Improving Communication Skills through Innovative Techniques for Building Vocabulary

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of innovative techniques for vocabulary building on improving communication skills among English learners. The research design employed a mixed-method approach, integrating quantitative with qualitative surveys into the effectiveness of various vocabulary acquisition strategies. The participants included 100 college students in this study, engaged in interactive activities, integration of technology, and context-based learning. The measurement of data collection was carried out in terms of vocabulary knowledge and communication proficiency pre- and post-intervention, and qualitative insights were gained through focus group discussions and individual interviews. The findings from the results show that innovative techniques significantly improved the participants' vocabulary scores and their communication skills, as the statistical analyses prove the difference after the intervention. Students expressed, through qualitative data, that interactive and technology-based approaches were more interesting and effective when compared to the traditional method. The qualitative themes emerging from the analysis revealed that the context of the words in vocabulary learning is an important feature and collaborative activities increase motivation and retention.

Keywords	Vocabulary building	Communication skills	Innovative techniques	Technology

Kelime Dağarcığı Oluşturmaya Yönelik Yenilikçi Teknikler Yoluyla İletişim Becerilerini Geliştirme

Özet

Bu çalışma, kelime dağarcığı oluşturmaya yönelik yenilikçi tekniklerin İngilizce öğrenenler arasında iletişim becerilerini geliştirmeye etkisini araştırmaktadır. Araştırma tasarımında, çeşitli kelime edinimi stratejilerinin etkinliğine niceliksel ve niteliksel araştırmaları entegre eden karma yöntemli bir yaklaşım kullanılmıştır. Örneklem, bu çalışmaya etkileşimli etkinliklerle, teknoloji entegrasyonuyla ve bağlam temelli öğrenmeyle ilgilenen 100 üniversite öğrencisinden oluşmaktadır. Kelime bilgisi ve iletişim yeterliliği ön ve son testleri aracılığıyla nitel veriler, odak grup ve bireysel görüşmeler yoluyla da nitel veriler elde edilmiştir. Araştırmanın sonuçları, yenilikçi tekniklerin katılımcıların kelime dağarcığı puanlarını ve iletişim becerilerini önemli ölçüde geliştirdiğini göstermektedir. Nitel verilere göre öğrenciler etkileşimli ve teknoloji temelli yaklaşımların geleneksel yönteme göre daha ilgi çekici ve etkili olduğunu ifade etmişlerdir. Analiz sonucunda ortaya çıkan niteliksel temalar, kelime öğreniminde bağlamın önemli bir özellik olduğunu ve işbirlikçi etkinliklerin motivasyonu ve kalıcılığı artırdığını ortaya çıkarmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler	Kelime dağarcığı	İletişim becerileri	Yenilikçi teknikler	Teknoloji

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Introduction

Effective communication in today's modern, networked world influences personal relationships, professional success, and academic achievement. Vocabularies stand at the axis of communication; they are the very foundation upon which language expression and comprehension develop. A good vocabulary allows thoughts to become transparent when taking part in any meaningful discussion; thus, being sure of one's self in dealing with different social situations. However, many learners perform poorly in vocabulary acquisition depending upon conventional techniques apparently not adequate to cope with the demands of communicative survival. The need thus arises for newer techniques to enhance vocabulary building for good communication.

Words and phrases used to convey thoughts, emotions, and information are referred to as vocabulary. Indeed, studies have consistently shown a strong correlation between a person's level of communication proficiency and their vocabulary. In addition to aiding in comprehension, a strong vocabulary also helps one develop the ability to articulate complex ideas succinctly and effectively (Kieffer & Lesaux, 2007). Despite its significance, many students still struggle with vocabulary acquisition. It has already been determined that the conventional methods, which essentially consist of rote memorization of word lists, are ineffective at encouraging vocabulary retention over the long term and its practical application. This typically indicates that most students would struggle to effectively communicate in real life by applying newly learned out-of-context words (Beck, McKeown and Kucan, 2013). This necessitates the development of fresh vocabulary-building techniques that appeal to learners and permit authentic language use.

Numerous approaches, ranging from conventional to contemporary teaching strategies, have been developed to enhance vocabulary acquisition. Students are taught new words through lists and definitions in traditional methods, which place an emphasis on memorization and direct instruction. These could lead to short-term or superficial gains with less opportunity for in-depth comprehension and practical application of the words (Nassaji & Tian, 2010). Conversely, modern methods are predicated on contextual and experiential learning. In this regard, collaborative learning strategies, technology integration, and contextually rich activities have so far shown promise as fresh substitutes for conventional methods. For instance, compared to the conventional approach, one study (Schwartz & Bransford, 1998) found that establishing interactive learning environments where students collaborate and discuss can improve vocabulary retention and usage. Learning vocabulary in a more dynamic and interactive way is made possible by the technology used in mobile apps and online resources.

