

Avoiding the Vocabulary Void: The effects of a vocabulary-based intervention programme on the GCSE English performance of Y11 eFSM pupils.

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Submitted to the University of Wales Trinity Saint David in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Education, University of Wales Trinity Saint David, 2019

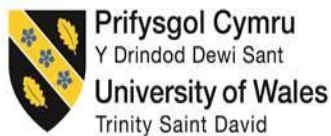
Abstract

This research investigated the effect on GCSE performance and attitudes towards vocabulary of fifteen eFSM Year 11 pupils by introducing an explicit vocabulary instruction model. The project took place in School X, with the purpose of understanding the impact that an explicit vocabulary model can have upon participants' academic performance and attitudes - particularly confidence, self-esteem and aspirations.

The rationale for this focus is as follows:

- Located in an area of high social deprivation, 90% of pupils enter School X with a reading age of 8 months or more below their chronological age. Research shows that this gap widens throughout secondary school unless effective intervention occurs.
- The introduction of the LNF, National Tests and the new GCSE's mean that vocabulary acquisition is paramount to academic success.
- Since the introduction of the new GCSE's (2015) English GCSE results have plummeted by 30% in school X. Item level analysis has revealed that poor vocabulary knowledge is hindering pupils in both the reading and writing sections of the exam.
- Previous research has linked poor vocabulary knowledge in socially disadvantaged pupils to poor levels of confidence and self-esteem.
- Policy makers and educationalists have recently turned their attention to vocabulary development – an area that has received little attention in the past.

The researcher implemented the STAR vocabulary instruction model in 12 English lessons over a four - week period. Most participants increased their GCSE predicted grade by one sub-level or more by the end of this project. All participants indicated an increased engagement with vocabulary and there was evidence of a positive impact on self-confidence and self-esteem. Pupil aspirations remained the same but the study provided interesting insight in this area. The vocabulary model will be refined and implemented in the English Scheme of Work in classes in 2019 – 2020.



Master's Degrees by Examination and Dissertation

Declaration Form.

1. This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed *AmBubbins*

Date 07/04/19

2. This dissertation is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of **MA (Education)**

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3. This dissertation is the result of my own independent work/investigation, except where otherwise stated.

Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references.

A reference list is appended.

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all members of staff from the University of Wales Trinity Saint David School of Education who have taught me throughout my MA (Ed) modules.

I am truly indebted to my family, for all their support and encouragement.

Lastly, thank you to the community of School X for their inspiration and willing participation.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background:

The National Literacy Trust estimates that there are six million adults in the United Kingdom who are functionally illiterate (Jama and Dugdale, 2010). Studies have repeatedly highlighted that such individuals have lower earnings (Macey, 2015), poorer physical and mental health (Morrisroe, 2015), poorer housing (Coley, 2013), lower life expectancy (Clark et al. 2018) and a higher rate of incarceration (Herkner et al. 2009). The work of The Sutton Trust and the Joseph Rowntree Association have also shown the link between illiteracy and a lower socio-economic background (Jerrim, 2017). Many researchers believe that this results in a perpetuating, ‘Matthew Effect,’ meaning “the word rich get richer while the word poor get poorer” (Rigney, 2010). This directly affects individual life choices such as friendship groups and subsequent connections (Myhill and Fisher, 2005), the ability to gain further qualifications as well as the likelihood of attending University or its level of prestige (Hirsch, 1999). Whilst there are other factors that may impede the academic progress of children from low socio-economic backgrounds and this one facet should not be viewed in isolation, research has shown that illiteracy and poverty are inextricably linked (Martinez and Fernandez, 2010, OCED, 2010 and UNESCO, 2011) and become self-perpetuating (Galbraith and Alexander, 2005, Hirsch, 2007 and OXFAM, 2013) unless effective intervention is introduced.

The Welsh Government (2014) made it clear that improving numeracy, literacy and reducing the impact of poverty on attainment were its educational priorities. This was in response to Estyn’s Annual Report (2013) which stated,

‘The key to achieving full access to the curriculum lies in the standards of pupils’ literacy. To have a chance of achieving well – however privileged or underprivileged their background – pupils must be able to read and to understand what they are reading...’ (Estyn Annual Report 2013:11).

Reaffirming this idea, the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF) was introduced in 2012 and literacy skills were deemed, ‘... essential for young people to reach their potential whether they are planning to enter further or higher education or employment’ (National Literacy and Numeracy Framework 2012:2). This was closely followed by the introduction of the National Tests in 2014 and later GCSE’s in 2015 where a ‘greater assurance of literacy skills’ (Welsh Assembly Government, 2014:2) became a cross-curricular requirement. The notion that, ‘every teacher is a teacher of literacy’ (Sampson, 1921 cited in Didau, 2014: 4) has resurfaced and has been championed across schools in the UK. It remains at the heart of the government’s agenda.

Within the wider field of Literacy and Reading research exists specific studies into vocabulary. Murray (2018) uses the term ‘invisible dictionary’ to symbolize the volume and variety of words that economically advantaged pupils are in possession of, as opposed to their underprivileged counterparts. Recent media headlines present the UK government’s concern over this issue; ‘*Teachers in UK report growing vocabulary deficiency*’ (Guardian, 2018) and ‘*Clarks shoe shop staff to be trained to speak to children amid Government drive to improve language skills*’ (Telegraph, 2019). Indeed, increasingly evidence shows that alongside socio-economic status, vocabulary is one of the significant factors that proves relevant to pupils achieving the top grades in a variety of GCSE subjects (Spencer et al. 2017). Researchers believe that these disadvantages can be overcome by intervention programmes which pay attention to ‘word gaps’ and increasing the word knowledge or ‘personal word hoards’ (Quigley, 2018:3) of pupils. However, British secondary school teachers have received very little training in this complex area (Didau, 2014) and may also lack the confidence in their own ability to deliver literacy instruction effectively (Didau, 2014, Lemov, 2016 and Murphy and Murphy, 2018). Furthermore, as pupils progress through school,

the extent to which skillful reading and vocabulary comprehension is required to access the curriculum increases. Didau points out that ‘reading difficulties are endemic, and the only chance for the vast majority of children who struggle with reading is for someone to teach them what they need to know’ (Didau, 2015:7). There is, therefore, a need for research into effective literacy intervention for older pupils (Kamil et al. 2008) especially in a British context as many previous studies have taken place within different education systems, notably New Zealand (Chung and Nation, 2003 and Coxhead and Boutorwick, 2018), Australia (Farrant and Zubrick, 2012, Murray 2018) and the USA (Hirsch, 1987, Chall and Jacobs, 2003, Beck et al. 2010 and Lemov, 2016).

1.2 Research Focus:

To achieve the highest grades, A or A*, in the new English GCSE, candidates must ‘use a wide range of ambitious and appropriate vocabulary confidently to create effect or convey precise meaning’ (WJEC, 2015: 22). This message is reinforced through the latest Examiners’ Reports, ‘the content of a candidate’s writing is crucial’ (WJEC, 2018) that notes that “(c)andidates ought to be reminded that when they are given a specific audience, they are expected to tailor their tone, style, content and language for that specific audience” (WJEC, 2018: 20). Pupils who sit on the borderline between C and D grades in any school are identified as key marginals. This is because schools in Wales are currently judged on the amount of C grades and above, they achieve. The key marginal pupils at School X are often eFSM pupils due to the demographic of the school. This year, the class of fifteen pupils consists of 15 eFSM pupils. This study will focus on exposing this group to explicit vocabulary instruction with a view to increasing the

variety and volume of vocabulary that they understand in the reading section of the GCSE English paper, as well as raising their grades in the writing section.

Furthermore, GCSE English candidates need to be resilient when tackling ‘vocabulary based’ questions in the examination. For example, when unpicking candidates’ responses to a vocabulary-based question, the Examiner’s Report states ‘we were genuinely impressed by the commitment of candidates and their willingness to attempt this challenging question’ (WJEC, 2018:16). The report goes on to state that candidates are expected to show ‘sustained ambition demonstrated through language/tone/devices/expression’ (WJEC, 2018:20). Previous observation and discussion with key marginal pupils has shown that they lack confidence and resilience when entering examinations. This has been reinforced by analysis of the English GCSE examination’s item level data which has shown that key marginal pupils have left out questions if they have proven too difficult, possibly showing a lack of confidence in their own abilities or poor self-concept / self-esteem (Nagy and Anderson, 1984, Didau, 2014, Clark and Teravainen-Goff, 2018). The investigation will consider if having more vocabulary knowledge leads to more confidence and self-belief in the examination by focusing on the vocabulary-based questions in the reading section and the marks awarded for writing. Lastly, although small- scale, the investigation will also look at the effect of the vocabulary intervention on future aspirations, such as effect on exams in general, college applications, college interviews and plans for further education.

1.3 Overall research aim and individual research objectives:

The overall aim of this research is to advance an understanding of the effects of a vocabulary-based intervention programme on the GCSE English exam performance of Y11 eFSM pupils. The foci will be both the programme’s academic impact and effect on aspects of pupils’

confidence. Two main research vehicles will be employed to facilitate this study: an in-depth review of relevant literature and the collection and analysis of empirical data. Specifically, within the context of secondary education, the objectives of this research are to:

- Analyse participants' views of their vocabulary knowledge in relation to their confidence, self-esteem and aspirations.
- Evaluate critically models of vocabulary instruction.
- Evaluate the impact of the explicit teaching of vocabulary on GCSE English exam results, pupil self-confidence, self-esteem and aspirations.
- Synthesise participants' views and the study's findings.
- Formulate recommendations for the explicit teaching of vocabulary.

The objectives should not be viewed as independent of each other, but rather as interlinked. This will help build an overall picture of effective vocabulary intervention particularly for those from disadvantaged starting points.

1.4 Research Value

Vocabulary development is currently part of the educational zeitgeist – it is topical and in urgent need of investigation (Oxford Language Report, 2018, Department for Education, 2018). The UK government is clearly concerned about the language development of children, with the launch of initiatives such as the 'Clarks' initiative (see above) involving the training of retailers in questioning to illicit more complex responses from children (Department for Education, 2018). In Wales, the 'Education Begins at Home' (Welsh Assembly Government) has recently launched its 'Take Time to Play' (2018) campaign to encourage parents to actively develop vocabulary. Both of these raise questions. For example, are the children whose parents can

afford to shop at 'Clarks' the correct demographic for this 'intervention?' Secondly, both campaigns are aimed at pre or primary school aged pupils. It seems that both research and policy are not specifically targeted at strategies to help socially disadvantaged learners of secondary school age. In Wales there is little research in this field. This is important considering the demand of the new GCSE's - the only available versions of these qualifications in the country. I, therefore, aim to provide a coherent perspective on a subject area that has previously received little attention.

There is a call for practical research in this area. I am in a unique position as School X is located in the second most deprived area of Wales. This research could, therefore, benefit others by illuminating previously unthought of barriers to vocabulary development and successful strategies for combatting this. Regional consortia have employed 'Closing the Gap Officers' and English Leads who are frequently looking for research to disseminate to schools in similar contexts but there has been a paucity in this area. My research will critically review the issues pertinent to this, examine existing vocabulary intervention models and frameworks and will obtain the views of the learners to create a rich picture allowing a meaningful comparison between theory and practice.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This Literature Review will examine the main barriers to literacy faced by eFSM learners, particularly those of secondary school age. It will consider the effects of such obstacles on academic performance as well as pupil self-confidence, self-esteem and aspirations. It will examine the need for effective vocabulary intervention and critically evaluate the existing frameworks. By synthesising the best practice in this area, a well-informed vocabulary intervention strategy will be designed to trial and cross reference with empirical research.

