Examining the Fourth Grade Turkish Textbook and Classroom Teachers' In-class Practices in Vocabulary Teaching

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Research Article

Examining the fourth grade Turkish textbook and classroom teachers' in-class practices in vocabulary teaching

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Abstract

This study was conducted to identify the activities aimed at improving vocabulary included in the fourth grade Turkish course and textbook, the opinions of classroom teachers in this regard, the strategies, practices and activities they used for this purpose, and the time they spent on this in the teaching-learning process. The research was carried out as a case study, one of the qualitative research designs. In the data collection process of this study, an activity identification table was used for examining the Turkish textbook, a structured observation form was used for classroom observations, and a semi-structured interview form was used for interviews with the participants. Descriptive analysis and content analysis techniques were used for data analysis. As a result of the study, it was determined that the distribution of activities in the textbook, which is acknowledged as one of the important tools for supporting the development of vocabulary, varied depending on basic language skills. It was concluded that in the Turkish course teaching process, teachers included 14 different activities related to vocabulary instruction, using 19 different methods, techniques and strategies, in line with the textbook. The results obtained from the observations and interviews revealed that teachers did not have adequate knowledge about the methods, techniques and strategies that they used to improve vocabulary, and that therefore, they were unable to appropriately use the implementation steps required for the strategies.

Note(s) from the author(s)
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≫ This paper is part of the PhD thesis of the first author in this study.

Introduction

Words, which are among the elements of vocabulary, show the feature of being parts of the whole that makes up the language. The fact that language is the most important tool that distinguishes humans from other living things, and the relationship of words with language as the most important building block of language has revealed the necessity of presenting a framework that starts with language conceptually. "What is language?" The question has been a question that scientists, thinkersd researchers have been trying to answer and explain for a long time.

Since the beginning of mankind, language has been the most important tool enabling communication between people. Aksan (2017) defines language as a system based on agreed-upon rules that provides agreement and communication among the individuals of a society and nation, symbolizing thoughts. For this reason, individuals' language usage skills reveal their ability to communicate with each other. The use of language as a means of communication between people means that language also plays a social role, and this indicates that language also has the task of establishing a relationship with the society it belongs to and with the culture of that society (Demirel, 2002). Yalçın (2005) states that language, which is one of the most effective communication tools, will facilitate education and teaching, which is the planned implementation of this education, by ensuring that the thoughts intended to be conveyed are conveyed as correctly as possible.

Although there is such an important relationship between language and thought, it can be said that the relationship between words and thought are also very important. Since words are one of the most important components of language. Since words are one of the most important components of language. The more developed and adequate the elements that make up the language are, the more advanced the thoughts will be. Since it is not possible to think without words, vocabulary knowledge is of great importance. Otherwise, without words, it is impossible to express the thoughts passing through the mind. Although there are a number of different definitions of the term "word", Korkmaz (2003, p. 6) defines words as "concrete or abstract vocables consisting of one or more than one syllabic phoneme and separately corresponding to certain concepts in the mind, and language units that establish a relationship between these vocables", while Akyol (2005) defines the word as "the label of the thoughts and attitudes we wish to express".

It can be said that the more words a person acquires, the more he/she thinks and can express his/her thoughts orally or in writing. Therefore, the richness of a language is closely associated with the number of words it possesses for expressing the concepts in thoughts in the most detailed way. Although the number of words that children know according to their age differs depending on various sources, Akyol (2018) states that children who reach preschool age can use approximately 8,000 words.

Written and oral communication are carried out with words. However, it is important that individuals have sufficient vocabulary to express themselves. Akyol (2018) states that reading, reading comprehension and transforming what one understands into production are among the important skills that people expect from school in the education process, and that one of the most important elements that make up the content of reading is vocabulary and the development of this vocabulary. Although many definitions of vocabulary have been made, it is defined in the Merriam-Webster online dictionary (https://www.merriam-

webster.com/dictionary/vocabulary) as "a sum or stock of words employed by a language, group, individual, or work or in a field of knowledge". The richness of people's vocabulary is an indication that they are able to use their speaking, reading, writing and listening skills in the most effective way. Göçer states that students who have an appropriate vocabulary for their age and grade level have a great advantage in developing their language skills (reading, listening, speaking and writing) for the learning domains of comprehension and expression, and in understanding basic grammar topics, concepts and rules (Göçer, 2009, p. 1027). A rich vocabulary is of great importance, not only for improving reading, listening, speaking and writing skills, but also for improving comprehension and expression skills.

It is possible to develop the basic language skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening by improving one's vocabulary. However, one of the most frequently mentioned problems in education today is that vocabulary is insufficiently developed and that people try to lead their daily lives with a very limited number of words. The absence of a common practice in the methods, techniques and strategies implemented for teaching vocabulary in education results in both the use of a limited number of words and failure to permanently and actively use the words that are taught and learned. Akyol (1997) states that teaching words and developing vocabulary is not only a process which involves looking words up in the dictionary, learning their meaning and writing sentences, but is also a complex process in which words are associated with ideas. Moreover, students need various opportunities and a good education if they are to create their own individual vocabulary, acquire a deep vocabulary, and develop certain strategies that will help them learn vocabulary independently (Butler et al., 2010). For this reason, it can be said that the practices of classroom teachers in school and the methods and techniques they use occupy a very important place in the development of vocabulary. In addition, in the Turkish Course Curriculum (2019), emphasis is placed on teaching words and developing vocabulary, and explanations on the development of vocabulary are given under separate headings both for general goals and for learning outcomes at each grade level. However, the curriculum does not include the methods and techniques that are to be used for teaching words and developing vocabulary, or how these methods and techniques are to be implemented by teachers. Researchers who have conducted studies on vocabulary (Justice, Meier & Walpole, 2005) agree that vocabulary acquisition has a very complex structure. This complex structure consists of many components such as the breadth of vocabulary, the level of vocabulary that students have, which words are taught, and how the learned words are assessed. Therefore, the main concern here is to identify the methods and techniques that will make this complex structure meaningful (Butler et al., 2010). To provide students with a quality vocabulary, and to teach words, their meanings and the related concepts, educators should act in a planned way, and as part of this, necessary and adequate opportunities should be provided. For this reason, the problems that need to be understood in determining an effective vocabulary acquisition are the strategies, methods and techniques that will help students to develop their vocabulary in the educational environment, the tools that classroom teachers use, and whether the materials they have developed are available. Accordingly, the aim of this study is to identify the learning outcomes related to vocabulary in the fourth grade Turkish textbook, which plays an important role in developing students' vocabulary. The study is focused on revealing the methods and techniques with which the identified outcomes are fostered in students by teachers, who are the most important practitioners in education. There are studies to identify the problems encountered in