With these innovative techniques being supported by an increasing number of research studies, most educators would revert to traditional techniques; this is far easier and often due to a lack of enough training or resources. This resistance to change in itself calls for further exploration into determining effective vocabulary-building strategies that can more easily be absorbed into existing curricula. This should, therefore, be considered important research that can help in solving some of the nagging problems of acquiring vocabulary and skill development in communication. The present study would attempt to provide educators with some workable, researched methods in understanding current trends in vocabulary-building techniques that can easily be adopted into practice within a variety of educational settings. The results may also contribute to the broader understanding of the relation between vocabulary acquisition and communication ability, which has wider implications for improving learner outcomes.

Vocabulary is a main element in successful communication, but most students are struggling to build up and use their vocabulary. Traditional methods of teaching in many cases proved helpless (McKeown, 2019) in encouraging meaningful vocabulary use, which urges the search for innovative techniques that might involve learners more and improve their skills of communicative behavior. This study will explore such techniques for their effectiveness, using a mixed-method research design to reach a comprehensive understanding of their impact on vocabulary acquisition and communicative competence. It thus attempts to contribute significantly to the existing fund of knowledge that could be beneficial to educators in support of effective language instruction practices.

Literature Review

For the most part, vocabulary is the foundation of good communication. Once more, vocabulary improves understanding and academic success by serving as a bridge that permits the expression of thoughts and ideas (Graves, 2006; Nagy & Townsend, 2012). The purpose of this literature review is to examine the body of research on vocabulary acquisition, with a focus on both conventional and novel methods. The role of vocabulary in communication will be covered, along with a variety of teaching techniques and empirical research showing how effective these approaches have been at improving students' vocabulary and communication abilities.

Effective communication and comprehension depend on having a strong vocabulary. Numerous studies have consistently shown a strong correlation between reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge. According to Nagy (2005), vocabulary knowledge has a significant impact on reading success because texts that contain more words are more accessible for a deeper comprehension and engagement with the issues they raise. In other words, a student's ability to process information appropriately is determined by the words they know; therefore, the more words they know, the better their academic performance will be and the easier it will be for them to communicate.

Having a storng vocabulary makes oral communication better. A person's ability to express their thoughts and feelings more precisely will increase with the size of their vocabulary, which will help others see and comprehend them more clearly. McKeown and Beck (2011) assert that a student's ability to apply their vocabulary to a variety of academic and communicative contexts increases with vocabulary development. For example, students with larger vocabularies were able to use such successes in social and academic communication contexts (Kieffer & Lesaux, 2007). This indicates that vocabulary is crucial for social interactions and fruitful conversations in addition to academic success.

Academic achievement is closely related to vocabulary knowledge. Some researchers have discovered that vocabulary has a disproportionately strong influence on students' performance in a variety of science, math, and reading subjects (Biemiller 2003; Snow 2010). For example, students' performance suffers when their vocabulary is limited because they might not comprehend the course materials. According to Nagy and Townsend (2012), a strong vocabulary improves writing, science, math, and reading comprehension.

In addition, learning vocabulary is one of the most important things for ESL or EFL students. Academic success is hampered by a lack of vocabulary because it makes it difficult to understand lectures and complete assignments.

Effective Vocabulary Acquisition Techniques

There are many effective vocabulary acquisition techniques but we will mention three of them here.

Contextual Learning: Contextual learning emphasizes presenting vocabulary within meaningful contexts to enhance understanding and retention. By exposing learners to words in appropriate contexts, they can better grasp both the meaning and the practical usage of new terms. For example, integrating vocabulary instruction into broader thematic units, such as science or literature, allows students to encounter new words within a natural context. Beck et al. (2013) found that students who learned vocabulary through context-based instruction showed significantly better retention compared to those who relied on traditional rote memorization. This highlights the importance of contextualized vocabulary instruction to enhance real-life applicability and long-term understanding.

Collaborative Learning: Collaborative learning, where students work together to explore and practice new vocabulary, is another effective approach. Through group activities, students can engage in discussions, use words in context, and share different perspectives, all of which promote deeper learning (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Collaborative learning fosters greater motivation and ownership in the learning process. Zhang and Liu (2017) reported that students who engaged in collaborative vocabulary activities showed significantly higher vocabulary gains compared to those who learned alone, demonstrating the value of social interaction and peer support in vocabulary acquisition.

Technology-Enhanced Learning: The integration of technology into vocabulary instruction has advanced significantly, offering new and dynamic ways to support vocabulary acquisition. Digital tools, apps, and online resources provide interactive and personalized learning experiences, with instant feedback—critical for effective learning (Gonzalez & Aebersold, 2006). Mobile apps like Quizlet and Anki use flashcards and spaced repetition to enhance long-term retention, while online games and platforms make learning vocabulary enjoyable. Studies have shown that students who use technology to learn vocabulary are more motivated and achieve better outcomes.