2.2 eFSM Pupils

A considerable body of work points to the potentially harmful impact of socio-economic disadvantage on children in the UK (Cassen and Kingdom, 2007; The Sutton Trust, 2009; Dyson et al, 2010; National Equality Panel, 2010; Kerr and West, 2010; Kintrea et al. 2011). Indeed, since the Education Act of 1944 and more directly, the Plowden Report of 1967, educational studies have examined the area of ‘disadvantage’ (Widlake, 1986, Natriello, 1990, Law et al. 2009) and the strategies to bridge the attainment gap that are created as a result. Research has tended to focus on three main areas. Firstly, ‘home’ factors such as parental aspirations and expectations (Goodman and Gregg, 2010), social capital (Gorski, 2008), parental engagement and parental skills (Suskind et al. 2015) and language acquisition (Cunningham and Stanovich, 1997). Secondly, ‘in-school’ factors including the curriculum (Wrench et al. 2012), attendance (Ready, 2010) and cultural clashes (Lawrence et al. 2012). Thirdly, there is evidence that ‘out-of-school’ factors influence the academic performance of this group such as extra-curricular opportunities (Feldman and Matjasko, 2007), additional responsibilities (Machin, 2006) and the influence of peers (Olanrewaju and Omoaponle, 2017). Researchers have also pointed to wider social issues such as changing labour markets

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(Emmenegger et al. 2015) and the marketization of the workplace (Crawford and Graves, 2013) that may indirectly have a negative impact on the attainment of this demographic. The effects of social disadvantage on education is, therefore, a complex area of study containing many overlapping variables. Isolating these is problematic and research in this area should be mindful of the potential of a variety of factors affecting the educational performance of such pupils.

Levels of socio-economic disadvantage for pupils in the UK are measured in terms of learners' eligibility for free school meals (eFSM). However, it must be remembered that this measure is questionable (Taylor, 2017) and, whilst it is commonly used, it is not an exclusive measure of potential deprivation, neither is it totally reliable (Harwell and LeBeau, 2010). There is growing concern over the criteria for 'eligibility,' with some commentators identifying that it leaves many pupils who do not quite fit the criteria vulnerable (Royston et al. 2012). In addition to this, there are those who point to the fluctuating home lives of some pupils, which means that they drift in and out of the eligibility bracket (The Children's Society, 2012). For this reason, some researchers (Halse and Ledger, 2007 and Gorard, 2012) point out that a pupil's history of FSM is a more reliable measure when analysing levels of educational disadvantage (Taylor, 2017). This seems plausible as it may be more indicative of the 'permanent' situation of their household in terms of socio-economic status (Crawford and Greaves, 2013). Lastly, eFSM pupils cannot be completely defined as a cohesive group. Within this demarcation, there could exist other influential factors on educational outcomes such as the learner also having Special Educational Needs (SEN), English as an Additional Language (EAL) or being defined as More Able and Talented (MAT). Whilst this study will use the eFSM criteria for social disadvantage, an awareness of these other mitigating factors will be shown throughout.

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2.3 eFSM Pupils: Barriers to Literacy

One of the problems in conceptualizing the literature is that there are often many differences between pupils that excel and pupils that struggle. These differences have led to a plethora of explanations for the difficulties faced such as Dyslexia (Velluntino, 1979), poor comprehension skills (Beck et al, 2013), poor phonological awareness (Perfetti et al., 1994) and genetics (Jerrim, 2013). Studies have shown that the above explanations are multi-layered (Stanovitch, 1986) or incompatible (Chall, 1983). It is important to bear in mind that this research is focusing specifically on vocabulary development which is one aspect of a large body of literacy research.

There is copious evidence to prove that the vocabulary gap begins before children even attend school. Hart and Riseley (1995) found a 30 million word gap between children from 'professional families' than children from 'welfare families' in their 30 month study of 42 American families. Similarly, Marchmann and Fernald (2008) found that vocabulary size at 25 months was fundamental to intellectual functioning at aged 8. Although, this does not mean that every child living in material poverty is predestined to have an underdeveloped vocabulary, it suggests that targeted educational intervention in this area would be beneficial, especially considering that there is evidence to suggest that the 'vocabulary gap' (Quigley, 2018) typically widens throughout time at school. Chall (1983) stated:

'The influence 'literate intelligence'-on general cognitive development has unfortunately been underestimated. Indeed, when reading development is delayed by personal or environmental factors or both, the effects on the person, unless given special help, are too often disastrous' (ibid., 2-3).

This has been echoed by recent commentators who have highlighted the failure at GCSE level and beyond for 'word poor' children (Barton, 2013, Didau, 2014, Quigley, 2018).

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The correlation between reading ability and vocabulary knowledge is sizeable throughout childhood **development** (Anderson & Freebody, 1979; Mezynski, 1983; Stanovich, Cunningham, & Feeman, 1984a). Torgesen (1985) speculated that, because a good deal of vocabulary and knowledge acquisition takes place via reading, the knowledge base of less skilled readers may be less developed because of their lack of reading practice. Delving into the realms of Bourdieu's notion of 'cultural capital' (1986), Willingham (2017) offers the notion that many disadvantaged children simply do not have the opportunities to develop the vocabulary and background knowledge required to comprehend texts. In this respect, the importance of acquiring vocabulary to read and reading to acquire vocabulary have a bidirectional relationship. This lack of opportunity is reinforced by longitudinal research. The National Literacy Trust's most comprehensive study; '*Literacy: The State of the Nation*, found that, '14% of children and young people in lower income homes rarely or never read books for pleasure' (Jama and Dugdale, 2010). The British Cohort Study (1970) found that children with a restricted vocabulary at five years old were more likely to be poor readers as adults, experience higher unemployment rates and more likely to suffer from mental health problems. Further studies have explored oral vocabulary. Researchers have found that university educated parents talk more to their children than less educated parents and that such talk correlates with later language ability (Snow and Beals, 2006 and Weisleder and Fernald, 2013). To elicit the main issues, those from socially disadvantaged homes may lack resources or exposure to reading material (Sternberg, 1985). There may be a lack of reading role models (Jama and Dugdale, 2012) and being read to (Merga, 2017) as well as being surrounded by a varied oral vocabulary. There is **evidence** that this disproportional start is further amplified at school (Nagy and Anderson, 1984, Hirsch, 1999 and Didau, 2014).

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A number of studies into the early years of school suggest Rigney's 'Matthew Effect' (2010) soon becomes evident:

'While good readers gain new skills very rapidly, and quickly move from learning to read to reading to learn, poor readers become increasingly frustrated with the act of reading and try to avoid reading where possible' (Rigney, 2010: 76)

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It is clear that those entering school from a disadvantaged start in reading will soon lose interest in this unless suitable intervention is put in place. Hirsch (1999) reiterates that spoken language is paramount he says that '... those who possess intellectual capital when they first arrive at school have the mental scaffolding ... to catch hold of what is going on' (Hirsch, 1999: 20). Similarly, Didau (2014) argues that those struggling in this area are at risk of damage to their self-confidence and self-esteem 'no-one wants to feel stupid and struggling to read is guaranteed to make you look thick' (Didau, 2014: 10). This concept of lower vocabulary and reading ability bolstering lower self-confidence is reinforced by other researchers such as Nagy and Anderson (1984) who estimated that, as regards in-school reading '...the least motivated children in the middle grades might read 100,000 words a year while the average children at this level might read 1,000,000' (Nagy and Anderson, 1984: 314). There are also differences in the volume of reading outside of the classroom that are linked to reading ability (Fielding et al., 1986) and these become increasingly large as schooling progresses (Quigley, 2018). The effect of reading volume on vocabulary growth, combined with the large skill differences in reading volume, could mean that a "rich-get-richer." This cumulative advantage phenomenon is almost inextricably embedded within the developmental course of reading progress (Stanovitch, 1986). The children who are reading well and who have good vocabularies will read more, learn more word meanings, and read even better. Children with inadequate vocabularies, read less, and as a result have slower development of vocabulary knowledge, which inhibits further growth (Stanovitch, 1986, Didau, 2014 and Quigley, 2018). Rigney

points out that this can easily snowball; “if you are literate you will gravitate towards literate friends’ (Rigney, 2010: 76). It is likely that this results in both a self-fulfilling prophecy and entrapment in a circle of limited vocabulary. Myhill and Fisher (2005) conclude that, ‘spoken language forms a constraint, a ceiling not only on the ability to comprehend but also on the ability to write, beyond which literacy cannot progress’ (Myhill and Fischer, 2005: 4). In line with Dweck’s concept of ‘Growth Mindset’ (2006), it seems that, in the area of reading and vocabulary development, success breeds success. Those who carry the ‘invisible dictionary’ (Murray, 2018) to school from home possess an inner confidence that ensures that the more difficult a task, the keener they will be to attempt it. This leads to the intrinsic motivation which spurs high achievers on, but also to the ‘learned helplessness’ (Seligman, 1967) from the lower achievers that can further hinder the socially disadvantaged.

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Although predominated by studies of children of primary school age (Lyon, 1999, Lynnakyla et al., 2004, Teravainen-Goff and Clark, 2019), research indicates that poor vocabulary not only leads to academic but psychological barriers. In their report, ‘*Mental wellbeing, reading and writing*,’ Clark and Teravainen-Goff (2018) found that children who are the least engaged with literacy are twice as likely to have low levels of mental wellbeing than their peers who are the most engaged. This report also shows that those who have low verbal ability possess worse mental health outcomes (Clark, Teravainen-Goff and Kelly, 2018). Similar studies have made the direct link between a pupil’s reading ability and pupil’s confidence and self-esteem (Byrne, 1996, Pajares, 1996, Appleton et al., 2006), although studies are scarce in a British secondary school context regarding the specific area of vocabulary. Research shows that literacy skills do not just enable educational attainment; they underpin strong family relationships, better health choices and an individual’s confidence to gain employment (Teravainen-Goff and Clark, 2018). Children’s reading abilities have also been associated with

perceptions of career barriers (Cunha et al., 2006). Overall, it seems that vocabulary matters, by delineating the amateur from the expert it promotes social mobility and, therefore, enhances personal well-being.

2.3 Models / Frameworks to support Vocabulary Development: A Critical Evaluation

Research suggests that good vocabulary teaching can make a difference. According to Cunha et al. (2006) the lack of an advanced vocabulary in pre-school children does not usually signify cognitive deficit, but rather is related to experience and instruction. Similarly, Snow et al. (1991) found that children from low literacy homes placed in high literacy classrooms could reverse the trend for literacy learning. In addition to this, many studies have linked effective vocabulary instruction to improved reading outcomes: a desirable benefit for 'literacy poor' pupils (Beck et al., 1982; Biermiller, 2001). However, Beck et al. (2009) have pointed out that there was little emphasis on the acquisition of vocabulary in school curricula as recently as the early 2000s, other than dictionary work or short exercises. Indeed, several researchers into classroom vocabulary have concluded that instruction was wanting (Blachowicz and Fisher, 2010; Walsh, 2003) with Blachowicz et al. (2006) summarising classroom vocabulary practice as 'less than robust', and Hairrell et al. (2011) claiming the best vocabulary intervention programme was 'still elusive.' Most of the vocabulary models and research in this area have, therefore, been developed relatively recently.