gaining vocabulary in Türkiye and to determine the methods and techniques used. (Gül, 2009; Gür, 2014; Karadüz & Yıldırım, 2011; Tağa, 2018; Uluçay, 2016). However, it can be said that these studies are insufficient. With this research, it is aimed to determine the strategies, methods and techniques that can help students improve their vocabulary.

Therefore, our research problem has been determined as "What are the classroom practices of the fourth grade Turkish textbook and classroom teachers for teaching vocabulary?"

Within this scope, solutions were sought to the following sub-problems:

1.To what extent is vocabulary development included in the activities in the fourth grade Turkish textbook?

2. Which activities aimed at improving vocabulary do fourth grade teachers implement in Turkish lessons, and how (in the introduction, development or conclusion sections of the lesson) are they implemented?

3. How much time do fourth grade teachers devote to practices aimed at improving vocabulary in Turkish lessons?

4. Which methods, techniques and strategies aimed at improving vocabulary do fourth grade teachers use in Turkish lessons?

5. What are the opinions of fourth grade teachers about the activities aimed at improving vocabulary in Turkish lessons?

Methodology

Research design

The design of this research is a case study, which is one of the qualitative research types. Case studies are studies in which events and phenomena are examined in depth, based on a connected system formed by a certain individual, class or institution, generally under natural conditions and based on "how" and "why" questions (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). Yin (2014) evaluates case studies under four main headings: "the holistic single-case design", "the embedded single-case design", "the holistic multiple-case design", and "the embedded multiple-case design". Among these designs, the embedded single-case design is explained by Yıldırım and Şimşek (2018) as a type of design consisting of more than one subunit or layer in a single case. In this study, the case study design was used in the "embedded single case design" design, and the fourth grade Turkish textbook for vocabulary teaching and the classroom teachers' classroom practices were examined.

Determination of the case to be studied

In the study, a Ministry of National Education (MoNE) publication approved as a fourth grade Turkish textbook by the Board of Education and Discipline of the Ministry of National Education in the 2020-2021 academic year was examined. Activities aimed at the learning outcomes in the Turkish Course Curriculum (2019) were identified. This study includes observations and semi-structured interviews conducted with the participation of the researcher in order to identify the practices, strategies and activities that classroom teachers use in fourth grade Turkish lessons with the aim of developing vocabulary.

Study participants

Classroom teachers (11 participants) who taught fourth grade in an elementary school in the Selçuklu district of Konya province during the 2020-2021 academic year were included in the study (Table 1). Since there were 11 fourth grade teachers in the primary school where the research was conducted, 11 participants took part in the research. It was planned to select the teachers through convenience sampling, which is one of the purposive sampling methods. This sampling method adds speed and practicality to research, since with this method, the researcher determines a case that is nearby and easy to reach. This sampling method is generally used in cases where the researcher does not have the opportunity to use other sampling methods (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018, p.123). Reasons such as the fact that the researcher could easily reach the fourth grade teachers at the school where she was employed and could collect more detailed data from them were effective in the selection of the sample.

Table 1. Personal information of the teachers

Teachers	Gender	Education Status	Professional Experience	How Many Times to Read the Fourth Grade?
Participant 1	Female	University	21 years and above	4
Participant 2	Female	University	21 years and above	5
Participant 3	Female	University	16-20 years	5
Participant 4	Female	University	16-20 years	4
Participant 5	Female	University	16-20 years	3
Participant 6	Female	University	21 years and above	6
Participant 7	Female	University	6-10 years	2
Participant 8	Male	University	21 years and above	5
Participant 9	Male	University	21 years and above	4
Participant 10	Male	University	21 years and above	4
Participant 11	Male	University	21 years and above	4

Data collection tools

In case studies, it is generally recommended to use more than one data collection tool in order to increase validity and reliability and to access a variety of mutually supportive data. The most frequently used data collection techniques in case studies are interviews, observations and document analysis (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). In this study, three different data collection tools, namely document analysis, a semi-structured interview form and a structured observation form, were used to collect the data and associate them with the sub-problems.

Data collection process

This study includes practices for evaluating the fourth grade Turkish course in terms of vocabulary teaching. During the pilot implementations made before starting the study, it was observed that teachers generally taught Turkish lessons in line with textbooks. This observed situation revealed the necessity to determine the extent to which the activities in textbooks met the learning outcomes in the Turkish Course Curriculum (2019). In this context, in order to

determine which activities in Turkish textbooks were aimed at developing vocabulary, a MoNE publication approved as a fourth grade Turkish textbook by the Board of Education and Discipline of the Ministry of National Education in the 2020-2021 academic year, when the study was carried out, was chosen. In order to determine the extent to which the learning outcomes for vocabulary development in the Turkish Course Curriculum (2019) were included in the activities in the textbook, a textbook activity identification table was used. The textbook used as a data collection tool was examined within a certain system. For this purpose, first of all, the textbook activity identification table was created by the researcher. In the table, 8 themes in the textbook were tabulated separately. The table for each theme includes the name of the text, the number of activities, the activities aimed at vocabulary development, the type of these activities, and the learning outcomes related to vocabulary development.