Thematic Units and Interdisciplinary Learning

Thematic units and interdisciplinary learning provide an immersive approach to vocabulary acquisition by integrating words across various subjects. This method allows students to encounter new vocabulary in diverse contexts, helping to reinforce their understanding and application of the terms (Hirsch, 2003). For instance, in a project-based study on environmental science, students learned relevant vocabulary, and those who received instruction through thematic units showed greater vocabulary improvement compared to those taught through traditional methods (Nagy & Townsend, 2012). This approach demonstrates the benefits of placing vocabulary in a broader conceptual framework to enhance learning and retention.

Game-Based Learning: Definitions of game-based learning mostly emphasize that it is a type of game play with defined learning outcomes (Shaffer, Halverson, Squire, & Gee, 2005). Usually it is assumed that the game is a digital game, but this is not always the case. The rise of gamification in vocabulary instruction capitalizes on the motivational aspects of gameplay to improve the learning experience. Games that incorporate elements of competition, collaboration, and fun engage students in practicing and applying new vocabulary in a stress-free environment. Gee (2003) argues that games provide opportunities for learners to encounter and use new words in context, leading to deeper understanding. Hwang and Wu (2014) found that students who engaged in vocabulary games exhibited higher retention rates than those who participated in traditional instruction, suggesting that game-based learning positively impacts both attitude and performance.

Empirical Studies on Innovative Vocabulary Techniques

Empirical studies have indeed investigated the effectiveness of contextual learning in vocabulary acquisition. For instance, a study by Beck et al. (2013) investigated the impact of vocabulary learning through context on elementary students. The study established that the students whose vocabulary instructions were provided through meaningful contexts yielded significantly higher retention and application rates compared to those who used memorization techniques for vocabulary acquisition. This evidence demonstrates the importance of placing vocabulary instructions within an authentic learning context.

Nagy and Townsend (2012) also investigated the effectiveness of context-based vocabulary instruction to middle-grade learners. The result showed that students who received contextual learning demonstrated higher gains in both vocabulary knowledge and comprehension compared to other students who received traditional instruction. Hence, this finding emphasizes the importance of offering enough chance for learners to view vocabulary within a real-life context in order to develop an enhanced level of understanding and mastery of it.

Collaborative learning research also reported positive results for vocabulary gain. Zhang and Liu (2017), for example, conducted an experimental research activity related to the effect of collaborative vocabulary activities on vocabulary development for university students. The findings showed that in comparison to an individually learning control group, students who experienced collaborative learning demonstrated significantly higher vocabulary gain. This suggests that peer interaction and collaboration are indeed critical in vocabulary acquisition.

In another study, Johnson and Johnson, in 2009, investigated the effects of collaborative learning on the retention of vocabulary among high school students. It was noted that there was improved retention rate and newer vocabulary was applied in their writing and discussions. This indicates the great deal a supportive learning environment with peer interaction and collaboration offers effective vocabulary learning.

The literature has also pursued means through which technology-enhanced learning impacts vocabulary acquisition. A study conducted by Bahrani and Tam (2012), for instance, examined the effectiveness of mobile applications in improving vocabulary acquisition among language learners. Their findings revealed that students who utilized vocabulary applications outperformed their counterparts relying on conventional approaches to develop and retain vocabulary. This finding merely reiterates the potentiality of technology to enhance vocabulary acquisition across diverse educational contexts.

Liu and Zhang (2014) conducted a study that explored the use of online gaming as a means of learning vocabulary. In their findings, students engaging in game-like activities involving the acquisition of vocabulary showed more relative levels of engagement and greatly enhanced retention of acquired vocabulary. Such findings indicate that blending vocabulary instruction with technology makes the learning process of the young student more active, motivating and supportive of vocabulary acquisition. Research regarding thematic units and interdisciplinary learning has proved its efficiency for building vocabulary. For example, Hirsch (2003) points out that students who received interdisciplinary projects with incorporated vocabulary lessons showed greater strides in knowledge of the sets and their use than traditionally instructed ones. This means that vocabulary should be learned in context to broader concepts and themes.

Similarly, Nagy and Townsend (2012) examined how thematic units support the learning of middle school students' vocabularies. Results indicated that students who learned their vocabulary within an interdisciplinary project showed better gains in both vocabulary knowledge and comprehension than students receiving traditional instruction. These findings give reason to show that thematic units have promise for promoting deeper learning and retention of vocabulary.

Gee (2003) also investigated the effectiveness of game-based learning on language learners' vocabulary acquisition. It was found that vocabulary-game-exposure students demonstrated superior retention of words and a greater use of unfamiliar words in writing and conversation. That means game-based learning is still capable of offering some engaging and effective opportunities for vocabulary learning.

This study investigates the innovative techniques of vocabulary building in the English language and their effect on improvement in communication skills among learners of English. The objectives of the research are:

(1) To identify ways of effectively acquiring vocabulary that may be helpful in improving communication skills.

(2) To explore what impact innovative vocabulary-building activities may have on learners' knowledge of vocabulary and communication skills.

(3) To recommend educators on how to integrate the proposed techniques into teaching.