One of the main areas of contention around vocabulary instruction is whether the instruction should be explicit or implicit. Many early studies uncovered that the bulk of vocabulary growth does not occur via direct instruction (Nagy & Anderson, 1984; Nagy, Herman, & Anderson, 1985; Jenkins & Dixon, 1983; Jenkins, Stein, & Wysocki, 1984; Sternberg, Powell, & Kaye,

1982; Sternberg, 1985). The main arguments, here, being that pupils would not be inclined to engage if explicit methods are constantly repeated (Hidiyah, 2014). These studies advocate more interactive methods of instruction such as word games and peer interaction (Nagy & Anderson, 1984), incidental learning of word meanings through context (Jenkins et al. 1984) and targeted vocabulary gains through reading frames (Sternberg, 1985). Although some early studies failed to verify the relationship, recent research has demonstrated a causal connection between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension (Beck et al., 1982; McKeown et al., 1983; Stahl, 1983). Nagy et al. (1985) also advocate vocabulary progression through free reading. They conclude ‘(d)espite the uncertainties, our analysis suggests that words learned incidentally from context are likely to constitute a substantial portion of children's vocabulary growth’ (ibid., p.250). However, more recently there has been a shift in education towards the benefits of ‘explicit, direct instruction’ in the classroom (Marzano, 2004, Sweller, 2004, Hattie, 2009 and Rosenshine, 2012). Lemov (2016) states that a ‘primary goal of explicit, direct instruction is to model for students the depth of knowledge that is involved in mastering words.’ Similarly, Quigley (2018), argues that this method is the most effective at generating ‘word consciousness’ in pupils. Pupils need to be immersed in challenging vocabulary in order to progress. Didau (2014) writes,

‘... just teaching inert vocabulary is not enough; we also need to show how these terms form the academic language of our disciplines so that pupils can discuss new concepts with confidence and authority...’ (ibid., 2014:25)

A level of compromise is proposed by Beck et al. (2013: 3) who state ‘a robust approach to vocabulary involves directly explaining the meanings of words along with thought-provoking, playful and interactive follow up.’ Similarly, Lemov concludes ‘... they are both necessary and both insufficient by themselves ... teachers should do both better’ (2016: 252). The explicit

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If so, you could use: (ibid., p.250).

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teaching of vocabulary should, therefore, be interspersed with more implicit approaches to foster vocabulary development.

i): The Frayer Model (1969)

One of the earliest models of vocabulary teaching is the Frayer Model (1969) (**Fig.1**). Based on the notion that concept development is the key for understanding content material (Turner et al. 2013), the model provides pupils with a way of graphically organising new vocabulary. Pupils analyse a word, synthesise its meaning and apply the information – often with relevance to their own lives (Doty et al. 2003). This may be particularly useful for eFSM learners as it ensures that the teacher associates the vocabulary with the pupils’ prior knowledge or own experience. This is likely to be more beneficial than assuming a cultural frame of reference as is the tendency of some comprehension teaching. The structure and thinking processes incorporated in this strategy provide an opportunity for students to build a deep understanding of the term (Reinberg et al, 2009), and this way of understanding vocabulary is the most effective according to Roe and Smith (2012). Over the years, researchers have offered further clarification on the model, some emphasise the need for teamwork amongst students especially in the initial stages of defining the term (Clark, 2007 and Ansberry and Morgan, 2010). Whereas, others suggest that the co-operative learning should occur at the end of the lesson for pupils to consolidate their learning (Urquhart and Frazee, 2012). The collaborative approach fostered by this model may improve the confidence of eFSM learners (Pantiz, 1999 and Johnson, 2009). There is evidence to suggest that pupils develop a deeper understanding of vocabulary by utilizing this technique (Manzo and Manzo, 1990, Gore, 2004, Cohen and Cowen, 2008, Bishop, 2009). Furthermore, it has the advantage of producing a graphic which can be referred to when required (Bishop et al. 2009). EAL pupils are likely to benefit from

this model as the visual clues are conducive to their language learning (Urqhart and Frazee, 2012). Likewise, this makes it a useful classroom tool for eFSM learners who may be carrying a cognitive load both academically and personally. However, if over used, the method runs the risk of becoming laborious for pupils (Quigley, 2018) and time consuming for teachers (Maccaca, 2007). These may have a negative impact on learning negating the point of the exercise. For this reason, a modified version or blended approach may be more conducive.

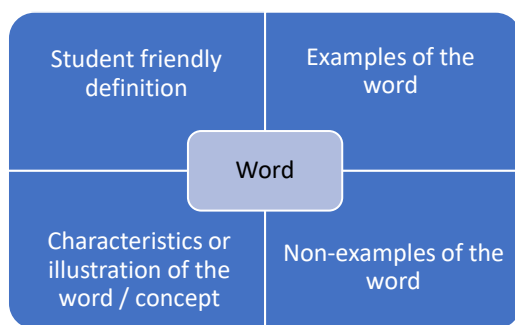


Fig. 1

ii) The Marzano Model (2004)

Marzano (2004) devised a more comprehensive version of Frayer's instructional model:

1. Provide a description, explanation, or example of the new term.
2. Ask students to restate the description, explanation, or example in their own words.
3. Ask students to construct a picture, pictograph, or symbolic representation of the term.
4. Engage students periodically in activities that help them add to their knowledge of the terms in their vocabulary notebooks.
5. Periodically ask students to discuss the terms with one another.
6. Involve students periodically in games that enable them to play with terms.

As in the Frayer Model, Marzano (2004) points out that during the initial stage, outcomes are more pronounced if pupils generate their own explanation from life experience. Similarly, the symbolic representation boosts achievement. This framework, however, has the added advantage of the vocabulary being constantly re-visited through note-book referral, discussion and games. Stahl (2005) cautioned against ‘mere repetition or drill of the word,’ emphasizing that vocabulary instruction should provide students with opportunities to encounter words repeatedly and in a variety of contexts. Marzano (2004) points out that the games secure pupil engagement and have a ‘powerful effect on students’ recall.’ Games are both non-threatening and the repetition ‘makes it stick’ (Brown et al., 2014). This method matches recent research on cognition. Essentially, it is a version of ‘retrieval practice’ (Karpicke and Roediger, 2008). This theory states that ‘as a student recalls ... his brain is strengthening its memories.’ In this case, this ensures that the vocabulary become firmly embedded into pupils’ long-term subconsciousness. Referring more specifically to vocabulary, Stahl and Kapinus (2001) stated ‘When children ‘know’ a word, they not only know the word’s definition and its logical relationship with other words, they also know how the word functions in different contexts’ (ibid., p.101). The Marzano model may also be considered an early form of ‘interleaving and distributed practice’ (Dunlosky et al, 2013). The vocabulary becomes further ingrained by pupils purposely encountering it across time and in different contexts. For the eFSM pupils who may be under-achieving in reading or lacking in self-esteem, the incorporation of ‘non-threatening’ games may be more appealing and effective.

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To test the effectiveness of their model, Marzano et al. (2005) drew together findings from over 50 studies over a five-year period and found that firstly, the strategy works at every grade level, and secondly, it worked better if all the steps were included. A follow up study by Marzano Research (2006) focused on English Language Learners (ELL) and students classified as Free

and Reduced Lunch. They discovered that the strategy also had a statistically positive effect on all areas just like they found when looking at students overall. The most positive outcome being for ELL students (Marzano, 2006). More recently, Haystead (2009) conducted a meta-analysis of 24 quasi-experimental studies which showed, ‘the six step approach to direct vocabulary instruction represents a gain of 24 percentile points over what would be expected if teachers did not use the six step approach’ (Haystead, 2009: 6).

However, this research should be viewed with a degree of caution. Marzano Research has been criticised for internal bias, as their research models are developed by their own establishment. Secondly, although the majority of studies, indicate that the process enhances student achievement, some studies indicate the reverse. Six studies showed gains greater than 40 percentile points, but nine studies showed negative effects (Haystead, 2009). When used in comparison with other models, some studies have shown the alternative to be more effective (Beck et al., 2015). Lastly, Gherma (2018) reported that the process was time consuming for teachers and not as effective as hoped for lower achieving readers. This implies that, in its entirety, it may not be ideal for my context and time-frame.

iii) The STAR Model (2005)

Based on a comprehensive body of earlier studies, Blachowicz and Fisher (2005) suggested the STAR model for vocabulary instruction. This model (Fig. 2) involves the teacher firstly deconstructing a text and identifying approximately six words to explicitly concentrate upon. These words should be a mixture of those that are central to the understanding of the text and those that are more generic that the pupils are likely to encounter in a broader context. Next, the word is directly taught by the teacher with forward planning regarding the pre, during and post reading stages. During the ‘Activate’ stage, the teacher reinforces the word until it is

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mastered by consciously using it in questions and asking the pupils to demonstrate understanding of it. Lastly, during the 'Re-visit' stage, pupils look back over the words in word books, games and writing to 'cement their understanding' (Blachowicz and Fisher, 2005).



Fig:2

This model may be considered more useful for everyday life as it involves combining the specialist vocabulary encountered in the text with words that the pupils are more likely to encounter elsewhere. This corresponds with the findings of Biemiller and Boote (2006) who found that repeated exposure to the words found greater average growth and to the work of Nash and Snowling (2006) who found that a contextual approach to instruction produced greater vocabulary gains. This also lends itself well to current educational thinking around 'mastery' where to embed learning, pupils need to revisit the concept in order to become fully proficient. Unlike, the Frayer and Marzano models, this model involves implicit instruction. This may be more conducive when preparing pupils to study excerpts of text required for GCSE English Language. This model also allows the teacher to scaffold questions from low-demand to high-demand (Blewitt et al., 2009) suggesting that it will challenge learners of varying

abilities - as the eFSM group are likely to be. Similar to the Marzano model, this model emphasises the importance of games for reinforcement. This aligns with Coyne et al.'s conclusion that 'vocabulary instruction should include teacher-student activities and interactive activities that target new words' (Coyne et al., 2007).

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However, many researchers have pointed out that this model would only be effective if part of a larger school-wide strategy (Sweeney and Mason, 2011). Indeed, Blascowicz and Fisher (2005) conclude that the STAR model is effective if:

'it involves a common philosophy and shared practices, based on a solid understanding of the knowledge base and supported by curricular considerations as well as classroom and school organizational procedures.' (Blascowicz and Fisher, 2005: 534)

Another difficulty posed by this model is despite the fact that most words are learned from context (Anderson & Nagy, 1991), contextual analysis is not an easy to master. Like any other word-learning strategy, it is best taught over the entire spectrum of school years, 'moving from the familiar to the unfamiliar, and increasing in complexity over time' (Quigley, 2018: 19). While several studies have provided intensive instruction in contextual analysis with mixed results (Jenkins et al., 1984, Stahl, 2005 and Suskind, 2015), recent instructional studies suggest that successful context-use instruction involves: good planning, explicit instruction, practice and feedback, scaffolding that leads to more student responsibility, and a metacognitive focus (Buikema & Graves, 1993, Kuhn & Stahl, 1998, Baumann et al., 2002, Blachowicz & Fisher, 2005). All of these may take time for teachers to master themselves. On reflection, whilst elements of this model such as the reference to texts and the repeated exposure to the same words are likely to be beneficial to my study, I will need to be conscious of my own skills and the time constraints involved in order to 'master' these in depth.