In the study, a structured observation form was used as a data collection tool for classroom observations conducted to observe the strategies used for the development of vocabulary, which activities were implemented in the introduction, development and conclusion sections of the lesson and how they were implemented, and the time that was allocated for the development of vocabulary. The observation form was divided into three sections in order to identify the practices for vocabulary development in the introduction, development and conclusion sections of the lesson. It was decided to create categories and codes under these three sections. The main and sub-categories of the observation form and the codes within the sub-categories were created in line with the information obtained from the literature review for the evaluation of the teaching process related to vocabulary, the identification of the learning outcomes for vocabulary development in the Turkish Course Curriculum (2019), and the opinions of experts. Accordingly, it was decided to create the sub-categories and codes in the observation form under three main categories, namely "Introduction to the lesson", "Development of the lesson" and "Conclusion of the lesson".

The codes related to the teaching practices in the Introduction to the lesson were placed in the sub-category of "Words worth teaching", the codes related to the teaching practices in the Development of the lesson were placed in the subcategories of "Using strategies for teaching vocabulary" and "Utilizing technology for teaching vocabulary", and the codes related to the teaching practices in the Conclusion of the lesson were placed in the sub-categories of "Assessing vocabulary" and "Assigning homework". To test the reliability of the observation form, a pilot implementation consisting of 6 lesson periods was made in the fourth grade. The researcher filled in the observation form during the observations in the class she was observing, and the observations were recorded with a camera. Afterwards, the observation form was filled in by two observers who watched two periods of the camera-recorded Turkish lessons. In order to test the data reliability in this study, Miles and Huberman's (1994) formula for inter-rater agreement, which is Reliability = (Agreement) / (Agreement + Disagreement) x 100 was used (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Based on the above formula, when the durations stated by the observers regarding the practices were examined, it was seen that the first observer specified the time allocated for the use of strategies related to vocabulary teaching as 22 minutes, while the second observer specified this as 20 minutes. Accordingly, the inter-rater reliability for a category was calculated as: Reliability = 20.0 (Agreement) / [20.0 (Agreement) + 2.0 (Disagreement)] x 100 = 90.90%.

Based on the pilot implementations, in order to determine how much time was allocated in which minute of the lesson to practices related to vocabulary development during the teaching process of the Turkish lesson, it was decided to prepare the observation form in the form of a checklist by dividing the 40-minute lesson into five-minute sections.

In the study, a semi-structured interview form was created in order to obtain the fourth grade teachers' opinions about teaching vocabulary in Turkish lessons. In conducting the interviews, the aim was to reveal how well the teachers' ideas, opinions and conceptual knowledge corresponded with their classroom practices related to vocabulary in the teaching-learning process in Turkish lessons. Accordingly, open-ended questions were created by considering the categories and activities in the teaching process observation form related to vocabulary development, and when necessary, sub-questions were created to reveal the details of the responses depending on the flow of the interview. The semi-structured interview questions, prepared by the researcher in line with the observation form by considering the research problem and purpose, were first presented to three domain experts to elicit their views on language, expression and content. In line with the feedback from the experts, revisions were made to the form. To test the applicability of the semi-structured interview form, a pilot implementation was conducted with 2 teachers. Following the pilot implementation, the semi-structured interview form was given its final shape. The interviews, which were recorded with a voice recorder, were coded into participant forms prepared for each teacher by numbering the participants from 1 to 11. All of the interviews with the teachers were conducted by the researcher herself in the office of the school's deputy principal between 07/09/2020-22/01/2021, and took about 15-25 minutes with each teacher. All of the interviews were recorded.

Data analysis

Within the scope of the study, a descriptive analysis technique was used for the analysis of the data obtained from the document review, observations and semi-structured interviews aimed at the teaching process. Descriptive analysis is explained by Yıldırım and Şimşek (2018) as the summarization and interpretation of data obtained according to previously determined themes. In the analysis of the data obtained from the examination of the Turkish textbook, the activities aimed at improving vocabulary were analyzed by descriptive analysis according to the relevant learning outcomes and the methods and techniques used. By using the observation form for the analysis of the data obtained from the observations, the data obtained from the coded observation form and the data obtained from the interview forms were transcribed and made suitable for analysis. By comparing the data obtained from the coded observation and interview forms, the data in the same group were combined to form a meaningful whole. In this way, it was ensured that the themes comprising the basis of the research findings were found. In the analysis of the data regarding the teachers' thoughts about the activities aimed at developing vocabulary in Turkish lessons, the semi-structured interview forms, the notes taken by the researcher during the interviews, and the audio recordings were used. First of all, the responses given to the interview questions asked by the researcher were digitalized by listening to the audio recordings without making any changes. Then, the obtained data were subjected to descriptive analysis according to the categories determined on the basis of the interview questions. Furthermore, direct quotations to support the themes and sub-themes determined in the observation and interview forms were included.

Findings and Interpretation

An attempt has been made to explain the findings obtained from the observations, interviews and document analysis conducted within the scope of the study with the aim of evaluating the fourth grade Turkish course in terms of vocabulary teaching on the basis of the sub-problems of the study.

To what extent is vocabulary development included in the activities in the fourth grade Turkish textbook?

The activities aimed at enriching vocabulary and the related learning outcomes were identified by examining the 8 themes and the activities included in each theme in the fourth grade Turkish textbook (2019). Within this scope, the following table includes the themes in the fourth grade Turkish textbook, the total number of activities included in each theme, and the distribution of the number of activities and learning outcomes aimed at enriching vocabulary.

Table 2. Distribution of the number of activities and outcomes aimed at enriching vocabulary in the fourth grade Turkish textbook

Themes	Number of Activities f	Number of Activities Related to Vocabulary f	Percentage of Activities Related to Vocabulary (%)	Number of Learning Outcomes Related to Vocabulary f
1. Reading Culture	40	8	20.0	6
2. War of Independence and Ataturk	35	10	28.5	6
3. Virtues	37	14	37.8	6
4.Science and Technology	40	16	40.0	8
5.Nature and the Universe	45	14	31.1	7
6. Our National Culture	43	14	32.5	6
7. Health and Sport	41	15	36.5	7
8. Art	40	16	40.0	7
Total	321	107	33.3	53

When Table 2 is examined, it can be seen that there are different numbers of activities and learning outcomes belonging to each of the 8 themes. When we look at the number of activities aimed at enriching vocabulary among these activities and the number of related learning outcomes, it can be seen that the fewest activities and related outcomes are found in the first theme, while the most activities and outcomes are found in the fourth and eighth themes. When the total number of activities in the textbook is examined, it is observed that while there are 321 activities in the 8 themes, the number of activities aimed at enriching vocabulary totals 107.