By addressing these objectives, the present study expected to add the volume of the literature of vocabulary acquisition studies and informs teaching on practical ways in which the process may be ameliorated.

Methodology

Research Design

A mixed-methods research design, which integrates quantitative and qualitative methods has been adopted in the study for a more integrated understanding of the problem statement. Quantitatively, the study is based on a quasi-experimental design that tests the efficiency of different innovative methods of vocabulary acquisition. The qualitative part depends on interviews and focus groups to draw detailed insights from the participants regarding their experience and perception of the various techniques used in the study.

In the quantitative phase, the quasi-experimental design has been used wherein the comparative effectiveness of different vocabulary-building techniques would be tried out on students in terms of their vocabulary acquisition and improvement of communicative skills. One group was the experimenatl one which used innovative techniques to learn vocabulary and the orther was the control group which used the traditional techniques. This particular design has been selected because this allows the researcher to make comparisons between groups without randomly assigning participants-a process often rather difficult in educational settings (Trochim, 2006).

Qualitative aspects of this study include in-depth insights from participants about their experiences with the techniques applied in building vocabulary. These were semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions that allow participants to express their thoughts and feelings in their own words, providing rich qualitative data. According to Creswell (2014), such a method allows for an

advanced level of understanding of the participants' points of view and the context in which the innovative techniques were applied and hence complements the quantitative findings.

Participants

The participants for this study were selected using a convenience sampling method, which involves selecting individuals who are readily available and willing to participate in the research (Creswell, 2014). The study was conducted at a public university in the United States, targeting undergraduate students enrolled in English courses. The total sample consisted of 100 participants, divided into an experimental group (n = 50) and a control group (n = 50). To be eligible for participation in the study, participants had to meet the following inclusion criteria: (1) Be enrolled in an English course at the university during the semester of the study; (2) Be at least 18 years old. (3) Provide informed consent to participate in the study.

The majority of participants were between 18 and 24 years old (75%), with a balanced representation of male (45%) and female (55%) participants. The participants' majors varied, including English, education, psychology, and other related fields.

Data Collection Methods

The data collection for this study involved both quantitative and qualitative methods, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of the effectiveness of innovative vocabulary-building techniques.

Quantitative Data Collection

Pre and post-tests were used to test the effects of the vocabulary building techniques upon the participants' acquisition of vocabulary and effective oral communication. The items of the tests were selected from West (1953) aimed at measuring participants' vocabulary knowledge like the meaning, usage, and contextual understanding of words.

(1) Pre-Test: The pre-test was administered to both experimental and control groups before the intervention. It comprised multiple-choice type questions, fill-in-the-blank exercises, and short answer questions assessing the participant's high frequency vocabulary knowledge and effective oral communication. The test was prepared by the researcher and checked by external scrutiny for clarity, and suitability.

(2) Post-Test: After the intervention period of eight weeks, the post-test was conducted to compare scores directly after and before the intervention.

Post-Intervention Protocol: A post-test was carried out on both experimental and control groups eight weeks after the intervention. The post-test was set to the same standard as the pre-test, which means participants could be compared directly on their scores before and after the intervention.

Detailed Intervention Description (Experimental Group): Participants in the experimental group during the eight-week intervention received gamified vocabulary instruction as a supplement to their regular ESL instruction. This intervention substituted vocabulary instruction that was provided in the form of direct method in these courses. Participants received (N=50) three hours of instruction per week that focused on vocabulary through gamification.

For this intervention, a mix of the two techniques described above was used:

Vocabulary Quests: Each week learners were given a 'quest' based around a theme, for example, "Ordering Food at a Restaurant" or "Describing Travel Experiences," which learners had to actively use to achieve realistic goals.

Gamified Flashcards (using Memrise): Participants learned new vocabulary as well as reviewed it on Memrise, where they were given points for answers that were correct, streaks, and leaderboard positions.

Vocabulary- Based Games (using Kahoot!): Every week included a Kahoot! Quiz based on comprehension and application of the target vocabulary.

From straightforward explanations to filling in the blanks to even more complicated situational questions were asked.

Collaborative Vocabulary Building Using Padlet: Each student constructed the vocabulary lists on Padlet by including definitions, example sentences, and images for the target words. They earned points based on the quality of contributions, which were rated by peers and the teacher.

During the other intervention assessments, daily and weekly quizzes were taken through the gamified platforms and student contributions to the Padlet.

For the control group, vocabulary learning was conducted with the use of exercises from a textbook without any game-like elements using set drills, rote memorization, and writing exercises.

Qualitative Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a subsample of 20 participants from both the experimental and control groups. Interviews explored views and experiences of participants about the Vocabulary Building technique. Guidelines for such interviews were provided through an interview protocol with open-ended questions that allowed free response from the participants.

(1) Interview Protocol: The interview protocol consisted of questions like:

How did you find the communication based techniques employed in the experimental group?

Which aspects of these techniques did you find most useful or difficult?