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iv) SEEC Model (2018)

Quigley (2018) looks to a more teacher-centered approach when designing his 'SEEC' model (Fig.3). Here, as in the STAR model, he places greater emphasis on the teacher selecting the vocabulary from the reading material. However, he encourages teachers to analyse the words in terms of the likelihood that they form part of the child's prior knowledge and prompts the teacher into thinking about repeatedly encountered and interrelated words. This may work effectively for eFSM pupils as the teacher can narrow or widen the cultural frame of reference accordingly. At the Explain stage, Quigley offers a list of teacher prompts; from saying the word (phoemic awareness), defining the word with multiple meanings and examples and asking students for clarification to clear up misconceptions. The importance of phoemic awareness and speaking the words should not be under-estimated, with many studies proving its positive effect. This is also likely to aid poorer spellers. Quigley suggests his third stage, 'Explore' is optional but beneficial. He reinforces that pupils should be provided with the opportunity to use other vocabulary related strategies here, such as looking at the etymology, common word families, interesting synonyms / antonyms and mnemonics. Different pupils are likely to remember the vocabulary using different methods. This stage provides pupils with some autonomy over their learning. This is likely to be appreciated by the age demographic of my group. The last step involves consolidating the information. Like both the Marzano and the STAR model, it involves pupils being repeatedly exposed to the word. Like other vocabulary experts (Stanovitch, 1986, Stahl and Kapinus, 2001, Blascowicz and Fisher, 2005) Quigley, once again, reinforces the need for 'retrieval practice' stating 'we need to allow for a little forgetting before retrieving the word again, thereby strengthening how well we remember the word' (Quigley, 2018:142) Suggested strategies for consolidating word knowledge over time

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involve, ‘test and learn, using the word in the world and research and record’ (Quigley, 2018: 142 – 143).

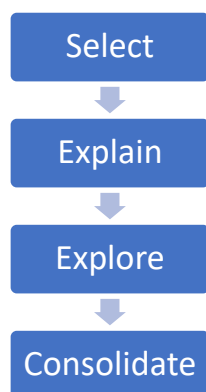


Fig: 3

As this model is relatively new, there is little research into its effectiveness. One of its advantages, however, is its clear grounding in metacognition. Quigley (2018) advocates this approach to learning, particularly for socially disadvantaged learners. This pupil-centered approach is likely to have more long-term impact as it encourages pupils to think carefully about the new knowledge they have acquired. This method corroborates other studies for this demographic of learner (The Sutton Trust, 2009, Spencer et al., 2012 and Muiji's et al., 2018)

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2.4 Summary: Emerging Issues and the need for Empirical Research

The review of the relevant literature reveals that the barriers to literacy faced by eFSM pupils is complex. Firstly, there is no agreed definition of an eFSM learner and, whilst traits have been identified, many of these pupils may have distinct individual needs. Secondly, there is also

variability between the literacy barriers encountered by members of this demographic. Factors such as ‘weak early instruction; lack of practice; incidental rather than systematic curricula; myths and misdiagnoses; tolerance of scandalous levels of reading failure; and ineffective interventions’ (Murphy and Murphy, 2018:50) have all been attributed to contributing to the literacy deficit. Research has, however, stressed the need for vocabulary instruction as a support mechanism for eFSM learners. Although, there is debate over whether these strategies should be implicit or explicit, it is clear that they need to be ‘robust: vigorous, strong and powerful in effect’ (McKeown et al., 2013:3). The vocabulary instruction models have been analysed and reviewed revealing a wealth of potential strategies each with advantages and disadvantages. The literature has also highlighted that practice-based research is sparse in this area, particularly in UK secondary school classrooms.

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A review of the main models suggests that the STAR model (2005) would be most conducive to my research. This is because it is text specific and, therefore, more in keeping with English GCSE teaching. Furthermore, the repetition is likely to have the added benefit of producing a positive effect throughout the exam. A further advantage of this model is that it allows a combination of explicit and implicit instruction which many researchers purport to be the most effective pedagogical method for vocabulary instruction (Didau, 2014, Beck et al., 2015, Lemov, 2016). During the ‘Activate’ stage of this model, however, I will use the ideas of the Frayer Model, Marzano and SEEC Model to provide pupils with some autonomy over how they wish to remember the word. The words will be interleaved and retrieved throughout the time frame to see if they are used to enhance achievement, confidence and self-esteem (Appendix A).

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Although you have made some reference to the relevance of each model as you have gone along, perhaps an additional sentence could be added for each one to make it more explicit – why it could and/or could not be used in your study. See how the word count for the rest goes and consider adding this if you have words left.

The next stage of this research will detail the research methods to be used to capture the empirical data, including details on the research strategy to be adopted, data collection techniques, ethics, sample selection and management of the researcher's role.

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3. Research Methods

3.1 Introduction:

There are three inter-related objectives underpinning my empirical research:

- To analyse participants' views of their vocabulary knowledge, exam confidence, self-esteem and aspirations.
- To evaluate the impact of the explicit teaching of vocabulary on GCSE English exam results, pupil self-confidence, self-esteem and aspirations.
- To synthesise participants' views and the study's findings.

This research aims to gain eFSM pupils' views to aid the evaluation and further development of the vocabulary instruction model for future cohorts. In addition to this, the study aims to gain participants' views on their self-confidence, self-esteem and aspirations in order to discover the potential psychological benefits of employing vocabulary instruction in the classroom.

This section will provide the details of the research strategy adopted to address the research aims identified above, together with the means of collecting data for analysis, including sample selection, and the analysis approach to be adopted. Lastly, the potential limitations and problems with the chosen research strategy and its implementation will be considered.

3.2 Research Context

School X is an 11 – 16 mixed, inner-city comprehensive. The school serves an area where there are multiple social and economic disadvantages. In fact, 'almost two-thirds of the pupils live in the 20% most deprived areas in Wales' (ESTYN, 2012). School data consistently shows that pupils enter high school averaging a reading of eight months or more behind their chronological

age. Various measures have been put in place to remedy this, however, the school saw a drop in English GCSE attainment in 2017 (30% less A* - C grades than in 2016) due to the new GCSE skills required. Departmental evaluation highlighted the pupils' lack of vocabulary knowledge as a barrier to success. It is imperative that School X develops a sustainable vocabulary intervention programme to increase 'word consciousness' (Quigley, 2018) and to further the academic attainment of its pupils in English and beyond.

The research has been planned systematically with careful consideration of ethics. The fifteen eFSM participants for this research project all belong to a distinct Year 11 class (aged 15 – 16) taught by the researcher. Although this will raise questions regarding researcher positioning, it will make the monitoring of the participants more robust and also eliminate the potential threat to reliability that may be caused by asking another to deliver the programme. There was no control group as; it may have been considered unethical not to provide the opportunities for an alternative class, no other class in the same cohort consists of eFSM learners and it was unnecessary as the research purpose is to evaluate the impact of the model and progress of a class over time. The sample may be considered small but this is due to limited timing and it being a 'convenience sample' – the designated class of the researcher. This is accepted practice for small-scale practitioner research and makes the study more purposive (McBurney, 1997). It was made clear to other pupils who asked that the vocabulary intervention programme was a trial and if successful, all groups would be party to the strategies in the future. The research took place during time-tabled English lessons, in the allocated classroom in School X, during March and April 2019. The class received 12 STAR vocabulary model lessons.

All participants were provided with an age-appropriate presentation, detailed letters and permission forms for parents outlining the guidelines of this research and its dissemination. All

participants had the right to withdraw from this research activity. Exit routes with no repercussions were outlined to participants throughout the project (BERA, 2011:15). If a participant wanted to withdraw from the research, a suitable alternative teaching arrangement was put in place and the child removed from the data-collection. The researcher followed university and school protocols and ethical guidelines and gained all necessary permissions before starting the research. Any safeguarding issues that could potentially arise, including the emotional distress of pupils, would be reported in accordance with school policy.

3.3 Research Strategy

Mertens (1998) holds that a researcher's philosophical views of the world will impact on the type of research strategy that she will adopt for her research. My prior research suggests that a phenomenological philosophical position is more befitting to my personality. This study aims to garner the views of individuals from a distinct social group and evaluate their responses. It will attempt to 'uncover [the] multiple realities, descriptions and experiences of the population' (Berger and Luckmann, 1991: 36). This aligns with an interpretivist epistemological and ontological perspective. Interpretative researchers believe that an understanding of the world can only be accessed through social interaction, and that such interaction in turn is understood in terms of the context of the interaction. If a researcher chooses to accept 'the ontological assumption associated with interpretative/constructivism that multiple realities exist that are time and context dependent, they will choose to carry out the study using qualitative methods so that they can gain an understanding of the constructions held by people in that context' (Mertens 1998: 161). The research will, therefore, be predominantly qualitative. There will be some quantitative data collected, however, in the form of attendance records and exam progress grades. Denscombe (2008) suggests that a mixed-methodology approach provides increased accuracy in data collected and can produce a more detailed picture. However, this quantitative

data will be secondary to the qualitative research methods and used to aid the validity of the main research. As qualitative research typically focuses on interactions between individuals, social factors and the collection of evaluative information; this makes it the most suitable approach for a class-room based study concerning pupils' learning, feelings and aspirations.

The research design was an evaluative case study using questionnaires (**Appendix B**) and semi-structured interviews as its main methods. I opted to complete an evaluative case study as it best suited the research question that did not aim to cover a whole population but to provide 'an in-depth picture of a particular area of the educational arena' (Gay, 1995:46). Cohen and Manion (1995: 106) describe a case study thus:

‘... the case study researcher typically observes the characteristics of an individual unit – a child, a class, a school or a community. The purpose of such observation is to probe deeply and to analyse intensively the multifarious phenomena that constitute the life cycle of the unit.’

According to this definition, a case study is therefore concerned with close observation of how a particular population group behave in a particular context. This definition is useful for my study as it aims to chart the progress and aspirations of the eFSM pupils as well as ‘prob[ing] deeply’ into their feelings regarding their vocabulary development. However, there is some disagreement about what constitutes a case study. Yin (2003: 13), for example, defines a case study in a different way: ‘A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.’ This definition is also applicable to my research. My literature review established that eFSM pupils are a diversified group who come from a variety of contexts. This research aims to uncover the main themes regarding their vocabulary development which are currently ‘not clearly evident.’ Thus, either definition of a case study,

whether it be Cohen and Manion's simple description or Yin's conditional definition, meets the research aim of delving deeply into a contemporary phenomenon, vocabulary and its effects on exam performance and feelings.

The evaluative case study used triangulation. The questionnaires contained a mixture of questions requiring a quantitative and qualitative response. The semi-structured interviews were designed to illicit further explanation to the questionnaires' findings. The primary advantage of triangulation is to help find agreement and validation of results so the researcher can be confident that the study is a 'true reflection of what is actually happening and not a reflection of the method of testing used to gather the data' (Murdoch, 2018: online). This was particularly important in this study as the interview responses were likely to be required to clarify the responses of more abstract concepts such as self-confidence, self-esteem and aspirations.

Questionnaires are the most efficient way to collect the evidence, in the given time, with a group who were all in a specific location at a designated point. Questionnaire construction is notoriously tricky (Gay, 1995, Corbetta, 2003, Bell, 2005). Validity and matters of ethics were considered throughout the questionnaires' construction and process. In order to achieve valid, reliable and un-biased data, I directly related the research questions to the items on the questionnaire. This ensured that they were all necessary making the questionnaire ethically sound (Burton and Bartlett, 2009). Similarly, as I had prior knowledge of the lower literacy levels of some of the respondents, 'emojis' and simple vocabulary were used to take this into account. It is generally thought that there will be a higher response rate if the questionnaire is of interest to the respondent. For this reason, I used 'I statements' throughout. I purposely kept

the questionnaire short in order to retain interest and to ensure that it could be completed in the allocated time slot. The questionnaires were also easy to return as they were simply placed in a box at the end of a session. The respondents were offered extra time if they so wanted it and it was made clear that they could hand in a blank copy if they so wished. The questionnaires were anonymous but the researcher/teacher labelled each questionnaire with a letter on collection in order to match responses with the GCSE progress grades.