Table 3. Distribution of activities aimed at enriching vocabulary in the fourth grade Turkish textbook in terms of learning outcomes

Outcomes Related to Vocabulary	Activities Used	*f*
T.4.1.2. The student can make predictions about the development and outcome of events when he/she listens / watches.	Gap-filling	1
T.4.2.1. The student can use words according to their meanings.	Using Words in Oral Expression	12
T.4.2.6. In his/her speech, the student can use the Turkish versions of words taken from foreign languages and not yet established in our language.	Using the Turkish Equivalent	1
	Using Words in Oral Expression	1
T.4.3.7. The student can find the antonyms of words.	Using Words According to their Semantic Features	3
T.4.3.8. The student can find the synonyms of words.	Using Words According to their Semantic Features	4
	Using Words in Sentences	2
T.4.3.9. The student can distinguish the meanings of homonyms.	Using Words According to their Semantic Features	1
	Using Words in Sentences	1
T.4.3.10. The student can determine the literal, figurative and phrasal meanings of words in the text he/she reads.	Using Words According to their Semantic Features	5
	Gap-filling	1
T.4.3.11. The student can grasp the contribution of idioms and proverbs to the meaning of the text.	Using Words According to their Semantic Features	8
	Using Words in Sentences	1
	Repetition	8
T.4.3.12. The student can guess the meanings of unfamiliar words and phrases by utilizing the context.	Guessing	32
	Using a Dictionary	32
a) Students are allowed to check the meanings of the words and phrases they have guessed by using dictionaries. b) Students are allowed to create glossaries from the words and phrases they have just learned.	Keeping a Vocabulary Notebook	32
T.4.3.22. The student can grasp the meanings of shapes, symbols and signs. Maps, and media signs and symbols are emphasized.	Forming a Mental Image	3
	Matching	3
T.4.3.35. The student can use information sources effectively. Information is given on how to use the table of contents in printed and digital contents and the dictionary section in order to access information,.	Using a Dictionary	1
T.4.4.1. The student can write poetry.	Memorizing/Writing Nursery Rhymes, Chansonnettes, Folk Songs, Lullabies	6
	Repetition	6
	Writing Study	14
T.4.4.8. In his/her writing, the student can use the Turkish versions of words taken from foreign languages and not yet established in our language.	Using the Turkish Equivalent	3
	Illustration	1
T.4.4.18. In his/her writing, the student can use conjunctions in accordance with the rules.	Working with Keywords	2
	Using Words in Sentences	2
T.4.4.19. In his/her writing, the student can use words with their literal, figurative and phrasal meanings.	Using Words in Sentences	36
	Using Words According to their Semantic Features	2
T.4.4.22. The student can write intensifying adjectives correctly.	Word Study	1

Examination of Table 3 reveals that the fourth grade Turkish textbook includes 16 different learning outcomes aimed at vocabulary enrichment. Based on the findings obtained by examining the fourth grade Turkish textbook, it was determined that there are a total of 107

activities aimed at enriching vocabulary. In the activities included in this context, it can be seen that in vocabulary teaching intended to improve vocabulary, the aim is mostly to carry out context-based teaching by utilizing the semantic features of words. Furthermore, it was also found that oral and written expression activities are included and that the use of words with literal, figurative and phrasal meanings is given great importance. Accordingly, it can be said that all of the learning outcomes for developing vocabulary in the Turkish Course Curriculum (2019) are included in the activities in the fourth grade Turkish textbook. In the interviews conducted with the fourth grade teachers, the majority of teachers were of the opinion that the learning outcomes related to vocabulary in the textbook were sufficient except for the outcomes aimed at written expression. However, the teachers concurred that the period of time allocated to activities in the textbook was not sufficient. This situation was clearly revealed in the findings regarding the time allocated to the teaching process in the classroom observations within the scope of the third sub-problem of the study. It was observed that teachers spent a short amount of time on activities aimed at developing vocabulary in the teaching process.

Which activities aimed at improving vocabulary do fourth grade teachers implement in Turkish lessons, and how (in the introduction, development or conclusion sections of the lesson) are they implemented?

In order to determine which activities aimed at improving vocabulary were implemented by the participants, and how they were implemented (in the introduction, development or conclusion sections of the lesson), the activities used were tabulated according to the section of the lesson in which they were conducted.

Table 4. Activities included in the introduction section of the lesson

| Teaching Process | | Activities | Participants | |
			Participant 2 f	Participant 1 f
Introduction Section of Lesson	Selection of Words Worth Teaching	Predicting Keywords	1	3
		Reading Aloud	3	4
		Using a Dictionary	1	-
		Repetition	2	4

When Table 4 is examined, it can be seen that the participants included four different activities aimed at improving vocabulary in the introduction section of the lesson, namely prediction of keywords, reading aloud, using a dictionary, and repetition, with the aim of determining words worth teaching. Most of these activities were carried out by the participants in line with the instructions given based on the texts in the textbook.