How do you feel that these techniques affected your acquisition of vocabulary and effective communication?

(2) Details of the Interviews: These interviews were conducted individually in a quiet, private place to maintain privacy and avoid biased responses. Each interviewee was interviewed for approximately 30-45 minutes and audio-recorded upon request with informed consent, for transcription and analysis later on.

Focus Group Discussions

Besides interviews, focus group discussions were carried out to obtain collective information from participants concerning the experiences of the experimental group. Overall, two focus groups, each consisting of 8-10 members of the experimental group, were carried out.

(1) Focus Group Guideline: The discussions in the focus groups were semi-structured. This is due to the fact that there was a moderator present to stimulate discussions among participants. The leading issues for discussion included: Perceptions by the participants in regard to novel techniques; Things they found were different with their vocabulary building and communication; Recommendations for improving their strategies in vocabulary building.

(2) Focus Group Process: The interviews were carried out in a friendly environment to facilitate free talking among the members. Each interview lasted about 60 minutes and audio-recorded for transcription and analysis.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Data Analysis

The quantitative data collected from the pre- and post-tests were analyzed using statistical software (e.g., SPSS). The analysis involved the following steps:

(1) Descriptive Statistics: Descriptive statistics were calculated to summarize participants' scores on the pre- and post-tests. Means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions were reported to provide an overview of the data.

(2) Inferential Statistics: Inferential statistics, including paired sample t-tests, were conducted to compare the pre- and post-test scores within each group and independent sample t-tests to compare the experimental and control groups' post-test scores. The significance level was set at $p < 0.05$ to determine statistically significant differences in vocabulary acquisition and communication skills.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Thematic analysis identifies, analyzes, and reports patterns or themes in qualitative data reported from semi-structured interviews and focus groups. Thematic analysis has been referred to as "a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns of themes within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.79). This involved the following steps in analyses:

(1) The audiorecordings of interviews and focus groups were transcribed verbatim, or word for word, into written texts that were then used for analysis.

(2) Familiarization: First of all, reading the transcripts a number of times allowed the researchers to get some feeling of the data and perform some preliminary observations.

(3) Coding: Transcripts were inductively coded; that is, the codes emerged from the data rather than predefined ones. Segments of texts that conveyed a key message related to the participants' experiences concerning building techniques of vocabulary were assigned codes.

(4) Theme Development: Coded data was then organized into broader themes representative of participants' experiences and perceptions. Themes were then reworked and defined to accurately reflect the data.

(5) Discussion: The identified themes are discussed in light of quantitative findings as a way of giving comprehensive insight into innovative vocabulary-building techniques that influence vocabulary acquisition and improvement in communication skills.

The quantitative aspect of the research will involve measuring the effectiveness of various methods of vocabulary building for acquisition and communication by the students. Data are collected through pre- and post-tests for both the experimental and control group. The analysis was performed mainly to indicate whether the experimental group, who were subjected to innovative approaches for building vocabularies, showed marked improvement in learning vocabulary from the control group who followed the traditional approach. In relation to this, descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were done using SPSS software, version 26.

Data Preparation

First of all, cleaning and preparation procedures were performed to ensure that accuracy and reliability exist within the dataset. All missing data points were identified and treated by applying multiple imputation methods, as recommended in Rubin 1987, so any threat of bias was minimal.

Beyond these, the data were checked for outliers, normality, and homogeneity of variances through graphical displays such as a box plot and histogram, and statistical tests such as the Shapiro-Wilk's test and Levene's test. Such preparation has ensured that assumptions underlying statistical testing were met.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were paramount throughout the research process to ensure the protection of participants' rights and well-being. The following ethical guidelines were followed:

Prior to participation, all participants were provided with an informed consent form outlining the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, potential risks, and their rights as participants. Participants were required to sign the consent form to indicate their willingness to participate.

Confidentiality was maintained throughout the study by assigning unique identification numbers to participants and removing any personally identifiable information from the data. Data were stored securely and only accessible to the research team.

Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and participants had the right to withdraw at any time without any consequences. Participants were informed that their decision to participate or withdraw would not affect their academic standing or relationship with the institution.

The research protocol was submitted for review and approval was obtained by the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB), dated 03.07.2024 and numbered 07/14, to ensure compliance with ethical research standards. Approval was granted prior to the commencement of data collection.

Findings

Descriptive statistics create the first impression of the data; hence, they describe the central tendencies and dispersion of pre- and post-test results for both groups. The means, standard deviation, and range of scores on the pre-test and post-test in both experimental and control groups are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. *Descriptive Statistics for Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores*

Group Test		Mean	SD	Min	Max
Experimental Group	Pre-Test	62.3	12.4	45	85
Experimental Group	Post-Test	82.5	10.1	65	98
Control Group	Pre-Test	60.1	13.5	42	80
Control Group	Post-Test	70.4	12.0	50	89

From the descriptive statistics, it is evident that the experimental group outperformed the control group on the post-test. The increase in the mean scores for the experimental group, from 62.3 in the pre-test to 82.5 in the post-test, reflects significant improvement in vocabulary acquisition. The control group also showed improvement, but to a lesser degree, increasing from 60.1 to 70.4.