The questionnaire contained five closed questions which required a scaled response, three open questions and space for any further comments. This semi-structured approach has been considered, by researchers, as the best for educational studies (Burton and Bartlett, 2009 and Bell, 2005) and it allowed room for participants to express themselves freely (BERA – 16). I used a Likert scale (1932) to measure the ‘magnitude of opinion and not simply its direction’ (McBurney, 1997) which was particularly needed for this study. The strength of this method is the extra detail for the researcher of the extent of agreement, it is also a reliable format to avoid leading questions. The use of statements instead of open questions provides a focus for participants and ensures a clear set of dispositions are assessed, this increases the validity of research. I ordered the questions from easiest to hardest and from closed to open, as recommended by research, in order to yield the best possible outcomes (Gay, 1995, Bartlett and Burton, 2009). This aimed to ensure that I collected the most significant information from any non-finishers. The scaled, structured questions had the advantage of placing a lower ‘cognitive load’ (Sweller, 1988) on respondents which is more likely to lead to a higher response rate and more accurate data. This is also easier to code and analyse. When constructing the questionnaire for the research activity the inclusion of ‘neither agree nor disagree’ was considered. Sturgis et al. (2014) suggest this middle response option can lead to participants who are tired or poorly motivated to complete the survey to choose the middle

alternative when they could give a directional response. O'Muircheartaigh et al. (2000) claim that to omit the middle option on a Likert scale denies participants who genuinely identify with this option from truthfully answering. A numbered scale was also considered or a simpler 'Yes/No' multiple choice style to keep it user friendly. However, as this format can skew results and provide a limited picture of participants it was decided the Likert scale would be most appropriate for a questionnaire focused on measuring dispositions. In addition, the option to 'neither agree nor disagree' was included as this would still be an interesting data point to analyse. This had many advantages; it would demonstrate extent of agreement, it would avoid leading questions and it would ensure a clear set of dispositions were assessed. In addition to this, existing pupil voice surveys in School X currently use this format so it is familiar. The unstructured questions were used to produce further insight into the research questions.

The purpose of the questionnaire was to measure a range of participants dispositions associated with their vocabulary. These were self-confidence, self-esteem and future aspirations. There has been considerable research into the effect of self-confidence and self-esteem on academic performance (Bandura, 1993, Crozier, 1997 and Pajares and Schunk, 2002). Academic confidence is conceptualised as being how students differ in the extent to which they have a 'strong belief, firm trust, or sure expectation' of tasks. The wording of the first four statements was grounded in this language in order to illicit as measurable a response as possible for these abstract concepts. Similarly, many studies have considered the measurement of the relationship between aspirations and poverty (Macours and Vakis, 2009, Bernard *et al.*, 2011, Beaman *et al.*, 2012). However, the indicators used to characterise aspirations 'vary substantially from one study to the other, ranging from depression scales, positive feelings towards the future, locus of control, goals and others' (Bernard and Taffesse, 2014). As this study is concerned with having a positive effect on the future of the eFSM pupils, question five relating to aspirations, was written in order to garner the participants' view on their future prospects. The

unstructured questions and additional comments box were used with the aim at producing more insight to the research questions. However, as this type of question produces a higher cognitive load, I chose to back up the questionnaire with semi-structured interviews.

The questionnaires were completed by the class of fifteen pupils at the start and at the end of the research - four weeks later, after the completion of the twelve vocabulary lessons. Conditions for the data collection points were as close as possible. The questionnaires were completed during normal class time on the same day of the week. The questionnaires were completed by hand as opposed to computerised in order to avoid any ethical shortcomings regarding GDPR law. The questionnaire was personally introduced to the class (on both occasions) so that I was able to explain the purpose, clarify individual items and address any questions.

The semi-structured interviews were completed by a focus group consisting of two top, two middle and two lower ability pupils from the class with a balance of introverted and extroverted personalities, as suggested by Crouch and McKenzie (2006). As the research was on a small scale, I aimed for the sample to be as representative as possible. Informed consent was provided (BERA – 14) and the participants had the right to withdraw at any time (BERA – 15) to a supervised alternative venue. An interview schedule was devised as recommended by Silverman (2016) this was to guarantee consistency of treatment and to allow comparability. Many researchers believe that semi-structured interviews are well suited to case studies as they allow in-depth exploration of perspectives (Bartlett and Burton, 2009 and Drever, 1995). The main reason for using this research method was to provide ‘in depth, experiences, motivations and reasoning to enrich the quantitative data’ (Drever, 1995: 3). During the interview, I was able to explain any ambiguities and correct any misunderstandings as well as probing for clarification. This provided the potential for high quality data and detailed coverage of an issue

(Bell, 2005 and Drever, 1995). The format contained five main questions with prompts and probes relating to them. The five questions were related to the research aims and sought further clarification and explanation of the impact of vocabulary development on self-confidence, self-esteem and future aspirations. I aimed to use clear wording and to avoid vague language throughout. As suggested by Drever (1995) I gave a preamble to provide a fuller explanation and to establish the correct tone. Responses were collected as field notes. At the end, I asked a sweeper question – ‘Is there anything else you wish to say on this topic?’ Followed by a closing statement (Drever, 1995) in order for the pupils receive closure.

3.4 Framework for Data Analysis

Data analysis for the first five questions of the questionnaire is statistical. The responses of the fifteen participants were analysed as individuals and as a group in order to delineate progress and themes. These results were also compared to the progress in GCSE tasks. The responses from the open questions and the interview data were ‘codified’ (Burton and Bartlett, 2009) in order to delineate points of commonality. As I had previously identified the themed subsets to form the roots of my questions, this made the qualitative data easier to compare and contrast. The interview data and the quantitative data were cross-referenced to create a ‘fuller picture’ (Biggam, 2010: 119).

All data collected has been anonymised for data protection. Access to this data and collection of new data is within daily practice and accessed on encrypted school computers. The data gleaned from this research activity will be disseminated with colleagues and will follow the ethical guidelines. Confidentiality and the security of the data will be adhered to throughout and after the study.

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3.4 Limitations and potential problems

Qualitative methods typically focus on interactions between individuals, social factors and the collection of evaluative information. Some, policy makers feel qualitative approaches fail to provide clear cut solutions and that the results from small scale research shouldn't be generalised (Burton, 2008). However, as this was an evaluative case study, I was aware of these limitations and have sought to overcome issues of validity and reliability where presented.

There are a variety of biases that can lead to unreliable evidence. Confirmation bias, for example, is the tendency to interpret findings in a way which supports prior beliefs. According to McNiff and Whitehead (2014 :32), 'practice can be understood as trying to realise one's values and this involves periodically taking stock of what we believe in and how we think.' Throughout this research, I need to be conscious of my position as teacher as researcher and the power imbalance caused by the relationship. I am aware that I am driven by a sense of 'social obligation' (McNiff and Whitehead, 2014: 32) but it would be naive to think that my participants have the same view of the situation. Whilst I will be clear about the duality of my role, I cannot be completely certain of the validity of the responses. For example, the participants may try to please or appease me. Likewise, my explanations or wording of questions could compromise my impartiality. For this reason, the convenience sample may be too biased and too small to be generalizable. Indeed, Dudovskiy (2018: online) claims that convenience samples are 'highly vulnerable to selection bias and influences beyond the control of the researcher' meaning they have 'little credibility.' However, as all educational research is 'positioned' (Burton, 2008) I believe I have to be satisfied with the fact that this research is presented as a case study and not an attempt to provide a categorical truth. Sources of error have also been considered, the same locations, seating plans and silent conditions will be used for all questionnaires and GCSE tests to aid reliability.

There are limitations of questionnaires. They sometimes ‘provide limited data, provide no narrative to why the participant identified with a response and can leave room for interpretation’ (Burton and Bartlett, 2009 : 45). Likewise, questionnaires about complex issues are difficult to compose and respondents may not find it easy to place their responses into specific categories (Burton and Bartlett, 2009). I aimed to minimise this by using the ‘I’ statements and a Likert scale in order for the respondents to feel they were expressing a degree of an opinion. A further disadvantage of questionnaires is that the short responses often fail to reflect the varying depth or complexity of people’s feelings (Burton and Bartlett, 2009). This was counteracted by the placement of the ‘additional comments’ box. Whilst, I was conscious of the need for simplistic wording, a pilot questionnaire should have been used to check if the questionnaire was pupil friendly particularly considering the low literacy levels and EAL background of specific participants. Lastly, as the questionnaire was repeated in a relatively short time scale, participants may have remembered their original answers and could have used this to influence responses. I aimed to minimise the limitations regarding the depth of data by triangulating the approach with semi-structured interviews.

Semi-structured interviews also pose problems for the researcher. They can leave the researcher open to claims of bias and inaccuracy. It is difficult for the teacher researcher to maintain objectivity whilst interviewing pupils in a school environment. To minimise this, the questions (including the prompts and probes) were carefully considered beforehand in order to gain as reliable a result as possible. The issue of the interview sample being unrepresentative was overcome by the choice of pupils involved – mixed gender and ability levels. The questions were carefully crafted to present an opportunity for pupils to consider the topics in different contexts. A further problem posed by this methodology is that skilled interviewing takes

practice (McNiff and Whitehead, 2014). In order to overcome this, question stems and concepts were carefully considered and refined to illicit detailed responses. A further problem was that I chose to take notes rather than record the conversations. This was a conscious decision as in similar contexts, pupils have been reluctant to speak in the presence of an audio recorder. To overcome this, I prepared a frame for my field notes linked to the themes of my research in order to ensure I could take notes quickly without losing the 'gist' of the response.

There are some elements of qualitative research in this study. Quantitative research can be described as 'explaining [of] phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analysed using mathematically based methods' (Muijis et al., 2004). GCSE progress is regarded as a measurable construct, therefore, quantitative data has been analysed to measure academic change and the impact of the intervention. Similarly, quantitative data is used partly in the questionnaires as the Likert scale has been analysed. The use of quantitative data has been criticised for regarding human behaviour as, 'passive, determined and controlled... ignoring intention, individualism and freedom' (Cohen et al, 2011). This is a potential pitfall of this data collection method as internal or external factors could affect pupil performance in their GCSE test and questionnaire filling on the day. A number of measures were put in place to minimise the impact of this (see above).

The limited time available also needs to be considered when completing the data analysis of the questionnaires and semi-structured interviews - both notoriously time-consuming. To minimise the impact of this, analysis has occurred throughout the period of the research. Whilst some researchers would argue that a 'significant time gap should be created between the transcription and the transcription analysis,' (Biggam, 2014) for reasons of objectivity, it could

be argued that to capture the essence of the interview, a more immediate time frame for analysis is more conducive.

There are limitations to this research, as well as issues related to implementing a case study in an environment where one is employed. The results of this study cannot be generalized to the wider research community. Indeed, the results of this research cannot even be generalized to represent the school under study; the study of different pupils may lead to different results. To test the reliability of this research project it would need to be repeated in a school setting over a longer time span with a variety of different pupils to create a clearer picture. However, the methodology is tried and tested and appeals to the concept of reliability rather than generalizability. It is thought that as more vocabulary case studies occur, the more the findings of this study will be reinforced ensuring incremental generalizability.

4. Research Findings

4.1 Introduction

The research findings comprise of the quantitative findings from the analysis of GCSE grades, questionnaire analysis and the interview data analysis. This is structured by themes linked to the research objectives. Using triangulation, the overall findings are synthesised in the concluding section.