Table 5. Activities included in the development section of the lesson

Teaching Process		Activities	Participants	
			Participant 2 *f*	Participant 1 *f*
Development Section of Lesson	Using Strategies for Teaching Vocabulary	Guessing	7	9
		Using a Dictionary	5	7
		Using Words in Sentences	4	7
		Vocabulary Study on Newly Learned Words	3	4
		Repetition	8	5
		Using Words According to their Semantic Features	3	4
		Keeping a Vocabulary Notebook	-	3
	Utilizing Technology for Teaching Vocabulary	Visual Interpretation and Forming a Mental Image	3	1
		Illustration	1	-
		Gap-filling	6	2
		Matching	2	-
		Writing Study	5	4
		Oral Expression	3	4
		Written Expression	2	1

Examination of Table 5 shows that the participants included fourteen different activities aimed at improving vocabulary in the development section of the lesson, namely guessing, using a dictionary, using words in sentences, keeping a vocabulary notebook, forming a mental image, matching, using words according to their semantic features, illustration, repetition, word study, gap-filling, writing study, oral expression and written expression, with the aim of using strategies and utilizing technology for teaching vocabulary. As in the introduction part of the lesson, it was observed that the participants conducted most of the activities within the framework of the activities in the textbook. The activities included by the participants in the concluding part of the lesson with the aim of improving vocabulary in Turkish lessons are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Activities included in the conclusion section of the lesson

Teaching Process		Activities	Participants	
			Participant 2 *f*	Participant 1 *f*
Conclusion Section of Lesson	Assessing Vocabulary	Repetition	1	2
		Matching	4	-
		Gap-filling	3	2
	Assigning Homework	Utilizing the Semantic Features of Words	5	3
		Oral Expression	1	-
		Written Expression	1	1

When Table 6 is examined, it is observed that for the development of vocabulary, the participants included activities such as oral expression, written expression, repetition, matching, gap-filling and using words according to their semantic features in the concluding part of the

lesson, with the aim of assessing vocabulary and assigning homework. Although it was not observed that the participants used any assessment scale for the assessment of vocabulary, it was observed that they mostly included assessment within the scope of activities that required the correct use of newly encountered words based on the texts in the textbook.

How much time do fourth grade teachers devote to practices aimed at improving vocabulary in Turkish lessons??

Below are detailed tables and descriptions regarding the selection of words worth teaching, using strategies for teaching vocabulary, utilizing technology for teaching vocabulary, the assessing vocabulary, assigning homework, and activities that do not include vocabulary teaching. Below are the results including the distribution of the participants' practices aimed at improving vocabulary according to the time they spent teaching them:

Table 7. Distribution of participants' practices related to vocabulary development in Turkish lessons according to time spent teaching them

Practices	Participants				Mean	
	Participant 2		Participant 1		min.	%
	min.	%	min.	%		
Selection of Words Worth Teaching	54	5.62	72	7.50	126	6.56
Using Strategies for Teaching Vocabulary	332	34.58	280	29.17	612	31.875
Utilizing Technology for Teaching Vocabulary	126	13.13	102	10.62	228	11.875
Assessing Vocabulary	28	2.92	64	6.67	92	4.79
Assigning Homework	55	5.73	22	2.29	77	4.01
Activities that do not Include Vocabulary Teaching	365	38.02	420	43.75	785	40.885
TOTAL	960	100	960	100	1920	100

When Table 7 is examined, it can be seen that the total observation period was determined as 1,920 minutes, while the part that included practices not aimed at improving vocabulary was determined as 785 minutes. The most time spent on practices that were not intended to improve vocabulary was spent in Participant 1's class (420 minutes). In Participant 2's class, however, 365 minutes were spent on practices that were not aimed at developing vocabulary. During the total observed teaching period (1,920 minutes), it was observed that in the part of the period that included activities for improving vocabulary, the most time was allocated to using strategies for vocabulary teaching (612 minutes) and to utilizing technology for vocabulary teaching (228 minutes) in the development part of the lesson. A total of 126 minutes was devoted to the selection of words worth teaching, which was included in the

introduction part of the lesson and included practices for determining the words that would be taught to the students. In the concluding part of the lesson, 92 minutes were devoted to practices aimed at the assessment of vocabulary, in which it was assessed whether the students had learned the newly encountered words and in which the practices for determining vocabulary development were indicated. It was observed that the least amount of time during the total teaching process was allocated to homework assignment activities (77 minutes) which included homework given for vocabulary development at the end of the lesson and practices related to checking homework.

Which methods, techniques and strategies aimed at improving vocabulary do fourth grade teachers use in Turkish lessons?

The strategies used by the participants to improve vocabulary in the Turkish lesson teaching process are shown in Table 7. The strategies most used by the participants are included according to their frequency of use.

Table 8. Strategies used by the participants to improve vocabulary in the Turkish lesson teaching process

Strategies Used	Participants	
	Participant 2 f	Participant 1 f
Direct Vocabulary Teaching	9	11
Referring to Context	12	15
Oral/Written Expression by Selecting from the Word and Concept Pool	4	2
Word Games/Word Puzzles	3	-
Note-taking	4	5
Think-Pair-Share	6	-
Question-Answer	26	34
Repetition of the Word at Certain Intervals	10	14
Drawing Attention to Target Words	5	9
Utilizing Preliminary Knowledge	2	4
Associating with Daily Life	4	7
Exemplifying	4	7
Brainstorming	2	5
Oral Story Completion	1	-
Matching Words with Visuals	2	-
Reading Aloud	5	7
Keeping a Vocabulary Notebook	-	5
Using a Dictionary	6	7
Guessing	8	12

Examination of Table 8 reveals that the participants used 19 different strategies aimed at improving vocabulary in Turkish lessons during the observed teaching period. While some of the strategies used (keeping a vocabulary notebook, guessing, using a dictionary, reading aloud, and matching words with images) are included within the scope of activities related to the textbook in the introduction, development and conclusion sections of the lesson, they are also discussed under this heading in order to determine the frequency of inclusion of strategies

frequently used by the participants. The participants' practices aimed at the specified strategies emerged when there were instructions related to them in the textbook. Therefore, all the participants included these strategies on an activity basis. The participants included these strategies in the activities they used in the introduction, development and conclusion sections of the lesson. In the interviews conducted with the teachers, they stated that in addition to the strategies they used the most, such as guessing, using a dictionary, and oral and written expression, they also included strategies such as brainstorming, drama, word pool, word puzzles and word games, and this shows parallelism with the findings obtained from the classroom observations.

What are the opinions of fourth grade teachers about the activities aimed at improving vocabulary in Turkish lessons?

To find an answer to the last sub-problem of the research, interviews were conducted with the participants after the observations. The participants were asked various questions about vocabulary teaching during the Turkish course teaching process. In this context, the findings obtained as a result of the interviews with the participants are explained thematically in the form of tables.