Paired sample t-tests were conducted within each group to determine whether the changes from pre-test to post-test scores were statistically significant. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. *Paired Sample t-Test Results for Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores*

Group i	Mean Difference	t	df	p-value
Experimental Group	20.2	15.37	49	<.001
Control Group	10.3	9.45	49	<.001

For both groups, the p-values are below 0.05, indicating that the differences between the pre-test and post-test scores were statistically significant. However, the experimental group showed a larger mean difference (20.2) compared to the control group (10.3), suggesting that the innovative techniques had a greater impact on vocabulary acquisition than traditional methods.

To further explore the differences between the two groups on the post-test, an independent sample t-test was conducted. This test compared the post-test scores of the experimental and control groups. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. *Independent Sample t-Test for Post-Test Scores*

Group	Mean	t	df	p-value
Experimental Group	82.5	5.25	98	<.001
Control Group	70.4			

The independent sample t-test revealed a statistically significant difference between the post-test scores of the experimental and control groups (t = 5.25, p < .001). This confirms that the students in the experimental group, who used innovative vocabulary-building techniques, showed significantly higher improvement in vocabulary acquisition compared to those in the control group, who followed traditional methods.

To measure the magnitude of the difference between the groups, Cohen's d was calculated. An effect size of 1.2 was found, indicating a large effect size (Cohen, 1988). This suggests that the innovative techniques had a substantial impact on students' vocabulary acquisition which in turn affected their oral communiaction skills positively.

Qualitative Data Analysis

The qualitative data analysis presented three major themes. These are: increased engagement and motivation, enhanced retention and application of vocabulary, and improved confidence in communication. These are discussed below.

Theme 1: Increased Engagement and Motivation

The experimental group had participants who consistently reported higher levels of engagement and motivation in learning vocabulary through innovative techniques. The interactive and collaborative nature of the activities was frequently cited as one of the major factors contributing to their positive experiences.

Sub-theme 1.1: Interactive Learning Environment

Participants also pointed out the effectiveness of interactive learning environments, such as games on vocabulary, discussions with peers, and group activities: "The vocabulary games were really fun, and I didn't feel like I was just memorizing words. It was more like a competition, and that made me want to learn more."

Another welcome aspect was the integration of digital tools and game-based learning, which the subjects also considered stimulating and conducive to acquiring English.

Sub-theme 1.2: More Motivated to Learn

Participants have stated to have felt more motivated to learn vocabulary through the new approaches. The competitiveness and collaboration in the activities encouraged them to continue participating and strive harder. One participant shared the opinion:

"I was motivated to study the new words because I wanted to do well in the games. It was a different experience than just sitting in a lecture."

A blend of interactive activities and collaboration among student peers, this instructional environment created an atmosphere that encouraged intrinsic motivation on the part of students to assume responsibility for their learning.

Theme 2: Enhanced Vocabulary Retention and Usage

The second overall theme to come out of the qualitative data focused on improved retention and utilization of the vocabulary. Experimental group participants consistently reported throughout that the new techniques allowed them to remember and use the vocabulary more effectively than in the past, both in and out of the classroom.

Sub-theme 2.1: Contextual Learning

Among the innovative techniques, the participants gave more significance to vocabulary learning in context. Through discussion, role-playing, and many other activities in which the new vocabulary was supposed to be applied, students could see how words functioned in context. According to one participant,

"When we had to use the words in discussions, I felt like I was really learning them-not just memorizing for a test. I could remember them better because I had actually used them."

Sub-theme 2.2: Collaborative Learning

Many respondents identified that collaboration with peers during these activities helped them to understand and remember new items of vocabulary. In discussing and using the vocabulary within groups, students would be able to consolidate their learning through social interactions. One participant stated:

"When we were working in groups, I could see how other people used the words, and that helped me understand them better. I felt more confident using them after we practiced together."

Theme 3: Increased Confidence in Communication

The final major theme to emerge from the qualitative data involved an improvement in participants' confidence to use vocabulary in real-life communication. Innovative techniques are not only effective in helping students acquire new vocabulary, but such words have also been given the confidence to be used within both academic and social contexts.

Sub-theme 3.1: Real-Life Application of Vocabulary

Participants reported that the novelty in techniques such as role-plays, debates, and discussions allowed them to apply new vocabulary in realistic communication situations. Such real-life application helped build their confidence in using the words appropriately. One participant explained:

"We also practiced using those words for situations that may be close to real life, such as debates or discussions. After the activities, I felt more confident in using those words because I knew how to use them in conversations."

Several also mentioned that their capability for expression became enhanced through the instruction on vocabulary. In building their existing stock of words, they could much better express themselves in a clear and concise manner. One participant even added that "The struggle to find the

right words to express an idea used to be my problem, but it seems now I have more vocabulary to work with. I feel I can relate to them more, especially in writing."