4.2 Quantitative Findings

The table below (**Fig: 4**) shows the participants' GCSE predicted grade at the start and the end of the four week period. The grades are 'fine-graded' (L=Lower, M=Middle, H=Higher). The table has been RAG rated to highlight the positive, neutral and negative results:

Participant	GCSE Predicted Grade – Start	GCSE Predicted Grade – End	Difference in sub-levels
A (Male)	DL	DM	+1
B (Female)	CL	CM	+1
C (Male)	DL	DH	+2
D (Male)	DM	DM	0
E (Female)	DM	DH	+1
F (Male)	DH	CL	+1
G (Female)	DM	DL	-1
H (Female)	DH	CM	+2
I (Male)	DH	CL	+1
J (Male)	CL	CL	0
K (Male)	EH	EH	0

L (Female)	CL	CM	+1
M (Female)	DM	DH	+1
N (Female)	DH	CL	+1
O (Female)	DL	EH	-1

Key:

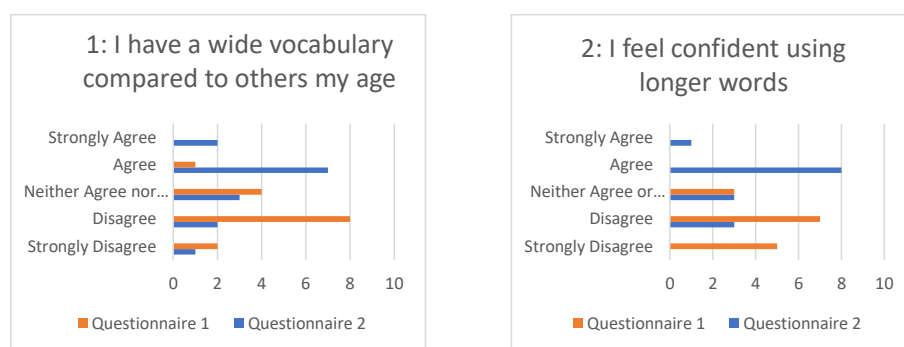
	Increase in predicted GCSE grade
	No change in predicted GCSE grade
	Decrease in predicted GCSE grade

10 of the fifteen participants (67%) increased their GCSE predicted grade by one sub-level or more during the four-week period. The GCSE predicted level of participants D, J and K remained the same. Participant D only attended 50% of the vocabulary intervention lessons due to medical reasons. Participant K is an EAL pupil and this may have affected performance (see Appendix C). There is no obvious reason for Participant J's result but this will be cross-referenced with the questionnaire. Participant O's GCSE predicted grade decreased by one sub-level, this small loss will also be investigated with reference to the questionnaire but could be described as a possible anomaly as the participant would only need to make a few minor mistakes for this to occur. Interestingly, Participant A and C's GCSE predicted grade also increased and these too were EAL pupils. The vocabulary intervention model generally shows an upward trend in participants' GCSE grades suggesting that this type of intervention is an effective method of raising standards and can have a positive impact.

4.3 Questionnaire Findings:

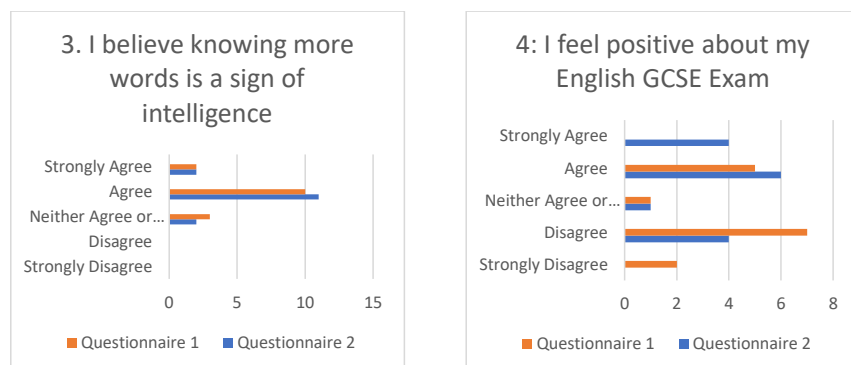
There was clear progress and changes tracked from the questionnaires (see **Appendix B**). The following bar charts outline the quantity of participants changing responses after the programme with analysis of the five ‘scaled’ questions from the questionnaire. These have been grouped into the themes of confidence (**Fig. 5**), self-esteem (**Fig. 6**) and aspirations (**Fig. 6**) in line with the research objectives:

Confidence (Fig.5)



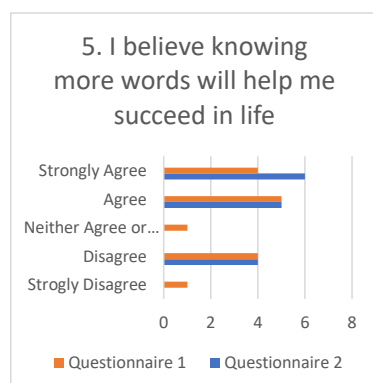
Prior to the explicit vocabulary instruction lessons, of the 15 eFSM pupils, 10 responded negatively to the statement ‘I have a wide vocabulary compared to others my age,’ and only 1 responded positively. Whilst there were still some negative or neutral responses after the lessons, there is a noticeable shift in opinion with 9 pupils responding positively to the statement. Similarly, all pupils responded negatively and / or neutrally to the statement, ‘I feel confident using longer words’ prior to the vocabulary lessons, however, afterwards 10 pupils responded positively. Both results suggest an upward trend in the confidence of the pupils.

Self-Esteem (Fig. 6)



All pupils responded positively or neutrally to the statement ‘I believe knowing more words is a sign of intelligence’ prior to the lessons and there was only a slight change in this response afterwards. 9 pupils felt negatively regarding their GCSE English exam before the lessons and 10 felt positively afterwards. Interestingly, 4 had changed responses to ‘strongly agree’ here suggesting an upward trend in self-esteem for some participants.

Aspirations (Fig. 7)



Prior to the vocabulary lessons, there was a mixed response to the statement, ‘I believe knowing more words will help me succeed in life.’ Afterwards, more pupils strongly agreed with this and the same amount agreed and disagreed. Whilst this may indicate a slight change in

aspirations the analysis of the open-ended questionnaires and interviews are needed for clarification.

Coding was used to delineate the common strands from the qualitative responses:

Fig.8

Questions	Questionnaire 1 Themes Extracted	Questionnaire 2 Themes Extracted
Explain how you feel about your own vocabulary?	Poor standard – ***** Improving - * Ashamed – ***** Lack of reading at home attributed –** No response - *	Poor standard – ***** Improving – ***** Recognition of awareness of longer words -*** No response - *
Why do you think having a wide vocabulary is important?	Not relevant - ***** Better jobs – ***** Portrays better self – image - ** No response - *	Not relevant – ***** Better jobs - ***** Portrays better self-image – ***** Aids understanding -** No response -/
What would be the effect of improving your vocabulary on your future plans?	No effect - ***** Better GCSE results – ** Better further qualifications – *** Better occupation -*** Better material goods –** No response - *	No effect - *** Better GCSE results – *** Better further qualifications – ***** Better occupation -*** Better material goods –/ Can help my own children -**

Key:

	Positive Response
	No Response
	Negative Response

Fig: 8: Before the vocabulary lessons, more participants felt that they had a poor standard of vocabulary (40%). They indicated that they were ashamed of this. One participant felt that their vocabulary was improving (see discussion) and two of the participants directly related their feelings to their lack of reading at home. After the lessons, there is overall a more positive response. The majority of participants indicate that they feel their vocabulary is improving (47%) and some highlight that they can recognise longer words.

Before the vocabulary lessons 46% of participants didn't believe that possessing a wide vocabulary was important. Although this decreased, 27% of the participants maintained this view after experiencing the lessons. Generally, however, the responses to themes extracted from the responses to this question suggest a positive trend. More participants recognise that an improved vocabulary portrays a better self-image and the theme of 'aiding understanding' emerged from the analysis.

Regarding future aspirations, 33% of the participants thought that an improved vocabulary would have little or no effect at the point of the first questionnaire. This dropped to 20% after the vocabulary lessons. There was an increase in participants realising that an increased vocabulary can improve GCSE results and further qualifications, whilst the result for improving occupations remained the same. The theme of 'helping one's own children' also emerged by the second questionnaire. This indicates that some participants realised the long-term impact of improving their vocabulary. This would be further investigated in the qualitative responses from the questionnaire and interviews.

4.4 Interview Findings

6 participants completed both Interview 1 (**Fig.9**) before the vocabulary lessons were taught and the same 6 participants completed Interview 2 (**Fig.2**) after the vocabulary lessons were taught. I used coding to discover the common strands relating to the key research objectives.

Interview 1:

Participants Responses	Frequency
Confidence	***** *****
Self – Esteem	***** *****
Aspirations	***** *****

Fig. 9

Interview 2:

Participants Responses	Frequency
Confidence	***** *****
Self-Esteem	***** *****
Aspirations	***** *****

Fig. 10

Key:

	Positive Response
	Negative Response

During interview 1, the effect of having a poor vocabulary on confidence became the predominant theme. Participants frequently alluded to situations where they felt out of their depth such as a recent trip to the museum where the tour guide had been ‘*using posh words*’ and an incident where two of them had withdrawn from presenting in assembly as ‘*that [was]*

for the top set kids who know what to say.' Further comments suggested that there was both a genuine fear of public speaking but that this was for two diametrically opposed reasons. Firstly, the participants revealed that they wished that they possessed a better vocabulary so that they could present well, however, the fear of '*getting the words wrong*' and subsequently looking foolish in front of their peers was the prevailing obstacle. Secondly, the fear of being associated with the '*geeks*' and the potential rejection from their friends that would ensue was of a great concern to all participants. All participants agreed that this loss of confidence had started around the end of Year 7 and it was suggested by two pupils that it was because they had stopped reading for pleasure at this point as it '*wasn't what you do in high school.*'

By interview 2, there was a noticeable difference in the amount of times a lack of confidence was mentioned and in fact, this theme was dominated by positive contributions suggesting that there had been some growth. The main shift had clearly been in the way that participants thought about words. All participants felt that they were capable of understanding complicated words and could recite strategies for working out word meanings. Most participants thought that with more practice they would be able to deliver a speech to their peers, however, the fear of being rejected by immediate friendship group remained a concern. Interestingly, vocabulary was elevated during the second interview and the participants encouraged one another to do this, possibly suggesting a developing confidence in formal situations.

During interview 1, the effect of possessing a poor vocabulary on self-esteem was marked. All participants used the phrase, '*It makes me feel thick*' at least once during the interview. Further probing revealed, that participants could name a number of incidences where they had refrained from putting themselves forward for positions as they felt they were for '*the brainy kids who speak properly.*' Examples of this included Student Council, Head Boy and Head Girl

interviews and volunteering opportunities. On a daily basis, feeling that they possessed a poor vocabulary led to feelings of inadequacy. Most pupils stated that they consciously '*didn't put their hands up*' even when they knew the answer for fear of mispronunciation. All pupils stated that they refrained from mixing with the '*geeks*' for fear of being ridiculed or for fear of being out of their depth. Interestingly, further probing here found that this fear was unfounded and not based on any direct experience suggesting the crux of the issue lie in the participants' own levels of self-esteem.

During interview 2, there was a marked difference when analysing the theme of self-esteem. Indeed, there were far more positive comments made than negative. All participants expressed sentiments of increased intelligence and capability. For example, Participant H stated, '*I've realised it's not about being stuck up, anyone can learn and use new words, you just have to try*' and Participant I commented '*I just put my hand up now and try and use one of the words, the teachers all think I'm cleverer.*' There was less of a 'them and us' attitude expressed by two of the participants and the '*geeks*' during the second interview. Participant H commented '*they are not that bad really when you get to know them*' and Participant I commented '*they are just the same as us really.*' Whilst this may be individual opinion, it is interesting to note the shift in confidence to express this opinion.