Table 9. Findings on questions asked to determine the most effective methods used by the participants and the time allocated

Category	Theme	Codes (Teachers' Statements)
Methods Used for Vocabulary and Time Allocated	Importance of developing vocabulary	• Reading comprehension • Expressing ideas • Academic achievement • Developing active and passive vocabulary
	Methods, techniques and strategies used	• Guessing • Reading aloud • Using a Dictionary • Oral and written expression • Word games • Word puzzles • Drama • Creating oral and written stories • Matching
	The most effective strategy	• Associating with daily life • Guessing • Using a dictionary • Using contextual clues • Brainstorming • Oral and written expression • Word wall
	Number of repetitions of newly encountered words	• 2-3 times (per week) • 3-4 times (per week)
	Methods used to ensure retention of learning	• Oral expression • Repetition • Keeping a vocabulary notebook • Utilizing visuals • Games

Time allocated	1-2 hours per week	

Table 9 contains information about the methods used by the participants for vocabulary development and the time they allocated for these methods. Accordingly, all of the interviewed participants expressed opinions about the importance and necessity of developing vocabulary. As for the reasons why it is necessary to develop vocabulary, the participants stated that the achievement of students in all subjects is related to the vocabulary they have acquired. All of the participants stated that they included guessing, using a dictionary, and oral and written expression activities for the development of vocabulary. Stating that he used the oral expression method, Participant 1 said, "…I attach great importance to students' oral expression. While giving an oral presentation, students generally use short and unclear sentences. When pronouncing words, they do not express them fully. I have them repeat the words that they incompletely express. I pay close attention to pronunciation…". Participant 8 explained the methods, techniques and strategies he used with these words: "…..in order to improve their vocabulary, I primarily have them read lots of books. We work with keywords. We work on guessing the meanings of unknown words. Then we work on finding them in the dictionary….".

Participant 5 stated that he allocated at least 2 hours out of 8 hours a week to practices aimed at vocabulary development in Turkish lessons, but that he always made sure he associated it with other subjects, and stated that learning and teaching vocabulary are too important to be limited only to Turkish lessons. Stating that he devoted at least 2 lesson periods a week to practices aimed at improving students' vocabulary, Participant 3 said, "...if there are too many words that they encounter for the first time in the text we are reading, we definitely allocate 1 lesson period for this, and sometimes even 2 lesson periods a week, but if the words they encounter are not very unfamiliar to them, I can say that 1 lesson period is enough….". When the responses given to the question are evaluated in general, all of the participants stated that they allotted at least 1-2 lesson periods a week for practices aimed at improving vocabulary in line with the texts and the activities related to the texts. Furthermore, the participants stated that practices related to vocabulary were not limited only to the Turkish course, and that they sometimes included new words learned in other lessons.

Table 10. Findings on the evaluation of the Turkish textbook used in class in terms of vocabulary

Category	Theme	Codes (Teachers' Statements)
Evaluation of Textbook in Terms of Vocabulary	Adequacy of inclusion of learning outcomes in the activities in the textbook	• Adequate apart from activities for written expression • Insufficient time allocated for activities • Limited inclusion of visuals in activities
	Suitability of texts for improving vocabulary	• Excessive number of unknown words • Long and boring texts • Inverted sentences • Majority of words not used in daily life • Difficulty in finding meaning by using context • Words encountered in one text not encountered in other texts. • Positive view regarding suitability of texts • Texts make it possible to encounter different words
	Effect of activities on improving vocabulary	• Inadequate time allotted to activities • Limited number of gaps in written expression activities

- Loss of interest due to repetitive activities
- Insufficient activities including keywords associated with texts
- Activities ensure retention of learning
- Association with daily life
- Positive view regarding contribution of activities to development of vocabulary

Table 10 includes information about the evaluation of the Turkish textbook by the participants. When we look at the statements of all the participants regarding the evaluation of the Turkish textbook, it can be seen that the learning outcomes aimed at vocabulary development in the Turkish Course Curriculum (2019) are adequately included in the textbook. However, the participants agreed that the current duration of the lessons was insufficient in terms of the applicability of the curriculum. Participant 7 summed up this situation as follows: "…actually, there are activities in the textbook for all learning outcomes, but how much can we foster the competencies that need to be fostered with only the activities in the book?… We only keep to the activities in the book, but since the words learned are not included in the next text or theme that we move on to, they are forgotten…". Participants agreed that the learning outcomes related to vocabulary in the textbooks were sufficient apart from the written expression outcomes. For example, with the statement that "…[The texts are] appropriate, very appropriate. They are also suitable for teaching the word concept. They are appropriate for the lives of children, and when we look at them in terms of culture, they are also suitable for the culture of the region… It is just that some texts are too long, and so we find it difficult to draw the students' attention...", Participant 11 expressed the view that the texts were appropriate in terms of vocabulary development but that they were too long.

Table 11. Findings on determining how the participants chose the words they deemed it necessary to teach

Category	Theme	Codes (Teachers' Statements)
Determination of Words Worth Teaching	How words are chosen	- Underlining unknown words in text - Unknown words encountered in activities - New words encountered in books read other than texts - New words encountered in daily life - Academic words
	Number of words taught	- 5-6 words per week - 6-7 words per week - 7-8 words per week - Number of words changes weekly
	Utilizing a word list	- No creation of a list of words that can be used

Table 11 includes information on how the participants chose the words worth teaching, the number of words they taught, and whether they utilized a word list. Accordingly, it was observed that participants had different views about determining the words worth teaching. Participant 9 reported that the words worth teaching were determined completely by the

students during the processing of the texts. In this respect, he stated that he asked the students the words whose meanings they did not know while reading the texts, and that he taught the words that the students specified. Participant 9 reported that the students specified the words as follows: "…we definitely ask the child. If the student does not know the meaning of a word, he/she must learn it. That is to say, we ask the student all the words whose meaning is unknown in the text. If they do not know, we try to teach them by focusing on those words and concepts. In other words, rather than the teacher, what matters here is whether the student knows the words in the text. If even one single student does not know a word, that word should definitely be learned…". Although the number of words that the participants taught each day/week differed from each other, all participants reported that they processed one text each week and taught at least 3-4 words based on the text given in the textbook. However, the majority of the participants stated that they did not keep to the words given in the textbook and that they included all the words appearing in the text and activities that the students did not know. When the responses given by the participants are evaluated in general, it can be understood that they mostly carried out vocabulary teaching in line with the words encountered in the texts and activities included in the textbook. Furthermore, it can be seen that they also included the teaching of words that they encountered in books they had read other than the textbook, or in daily life. However, there was no word list that the participants regularly created and used while teaching vocabulary.