The innovative vocabulary-building techniques developed a great deal of confidence in communication, whereby even the most complex vocabulary was used both comfortably in speech and in written form.

Conclusion and Discussion

This study investigates the impact of innovative techniques for vocabulary building on improving communication skills among English learners. By connecting the results to broader theoretical frameworks, this discussion aims to provide a holistic understanding of how innovative vocabulary-building techniques can enhance language acquisition and communication skills.

These findings from this study show that innovative techniques in vocabulary building were quite effective in enhancing students' ability to learn and express themselves more appropriately in English. Accordingly, the experimental group performed better in the skill tests on vocabulary acquisition and in communication skills than the control group that employed the traditional method of instruction. Qualitative data also supported the said finding, as participants demonstrated heightened levels of engagement and motivation with confidence in employing new vocabulary in real situations.

1. Improvement in Vocabulary Acquisition: The post-test scores of the experimental group were significantly higher as compared to the control group, confirming the fact that interactional and innovative modes of learning, such as vocabulary games, peer discussion, and contextual learning are far more imposing for acquiring vocabulary as compared to traditional rote memorization techniques The results are in accordance with what Nation (2001) found.

2. Enhanced Communicative Competence: The experimental group subjects showed more confidence in deploying the new vocabulary both in academic and social contexts. It would, thus, seem that these techniques promote not only vocabulary retention but also the application skills of students in a communicative situation, as confirmed by Oxford (1990) and Schmitt (2000).

3. -More Engagement and Motivation: Qualitative data showed that these new techniques made learning more interactive and engaging for students. This is in relation to earlier researches (i.e. Dörnyei, 2001; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000) that indicated a relationship between interactive collaborative learning environments with a high level of student motivation and engagement.

Vocabulary acquisition is a complex process that involves much more than the simple memorization of words, such as understanding how words function in different contexts and their relation to other words in communicating information, according to Schmitt (2000). Thus, the results of this study fall in line with other studies that inventive, context-based methods are more effective than traditional ones. The significant increase in the experimental group in the vocabulary test scores indicated that interactive techniques such as word games and group discussion indeed allowed the students to learn about words in contexts.

Results confirm the active learning and constructivist theories, which maintain that there is greater learning when students are involved actively in the process of learning (Bruner, 1966; Vygotsky, 1978). The activities undertaken in this experimental group called for the use of new vocabulary in a more real-life manner, such as debates and role-plays. This experimental procedure in contextual learning is consistent with the depth-of-processing hypothesis advanced by Schmitt 2000, which

stipulates that conditions making learners process words more deeply will enable them to remember and subsequently use the items better.

These findings constitute further support for Folse's (2004) assertion that the best way to learn vocabulary involves a combination of form-focused instruction, or explicit teaching of word meanings, and meaning-focused instruction, or using words in meaningful contexts. The innovative techniques used with the experimental group combined both of these approaches, which apparently helped result in significant gains in vocabulary acquisition.

Perhaps one of the striking findings of this study is that innovative vocabulary-building techniques really engage the students more and have higher motivational intensity. This finding coheres with Dörnyei's (2001) motivational framework for language learning, in that an optimal learning environment should more likely reduce extrinsic motivation and ensure a stronger presence of intrinsic motivation. The subjects in the experimental group, therefore, played with vocabulary and held group discussions in which they became more actively involved in their own learning processes and collaborated with peers. This, in turn, enhanced motivation to learn and put into practice new vocabulary and thus improved test scores. It is no less widely acknowledged that motivation positively influences language learning. According to Guthrie and Wigfield (2000), motivated students are more likely to engage themselves in deep learning processes which, in turn, lead them to better retention and application of knowledge. From the qualitative data in this study, it emerged that the students in the experimental group felt more motivated to learn vocabulary because activities were engaging and enjoyable. This finding is coherent with the flow theory by Csikszentmihalyi (1990) that there is most motivation on the part of learners when they are fully engaged in a task that can be attained yet challenging. The innovative techniques applied in this study created such an environment, hence increasing the level of engagement and motivation amongst the participants.

Qualitative data showed that the students in the experimental group learned vocabulary more contextually. This finding supports the literature on contextualized learning, stating that there is better retention of vocabulary when students learn them in meaningful contexts (Nation, 2001). Similarly, the innovative techniques used during the experiment required students to make use of new vocabulary during discussions, debates, and role-plays, which helped them learn how the words functioned in different contexts. This supports the argument of Folse (2004) that vocabulary is most effectively learned when students encounter it in an authentic and communicative context.

Collaborative learning was another factor contributing much to the effectiveness of the innovative techniques. Students pointed to the helpful influence of peer collaboration in group activities on their understanding and retention of new vocabulary items. Again, this confirms the social constructivist theory by Vygotsky (1978) that stresses the role of social interaction in learning. Community activities of learning, such as group discussions and peer feedback, allow students to co-construct knowledge and reinforce their mastery of vocabulary. This is in line with the suggestion of research that cooperative learning environments enhance deeper cognitive processing and better retention of vocabulary according to Oxford (1990) and Schmitt (2000).