During interview 1, all participants did not equate enhanced vocabulary with their future job prospects. Participant F, for example, was adamant '*I'm going to work in a garage ... you don't need it to work in a garage ... I've been there, everyone talks like me.*' This sentiment was echoed by all participants including those who were taking college courses and those who were EAL and planning on returning to their country of origin. All participants, however, recognised that those who possessed a large vocabulary had more chances of better career prospects and

expressed regret at their lack of application to this earlier in school. The participants were acutely aware of the reality facing them outside the school gates commenting that it *'will be hard to compete'* for the top grades in college and the best jobs and that *'sounding posh'* was the key to successful interviews and networking. Whilst the majority of participants seemed clear in their future plans this was underlined with a sense of inevitability that they were destined for *'middle of the road'* jobs.

There was little change regarding comments made linked to 'aspiration' during interview 2. Whilst there was a more positive feeling expressed towards their prospects in the upcoming English GCSE exam, all participants remained focused on their chosen career path. One participant, however, recognised that if she achieved the C grade in English, she'd access a higher - level course in hairdressing and she expressed her aim at achieving this. The participants reinforced their belief that those with better vocabularies would achieve highly but reiterated that it was *'too late for them.'* An interesting comment came from Participant F *'you know what ... you should take us to Year 8 and we can tell them about the words we know now and tell them to start reading now.'* This suggests both a growth in confidence and a recognition that the vocabulary model has had some effect.

4.5 Findings: Overall Summary

Employing the vocabulary lessons has been successful academically with 67% of the participants increasing their GCSE sub-level over the four - week period. Reasons for the lack of improvement in some participants' grades can be attributed to other factors (see discussion). The upward trend suggests that this type of intervention is an effective method of raising standards of English GCSE performance.

As well as boosting exam performance, evidence from the questionnaires and interview data suggests that an increased knowledge of vocabulary can positively affect pupil confidence and self-esteem. The increased vocabulary knowledge did not seem to have an impact on participants' aspirations but there was recognition of its relevance regarding future achievement (see **Appendix C for examples of the triangulation**).

5. Discussion and Interpretation of the Data

5.1 Introduction

The empirical research highlights emerging patterns between vocabulary development and the attainment and attitudes of eFSM pupils. Firstly, an increased awareness of vocabulary can have a positive impact on academic attainment. Secondly, that self-confidence and self-esteem can be developed alongside vocabulary progression. Lastly, that there is scope to develop the aspirations of pupils if a whole-school approach based on the vocabulary model was adopted. It is important to place these in the context of previous research.

5.2 Findings placed in the context of previous research

Academically, the vocabulary lessons based on Blachowicz and Fisher's (2005) STAR model were successful. 67% of pupils raised their GCSE sub-level based on a test of both reading and writing. Regarding the results of the three participants whose results remained the same; one was a poor attender, one was an EAL pupil who used the vocabulary but whose sentence structure needed addressing and the other when cross referenced with the questionnaire showed lack of engagement with the process. The pupil whose grade regressed can be described as an anomaly and further inspection of their test revealed that this was incomplete. Overall the findings corroborate Snow et al.'s (1991) theory that 'children from low literacy homes placed in high literacy classrooms ... reverse the trend for literacy learning.' This corresponds with the findings of Biemiller and Boote (2006) who found that repeated exposure to the words found greater average growth and to the work of Nash and Snowling (2006) who found that a contextual approach to instruction produced greater vocabulary gains than lessons that simply emphasised word definitions. Contrary to the commentators who favour more implicit methods (Jenkins, Stein, & Wysocki, 1984; Sternberg, Powell, & Kaye, 1982; Sternberg, 1985), the use

of an established model that was ‘robust: vigorous, strong and powerful in effect’ (McKeown et al., 2013:3) proved a particularly effective support mechanism for the eFSM learners at this pivotal point in their school career. Whilst not all of these key marginal pupils reached the C grade as a result of this intervention, the use of ‘explicit, direct instruction’ exposed the pupils to the ‘depth of knowledge that is involved in mastering words’ (Lemov, 2016: 10) and generated more ‘word consciousness’ (Quigley, 2018) amongst the pupils. This was reflected in their test scores.

Regarding confidence and self-esteem, the predominant theme extracted from the empirical research, prior to the vocabulary lessons, was the sense of embarrassment created by the participants’ lack of word knowledge. This influenced their decisions to participate in classroom tasks and extra-curricular opportunities. This is reminiscent of Rigney’s (2010) ‘Matthew Effect.’ The participants had failed to put themselves forward for activities that could potentially bolster their CV’s such as volunteering or a Head Boy / Girl interview due to their innate fear of public speaking or ‘*getting the words wrong.*’ The participants left these opportunities to the ‘*geeks*’ (the pupils that they perceived had a wide vocabulary and could speak eloquently). In this respect, the ‘word rich, were getting richer and the word poor, poorer’ (Rigney: 2010:8). Similarly, there was a genuine fear of public speaking especially in front of peers who they felt were intellectually superior. This reinforces Didau’s (2014: 10) statement that ‘no-one wants to feel stupid and struggling to read is guaranteed to make you look thick.’ Two of the participants pinpointed their lack of reading at home as a pre-cursor to this behaviour. Whilst not explicitly stated, this may align with Willingham’s (2017:12) notion that ‘disadvantaged children simply do not have the opportunities to develop the vocabulary and background knowledge required to comprehend complex texts.’ The choice not to participate or to refrain from offering answers in case of mispronunciation equates with the theory of

learned helplessness' (Seligman, 1967) and this can further hinder the socially disadvantaged (Lyon, 1999, Lynnakyla et al., 2004, Teravainen-Goff and Clark, 2019). After the vocabulary lessons, however, the pupils reported feeling more capable at decoding more sophisticated vocabulary. There was a shift in the 'them and us' attitude expounded during the first interview, although an underlying fear of being rejected by their own peer group remained. This is reminiscent of Rigney (2010: 76) '...if you are literate you will gravitate towards literate friends' whereas 'poor readers seek friends with whom they seek other enjoyments' (Rigney, 2010: 76). This confirms the findings of my literature review, that eFSM pupils often find themselves stuck in a self-fulfilling prophecy and trapped in a circle of limited vocabulary. However, after the vocabulary lessons, more spoke positively about regarding their own vocabulary knowledge suggesting the lessons had aided the development of confidence, within the peer group, in this area.

Commented [CM33]: I would use "..."

The empirical research findings regarding aspirations were perhaps the most surprising. Contrary to my initial thoughts, there was little change between the participants' responses prior to and after the vocabulary lessons regarding their future goals. Participants were aware of that enhanced vocabularies are required for more advanced careers and that a more sophisticated vocabulary helps present a better image, however, the participants felt that their future was pre-destined and that these plans were unlikely to change. This was also recognised by Teravainen-Goff and Clark (2018) who found that an individual's capacity and confidence to gain employment was directly related to the way they perceived their literacy. They highlight that these 'perceptions' influence children and establish career barriers from an early age. All participants had already made up their minds regarding their future and seemed accepting of the fact that they would have 'middle of the road' jobs where those with wider vocabularies would have better career prospects. Strikingly, the almost 'fly away' comment by Participant

C is the most poignant from the empirical research *'you know what ... you should take us to Year 8 and we can tell them about the words we know now and tell them to start reading now.'*

This is in keeping with research that says vocabulary intervention should be part of a wider school strategy as uncovered by Blascowicz and Fisher (2005) themselves, in the conclusion to their own STAR model study.

5. 3 Reflection

Watts (1995) concluded that little had changed in vocabulary instruction from earlier classroom studies. Blascowicz and Fisher (2005) attribute this to vocabulary instruction being overshadowed by other forms of reading strategy. With the rise in popularity of recent commentators such as Didau (2014), Lemov (2016) and Quigley (2018), explicit vocabulary instruction is now rising to the forefront of educational thinking both within English departments and as a school wide initiative. Although, small-scale, this research has shown me that this should be a key priority for schools in order to boost academic success, instil pupil confidence and more importantly to help raise the future aspirations of learners by encouraging self-efficacy and resilience regarding their own learning.

This study has shown that Y11 is too late to embed an effective strategy. Whilst it could be temporarily successful in boosting results, pupils' underlying beliefs in their own abilities have become ingrained and influenced by their peers to a point where there can be little progression. In the words of Quigley, vocabulary instruction *'...is best taught over the entire spectrum of school years, moving from the familiar to the unfamiliar, and increasing in complexity over time'* (Quigley, 2018: 19). This corresponds with the conclusions of a number of eminent thinkers in this field (Stanovitch, 1986, Beck et al., 2003 and Blacowicz and Fisher, 2005). It

is clear that if a robust intervention model was adapted throughout a school, all pupils would have the opportunities to become more ‘word conscious’ (Quigley, 2018) and that this is likely to positively affect academic results as well as aid in ‘closing the gap’ between the socially advantaged and socially disadvantaged pupils.

Whilst, effective overall, the STAR instructional method has its drawbacks. After their initial enjoyment of the first six lessons, levels of engagement started to wane. This matches the ideas of Hidiyah (2014) who claimed that that repeated explicit instruction methods have the tendency to become tedious. This was largely due to the study’s time constraints and the frequency of instruction would need to be revised if this model was adopted for practical use.

These results could be further analysed by gender and EAL. It also should be noted that other factors could have contributed to the outcomes. For example, the quality of teaching, the wider school focus on reading, individual participant attitudes and other variables regarding the participants’ literacy abilities. Although this data is useful to analyse, it must not be wholly relied on as a direct result of the vocabulary instruction.

6. Summary and Conclusions

6.1 Introduction

This section will revisit the research objectives, summarize the findings of this research work and offer conclusions based on the findings. Throughout this process, the contribution of this research to the present state of knowledge and the value of this study will be considered. Recommendations for future research in the area of explicit vocabulary instruction will be discussed as well as my personal reflections on this body of work.

6.2 Summary of Main Findings and Directions for Further Research

The primary research objective was to analyse the eFSM participants' views of their vocabulary knowledge in relation to their confidence, self-esteem and aspirations. The literature identified the main barriers to success and suggested potential strategies to help combat these. Overall, the empirical research matched the findings of the literature review exposing the same areas of contention such as the 'Matthew Effect,' failure to read at home and limited aspirations for the future. However, in practice, the picture is not so clear. This is due to the amount of variables also affecting this demographic linked to their background and life priorities. Importantly, this case study highlighted the influences of peers on an individual's willingness to develop their vocabulary, this was absent from the literature and suggests an avenue for further study to contribute to this research area. Likewise, this study highlighted that there is a need for specific work by schools with eFSM pupils to increase their self-efficacy and aspirations during the early years of secondary school in order to prevent ingrained determinism over their future.

A further key research objective was to evaluate the models of vocabulary instruction, gather participants views of this and evaluate its academic impact. Critical evaluation of the available

models directed me to use Blascowicz and Fisher's (2005) STAR Model for this study. In practice this worked effectively as can be seen by the 67% rise in predicted GCSE grades over the four-week period. This model is the most conducive to teaching the English GCSE at KS4 due to its grounding in text. The study identified, however, that KS4 is too late to implement a sustainable and effective model. The findings implied that a structured model used throughout KS3 and KS4 would have a positive impact on academic and personal achievement. Further research into the available models would be required here to establish whether schools adopt one consistent model or use a variety of models in a strategic approach.

6.3 Conclusion

The main conclusion that can be drawn from this research is that there is a need for schools (particularly those located in deprived areas) to embed a structured approach to vocabulary instruction. Although this case study, yielded positive outcomes for the pupils, four weeks is not enough time to equip pupils with the knowledge and skills that they need in this area to benefit from its effects in the future. As a Senior Leader in School X, this case study will influence further decisions made at School X and help shape the direction of vocabulary development for the school. On a wider scale, the findings may be shared with the 'Closing the Gap' Officers ensuring that other schools benefit from this idea.