Table 12. Findings on determining how the vocabulary acquired by the students was assessed

Category	Theme	Codes (Teachers' Statements)
Assessing Vocabulary	How vocabulary is assessed	• Oral expression • Written expression • Daily conversations
	What type of assessments are made	• Written expression • Oral expression • End-of-theme assessments • Inclusion in daily conversations • In-class observation
	How often assessments are made	• 8 times per year with end-of-theme assessments • 4-5 times during the year with written exams

Information about how the participants assessed vocabulary, what kind of assessments they made and how many times they made assessments can be seen in Table 12. Accordingly, it was observed that the participants mostly assessed children's vocabulary during written and oral expression activities at the beginning of the academic year. Stating that they assessed students' vocabulary according to whether they used words appropriately or not by having the students do oral and written expression exercises, Participant 7 said, "…First of all, I make an oral and written pre-assessment. How and with which words does the student express him/herself, and how does he/she write them down?… I try to determine it in this way", while Participant 2 put it like this: "…I mostly look at expression skills. That is, can he/she express him/herself while speaking or describing an event?... Then I look at his/her writing skills…. Can he/she use words

properly and in accordance with their meanings in his/her sentences? I pay attention to these, but I mostly make an assessment based on their oral expressions by examining their speaking skills...".

Although the participants reported that they did not use an assessment tool to assess whether words had been learned or not, they were of the opinion that students learn new words depending on the degree to which they can associate them with different subjects and include them in their daily conversations. Based on this, it can be said that when students included words they had learned in their active vocabulary, they reflected them both in their written expressions and in their conversations, so that teachers were also able to make assessments in this way.

Table 13. Findings on determining how teachers utilized technology for the development of vocabulary

Category	Theme	Codes (Teachers' Statements)
Utilizing Technology	Importance of using technology	• Vocabulary development • Chance to offer fun and interesting activities • Providing convenience and variety • Saving time • Increasing retention of learning through visual and auditory activities • Inhibiting creative thinking
	Types of technology used	• Computer • Internet • Projector • Smartboard • Web 2.0 tools
	Types of activities for which technology is utilized	• Word puzzles • Matching • Finding images of words • Synonyms • Antonyms • E-dictionaries • Gap-filling • Listening to stories and fairy tales • Watching animated films and cartoons
	Software programs used	• EBA • Eğitimhane • Vitamin • Okulistik • Morpa Kampüs

In Table 13, information about the importance of using technology in Turkish lessons for the development of vocabulary, the types of technology used, the types of activities for which teachers used technology, and the software programs they used can be seen. Stating that it is important to use technology in Turkish lessons and that it enables permanent learning especially in vocabulary teaching, Participant 5 said, "...I think that if technology is used consciously, it is certainly effective in the development of children's vocabulary", while Participant 7 was of the opinion that "…Of course, technology has an impact on lessons, just as it has on everything else. It is also very important for Turkish lessons…. Especially in vocabulary learning, students at least

have the opportunity to see the visuals associated with a particular word visually. I think this also increases retention of learning". When the participants' statements are evaluated in general, they were of the opinion that technology is indispensable nowadays, and that therefore, it is effective when consciously included in the development of vocabulary in Turkish lessons. However, although the participants thought that technology is important for the development of vocabulary, they emphasized that vocabulary can develop the most when children are given the opportunity to express what they have learned through oral and written expression. Moreover, they stated that thanks to technology, they could offer children fun and interesting activities related to vocabulary, but that none of them were as effective as reading books. Participants reported that they generally preferred software programs used for improving vocabulary in the sense that they provided convenience and variety in the preparation of activities. Participants specified the programs they utilized. For example, Participant 3 said, "…EBA is my favorite program, but in the 4th grade, 'Vitamin' is very successful. Apart from these, I use 'Morpa Kampüs'. Sometimes, I also use 'Okulistik'…". All participants stated that they utilized software programs in the preparation of different activities aimed at improving vocabulary. Moreover, when the responses given by the participants are evaluated in general, it can be seen that they mostly preferred programs such as "EBA", "Okulistik", "Vitamin", "Morpa Kampüs", and "Eğitimhane".

Conclusion and Discussion

In this study, which was conducted to identify the activities used for the development of vocabulary in the fourth grade Turkish lessons and textbook, the opinions of classroom teachers in this regard, the strategies, practices and activities they used for this, and the time they spent on this in the teaching-learning process, it was determined that in the textbook, there were 16 different learning outcomes for the development of vocabulary. It was revealed that there were 107 activities related to the 16 different outcomes.

In this context, activities related to guessing the meanings of words, using words in sentences and using a dictionary were mostly included. Apart from these, it was revealed that activities requiring the use of literal, figurative and phrasal meanings of words, and repetition and sentence use activities requiring the use of idioms and proverbs by utilizing the semantic features of words were included more than other activities.

In the study conducted by Maden (2020), it was determined that activities for guessing, using words in sentences and utilizing the semantic features of words were the most frequently used activities in all elementary school textbooks from first grade to fourth grade. Although textbooks are one of the important tools supporting the development of vocabulary, it is expected that the words intended to be taught to students will be placed in themes and texts within a certain plan according to grade levels. However, it can be seen that the number of words required to be taught in both the Turkish Course Curriculum (2019) and the textbooks is not systematically included. Yet the learning outcomes aimed at vocabulary development, the framework of which have been determined with the Turkish Course Curriculum (2019), are concretized through textbooks.

