1.79)	2.45	0.29
Picture Book Read- Aloud	16	4.13 (0.81)	16	2.75 (1.18)	18	3.44 (1.20)	9.27	0.01*

*Note: n = number of students participating in assessment; M = mean of scores for assessment; SD = standard deviation of scores for assessment; χ^2 = Chi-square test results; p = Asymptotic significance; * indicates statistical significance.*

Discussion

In this study, the picture book read-aloud was the only instructional strategy out of the three that included concepts exclusively relevant to the students. The picture book was the only method that yielded an increase in student vocabulary retention scores. The images within the picture book were of previous students who attended the school. These results provided evidence that cultural relevance in books builds text-to-self connections and increased comprehension (Collins, 2005; Lin, 2014).

When subjects were read this book, they were able to see images of students like them. These connections may have accounted for the increased assessment scores. This finding corresponds with the Ministry of Education 2017 Report about contextualizing the content of the curriculum by the use of stories and including activities that promote national identity. Also, to strengthen the existing curriculum for pre-primary education, the same authors of the report recommended using music coinciding with research by Kung (2013).

In the picture book read-aloud instructional strategy, words were chosen based on images taken during a previous trip to Ethiopia. The vocabulary word set seemed related to the primary researcher because the words came from pictures from Ethiopia. In retrospect, the words were not wholly related. *Boy* and *girl* have no denotational relation to *book*, *basketball*, or *smile*. The word *book* received half or below half the amount of correct responses as the word *basketball* on all three days of teaching and assessment. This result was interesting since the image of a book was in the picture book, and the primary researcher pointed and modeled the word for students. After visiting Ethiopia, she realized that books are not regularly used or available within the classrooms. Because students did

not have a connection within the word set, the children struggled to learn the vocabulary. Contrastingly, students have played basketball on the school playground, so they retained this word easily. Word sets led to vocabulary understanding when the words were explicitly related (Alharbi, 2015).

Vocabulary words that seemed related to native speakers yielded different understanding rates in ELLs (Alharbi, 2015; Holt, 1995). Notably, student's vocabulary retention in this study varied across the strategies based on the words. Initially, the researcher believed that all of the color words would yield a similar level of vocabulary acquisition for the students. Yet within the worksheet method, the word *orange* had a 40% higher amount of correct answers than the word *blue* on day one. On day two, *orange* had a 50% higher amount than *blue*; *orange* was over 50% higher than *blue* on the third day. One theory about this gap is that *orange* is also a word for fruit that students may have been familiar with or recognized.

Increasing students' English vocabulary retention. Some researchers (Bas, 2008; Weninger & Kiss 2013) have suggested using worksheets as the main form of English language instruction in primary schools. Meanwhile, Kung (2013) found that jazz chants were an immense aid in English language acquisition. At first, the worksheet method was the most effective method of increasing vocabulary. However, the overall average amount of correct responses for the worksheet method declined over the three days at the school. A plausible explanation for the initial increase was that worksheets were utilized as the primary teaching method employed at this school. Over several days, it did not maximize vocabulary retention. This result supports Cianca's (2012) findings that worksheets are not an effective method of English instruction. Like other scholars (Shintani, 2012; Lin, 2014), the picture book read-aloud was recommended as the best instructional strategy to increase vocabulary for elementary ESL students. Explanations of word meanings in conjunction with new vocabulary have led children retaining more knowledge after lessons (Collins, 2005; Lin, 2014; Lin & Hsu, 2013).

Limitations

Communication and cultural barriers initially existed between the primary researcher and the kindergarten teacher. On the first day of data collection, the teacher wanted to correct student mistakes during the assessment. The primary researcher communicated that these mistakes were beneficial to the research. Another limitation was the amount of time spent at school (i.e., three days) and the small sample size.

Implications

Researchers can address cultural differences by involving the teacher in a walkthrough of the vocabulary instruction and sample assessment. The teacher can have input on the method (e.g., which jazz chant to use) and the vocabulary taught to their students. The teacher can remove words that students already know (e.g., *orange*). Teachers should select appropriate vocabulary words according to the level of the student's language proficiency (Attinasi & Minnoves-Myers, 1981; Lindholm-Leary, 2016). Another suggestion is to replace the teacher report of student vocabulary knowledge with a student pre-test with the actual vocabulary words. A pre-test would minimize potential researcher and teacher bias. We

suggest gathering more comprehensible data by conducting a prolonged study with more participants.

Conclusion

This action research study revealed statistically significant differences across days for the worksheet and the picture book read-aloud activities. The picture book read-aloud was the sole method that increased vocabulary retention scores. The picture-book read aloud method is recommended to improve vocabulary retention of kindergarten students in this Ethiopian classroom.

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Appendix A: Instructional Activities and Vocabulary Used

Worksheet	Jazz Chant	Picture Book Read-Aloud
Red	Head	Book
Blue	Eyes	Boy
Orange	Ears	Girl
Green	Mouth	Basketball
Purple	Nose	Smile