The conclusions reached, however, have to be viewed in terms of a caveat. The conclusions are based on an extensive review of related literature and a case study, which means that the conclusions are linked to these two sources only. The research cannot, therefore, be generalised. However, it will add, incrementally, to the emerging field of vocabulary development knowledge.

6.3 Recommendations

To help avoid the vocabulary void, schools need to:

- Invest in research into vocabulary models appropriate to their setting. These explicit structured models should be used throughout KS3 and KS4 to maximise academic output and to aid pupil confidence.
- Examine the influence of peers and implement supportive mechanisms so that socially disadvantaged learners feel confident in school.
- Raise awareness of the importance of vocabulary with staff and allocate time for appropriate teacher training in this area.

6.4 Self-Reflection

This research project had an impact on the experiences of the participants involved and the data shows that it aided the academic progress of the majority of pupils. The role of teacher-researcher has enabled me to view the issues surrounding vocabulary through an alternative lens. It has reinforced my view that vocabulary development is crucial to help socially disadvantaged learners lead a successful life. The insight gained into vocabulary development will inform my future practice and will have a positive impact on the pupils of School X

15, 000 words

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Appendix A:

Example STAR Model Lesson Outline

Activity	Time
Select: The teacher chooses a GCSE Text for the lesson and highlights six key words. The teacher plans definitions, explanations and effective questioning around these six key words (differentiated for the ability of the pupils)	Prior to the lesson
Teach: The whole class reads the text together. The teacher specifically concentrates on the six key words pointing out their etymological roots (where necessary) and providing clear and precise definitions. The class annotates the text as would be expected in the GCSE exam.	20 Minutes
Activate: The teacher uses effective questioning based on the key vocabulary in order to re-iterate meanings and allow pupils to focus on the vocabulary. Pupils are given the opportunity to practice saying the words aloud.	10 Minutes
Re-visit: The pupils add the new words to their word bank using their choice of method to aid their memory of it, for example, an illustration, a rhyme or a mnemonic. Pupils are asked to read back over the words that they have previously added to their word bank.	10 Minutes
Re-visit: Whole class game involving the six key words (and previous words for retrieval practice)	5 Minutes

Appendix B**Vocabulary Questionnaire**

Please read the statements below and put a tick next to the answer which best fits your views. Only tick one box for each statement.

This is not a test and there are no right or wrong answers. The feedback will be used for us to improve English lessons and the quality of our teaching and learning.

Year Group:

Class Name:

Male or Female:

Date:

Question	Strongly Agree 	Agree 	Neither Agree or Disagree 	Disagree 	Strongly Disagree 
I have a wide English vocabulary compared to others my age.					
I feel confident using longer words.					
I believe knowing more words is a sign of intelligence.					
I feel positive about my GCSE English exam.					
I believe knowing more words will help me succeed in life.					
Explain how you feel about your own vocabulary?					
Why do you think that having a wide English vocabulary is important?					
What would be the effect of improving your vocabulary on your future plans?					

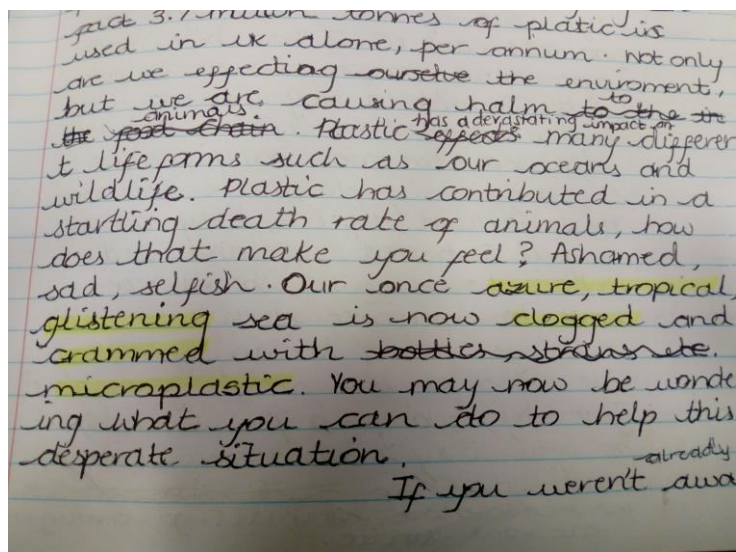
Any other comments you would like to make about vocabulary:

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

Appendix C

Participant A (eFSM / EAL Learner):

Example of work produced during explicit vocabulary lesson:



Quantitative Result: +1 sub level (average gain for this study)

Questionnaire Data (1) summary:

Q. 1 – 4:

Clear lack of confidence and self-esteem (all disagree).

Believes words are a sign of intelligence.

Q.5 – 8:

Does not believe knowing more English words will help him succeed in life. Explains intention of returning to own country where he will not need English.

Questionnaire Data (2) summary:

Q. 1 – 4:

Increased confidence and self-esteem (all agree).

Maintains words are a sign of intelligence.

Q.5 – 8:

Does not believe knowing more English words will help him succeed in life. Explains intention of returning to own country where he will not need English but thanks the teacher-researcher as he has learnt new words for the exam.

Interview Data:

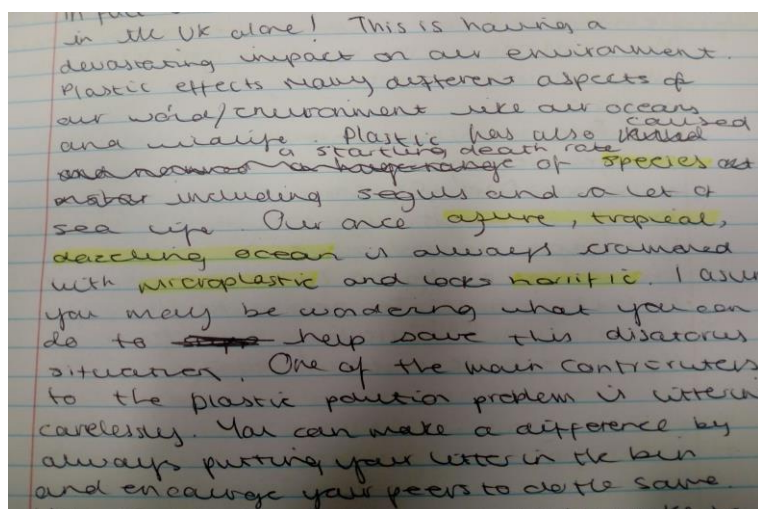
Participant A did not take part in the interviews.

Participant A Summary:

Interesting findings from this EAL / eFSM participant. Exam scores improved in line with the rest of the class suggesting that the vocabulary model was as effective for EAL Learners. This was also the case for Participant C. Participant K was also an EAL learner but this participant's results remained the same. This could possibly be explained by the differing levels of acquisition and immersion of these participants. It is well documented that EAL pupils have periods of growth and periods of stagnation regarding language acquisition. The questionnaire results indicate a growth in confidence and self-esteem for this participant over the four weeks. Although aspirations (like many others) remained the same. Interestingly though, this appears to be because the participant intends on returning to his country of origin and therefore does not value the need for improved English. However, this pupil thanks the researcher for helping him towards the exam possibly suggesting a positive effect.

Participant F (Representing Average Findings):

Example of work produced during explicit vocabulary lesson:



Quantitative Result: +1 sub level (average gain for this study)

Questionnaire Data (1) summary:

Q. 1 – 4:

Clear lack of confidence and self-esteem (mostly disagree).

Believes words are a sign of intelligence.

Q.5 – 8:

Does not believe knowing more English words will help him succeed in life as he already knows he wants to be a mechanic. Feels ashamed of his lack of vocabulary and states he has always found reading boring.

Questionnaire Data (2) summary:

Q. 1 – 4:

Increased confidence and self-esteem (all agree or neutral).

Agrees that words are a sign of intelligence.

Q.5 – 8:

Maintains that an improved vocabulary will not help him personally as he has secured a job with his uncle in a garage. Expresses regret at not maintaining the reading he did at primary school.

Interview Data (1):

Themes extracted from this participant:

- Confidence - *****
- Self-Esteem - *****
- Aspirations - *****

Interview Data (2):

Themes extracted from this participant:

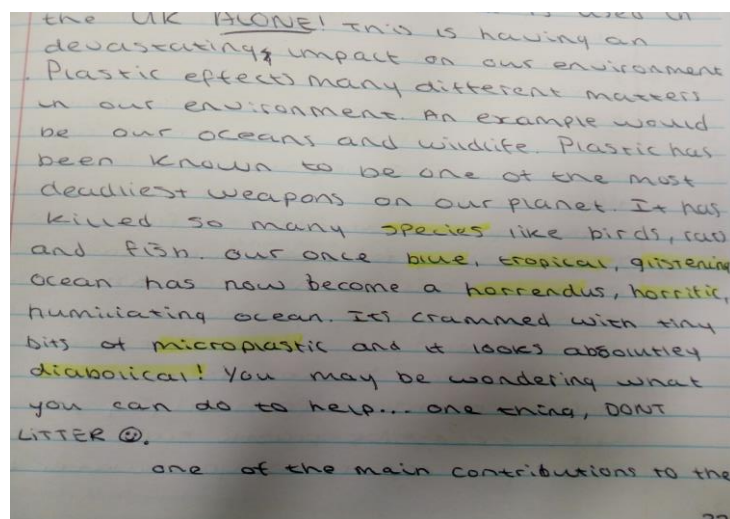
- Confidence - *****
- Self-Esteem - *****
- Aspirations - *****

Participant C Summary:

Participant C is representative of the average findings for this study. Exam scores improved in line with the rest of the class average – 1 sub-level. The questionnaire results indicate a growth in confidence and self-esteem for this participant over the four weeks. Although aspirations remained the same. This appears to be because the participant already has a clear idea of the job that he will do when he leaves school and has his mind fixed on this career path. Interestingly this participant stated that he didn't need an improved vocabulary to work in a garage as 'everyone there talks like me.' Whilst recognising his improvement he didn't feel it would make much difference. There was a sense of inevitability about his future career prospects. However, this participant suggested using the model earlier in the school to inspire others.

Participant H (eFSM / Female):

Example of work produced during explicit vocabulary lesson



Quantitative Result: +2 sub levels (more than average gain for this study)

Questionnaire Data (1) summary:

Q. 1 – 4:

Clear lack of confidence and self-esteem (mostly disagree).

Believes words are a sign of intelligence (strongly agree)

Q.5 – 8:

Believes words will help her future career but underlying theme that she does not feel intelligent enough to use them.

Questionnaire Data (2) summary:

Q. 1 – 4:

Increased confidence and self-esteem (all agree or neutral).

Agrees that words are a sign of intelligence.

Q.5 – 8:

Feels there has been an improvement regarding her own vocabulary but still does not feel that she is as intelligent as other pupils and is sometimes scared to use them. Is unsure about future plans but doesn't think the words will help at this stage.

Interview Data (1):

Themes extracted from this participant:

- Confidence - *****
- Self-Esteem - **
- Aspirations - ***

Interview Data (2):

Themes extracted from this participant:

- Confidence - ***
- Self-Esteem - ***
- Aspirations - ***

Participant H Summary:

Participant H's exam grades improved by 2 sub levels during the course of this study (higher than average result). The questionnaire results indicate the most significant growth in confidence and self-esteem over the four weeks. Aspirations were more difficult to pin point, however, the interviews revealed that she had failed to put herself forward for the Head Girl interviews as she didn't want to sound 'thick.' However, the interviews revealed a change in thinking regarding this participant's views of her peers (particularly those she perceived as more intelligent). This participant acknowledged that she could develop her vocabulary and could present herself well if she practised. This indicated a growth in confidence.