At the same time, although the numbers of activities and learning outcomes in each theme are different from each other, 107 out of the 321 activities included in the 8 themes are aimed at improving vocabulary. It was also seen in the results of the studies conducted by

Karadüz and Yıldırım (2011), Yağcı, Katrancı, Erdoğan and Uygun (2012) and Uğur (2014) that guessing, using a dictionary, using words in sentences, utilizing the semantic features of words, and written and oral expression activities, which are the activities mostly included in the Turkish textbook, were the methods most frequently used by classroom teachers in the teaching process. These results reveal that in Turkish textbooks, activities that teachers have knowledge of and that can be used in the classroom are preferred.

In the classroom observations, it was concluded that in the introduction part of the lesson, the participants included four different activities aimed at determining words worth teaching, namely prediction of keywords, reading aloud, using a dictionary, and repetition. All of these activities, which were included for determining words worth teaching, were carried out within the scope of the fourth grade vocabulary learning outcomes in the Turkish Course Curriculum (2019) and the textbook activities. In the related literature, it is stated that in addition to teaching words, determining the words to be taught is very important for the development of vocabulary (Nagy & Hiebert, 2011; Tağa, 2018). However, there are no instructions or explanations regarding how to determine the words to be taught in either the current curriculum or the textbooks in use.

Other than the activities in the textbook, the choice of words to be taught depends entirely on the experience and preference of the teacher. Although determining the words to be taught with a planned approach for the development of vocabulary is an issue that needs to be emphasized, neither the lists of words to be taught nor the path that teachers should follow in word selection are specified in the current curriculum.

The importance of including newly learned words in different activities in order to improve vocabulary has also been revealed in studies. It was concluded that in the teaching process conducted within the scope of text-based activities, the inclusion of activities such as using words in sentences, using a dictionary, utilizing the semantic features of words, making use of visuals, illustration and repetition had a positive effect on vocabulary development (Akyol, 2001; Alenezi, 2014; Göçer, 2009; Lundmark, 2009; Stahl & Nagy, 2006; Wright, 2011). Çetinkaya (2011) stated in his study that the inclusion of word repetition activities had a significant effect on vocabulary development.

In the observed teaching process, it was determined that participants mostly used the strategies of referring to the context, repetition, question-answer and drawing attention to the target words. While teaching unknown words during the processing of texts and activities related to the texts, the participants included all of the determined strategies in line with the textbook. As a result of the study, it was concluded that the strategy of teaching unknown words by using contextual clues by reading texts aloud was frequently utilized by the participants while teaching words appearing in the text that were unfamiliar to the students besides the keywords in the textbook. The related literature emphasizes the effect of teaching words in context on the retention of learned words by using different methods, techniques and strategies for vocabulary teaching, and stresses the importance of developing children's vocabulary (Akyol, 2018; Alenezi, 2014; Baumann, Kame'enui & Ash, 2003; Blachowicz & Fisher, 2010; Coyne, McCoach, Loftus, Zipoli & Kapp, 2009; Dilidüzgün, 2014; Goodson, Wolf, Bell, Turner & Finney, 2010; Yıldız, 2019).

In line with the interviews conducted to determine classroom teachers' views about the activities aimed at improving vocabulary in Turkish lessons, the participants were of the opinion

that vocabulary development has a significant impact not only on students' reading comprehension skills and ability to express their ideas correctly, but also on their academic achievement. In the study by Karadüz and Yıldırım (2011), in which they sought the opinions of teachers on vocabulary development, teachers stated that the development of vocabulary is necessary for school achievement due to the development of basic language skills such as reading, writing and speaking. This situation is similar to the results obtained from the findings of the current study. However, when the findings obtained from the observations and interviews were evaluated in the study, it was revealed that the teachers did not have adequate knowledge about the methods, techniques and strategies they used for improving vocabulary, and that therefore, they did not use the implementation steps required by the strategies appropriately. Yağcı, Katrancı, Erdoğan and Uygun (2012) concluded in their study that classroom teachers mostly learned the methods, techniques and strategies they used while teaching vocabulary through their own efforts, which reveals the reason for this situation. In their study, Berne and Blachowics (2008) similarly concluded that teachers did not have enough information about the methods, techniques and strategies they would use, and that therefore, they had no idea about which one was more effective, a fact that can be considered as one of the reasons for the results obtained in the present study.

In conclusion, when the observation and interview findings regarding the fourth grade Turkish lesson teaching process are evaluated, it can be seen that the teachers' ideas on vocabulary development mostly overlapped with their practices in the classroom environment. Although it was observed that teachers used various teaching strategies in the classroom environment aimed at improving vocabulary, it was determined that teachers could not fully carry out the implementation steps required by the strategies. It can be said that the reason for this is that teachers did not have adequate knowledge about the methods, techniques and strategies used for improving vocabulary. At the same time, it can be seen that due to reasons such as concerns about keeping up with the subjects in the curriculum and the insufficient duration of lessons, teachers carried out all of their practices related to vocabulary within the scope of the texts and text-related activities in the textbook. However, although the texts and activities in the textbooks were guides for the teachers, we cannot say that they were completely adequate for developing vocabulary, because although the teaching activities carried out only in line with the textbook formed the basis for developing vocabulary, it was impossible to include all the required words. For this reason, the necessity of teaching words that students encounter in good quality books that they have read, as well as teaching words not in the text through writing, listening and oral expression activities emerges as a result of the study.

Suggestions

In line with the results obtained in the study, the proposed suggestions for the development of vocabulary in fourth grade elementary students are as follows:

- Turkish lessons can be planned in such a way as to provide rich language experiences that students can participate in actively.
- For vocabulary to be developed in a planned way on a scientific basis, lists of words that need to be taught at each grade level can be determined and included in textbooks with examples of activities in which the determined words can be practiced.

- By informing teachers about the teaching methods, techniques and strategies for the development of vocabulary demonstrated by the research findings, these methods can be included in their practices in the teaching process.

Experimental studies in which the teaching-learning environment is observed, and which are aimed at revealing the effectiveness of the methods, techniques and strategies used for vocabulary development, can be conducted especially at elementary school level in Türkiye.

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