One of the key themes to emerge from the qualitative data was that students felt more confident using new vocabulary in their communication. This echoes earlier findings, where it was noted that students were developing increased confidence in their language use, along with chances for authentic practice (Thornbury, 2002). In this study, the novel approaches provided students with the opportunity to employ new vocabulary in authentic use situations through activities such as role-plays and discussion which further developed their communicative competence.

Improvement in participants' confidence is also consistent with the Communicative Approach to language teaching, which emphasizes the use of language in authentic communication. In this light, while carrying out activities that required realistic use of vocabulary, students not only picked up the meaning of words but also gained confidence in using them appropriately in communication. This finding confirms the claim that in foreign language teaching, it is not sufficient to impart knowledge only, instead, the development of communicative competence also has to be one of the top priorities as pointed out once again by Savignon (2002).

Synthesis of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

The integration of the quantitative and qualitative results provides a comprehensive understanding of the impact of the innovative vocabulary-building techniques on students' vocabulary acquisition and communication skills.

Therefore, integrating quantitative and qualitative results will give an overall effect of innovative techniques for building vocabulary on the students' vocabulary acquisition and their ability to communicate. It is also obvious that the quantitative and qualitative results have established the efficiency of the innovative techniques. Quantitative data represent very significant increase in vocabulary acquisition as revealed by excellent increase in post-test scores for the experimental group. Qualitative data presented the thick description of participants' experiences: more engagement, motivation, retention, confidence in communication. These findings combined therefore suggest that innovative techniques improve both vocabulary knowledge and attitudes toward language learning.

Whereas the quantitative results gave some indication of how the techniques impacted gains in vocabulary acquisition, the qualitative data illustrated some of the processes through which such improvements might occur. For instance, participants remarked that the activity was in itself interactive and collaborative in nature and thus served to keep them both involved and motivated-an aspect most probably contributing to the significant gains in the post-test scores. Qualitative data revealed deeper impacts toward contextual learning and application in real life, which may explain why the experimental group showed better retention and usage of vocabulary.

According to the data analysis, it would be appropriate to infer from the analyses of data that innovative methodologies in building vocabularies indeed gave rise to very significantly positive impacts on learning and communicating vocabularies. Quantitative data also indicated that the experimental group outperformed controlled counterparts through higher post-test scores by using innovative techniques. Qualitative findings supplemented these with rich and detailed accounts about participants' experiences in showing more interest, motivation, and confidence in using the new vocabulary. These findings put together go to make strong support for using innovative, interactive, and collaborative approaches to vocabulary instruction.

Implications for Teaching Practice

The findings of the present research have several far-reaching implications for teaching practice, particularly important consequences regarding vocabulary teaching and foreign language teaching as a whole.

Innovative Techniques for Vocabulary-Building should be incorporated into the Foreign Language teaching Curriculum. In light of these findings-the amazing development in the ability to learn vocabulary and to communicate that the experimental group achieved-the contemporary language teacher should incorporate modern, engaging methods into direct vocabulary instruction. Indeed, older methods focusing on rote memorization are not as effective in retaining and using

vocabulary over the long term. Instead, a more holistic approach with explicit teaching, including opportunities for students to encounter new vocabulary in meaningful contexts, should be integrated.

Other approaches to making the learning environment vibrant and participatory include vocabulary games, group discussions, and role-plays. Such techniques will not only make learning about vocabulary more fun and engaging but also foster deeper cognitive processing which eventually translates to better retention and application of the vocabulary being taught. It therefore addresses Nation's (2001) four strands in vocabulary learning, including a balance between form-focused instruction and meaning-focused use of vocabulary. In this respect, the responses of the participants in the experimental group indicated that more learning engagement and motivation were felt, which therefore suggests the establishment of learning environments that are challenging and pleasant at the same time. The design of such activities can, however, be performed by language teachers themselves, who should make it a point to spur intrinsic motivation among their students by providing them with an opportunity to take an active role in their learning process through the use of interactive and collaborative techniques, including group discussions, peer feedback, and vocabulary games.

Integration of digital tools and technology can also be considered for vocabulary instruction by teachers. This can enhance students' motivation and interest in learning since the inclusion of digital means may deliver the content in a friendlier manner. For instance, different online vocabulary games and apps allow collaboration among learners to be facilitated in an interactive learning environment. Students will therefore be encouraged to use vocabulary for practice in a non-boring manner.

Results of the present study confirm that vocabulary should be taught in context. Teachers should allow students to notice and use new items in an authentic, communicative situation. This might be done through role-plays, debates, discussions, and other activities which would involve students in using new items communicatively. Besides improving retention of vocabulary, contextual learning can also allow students to develop their communicative competence by showing how words function in varied contexts. This should also be reflected in the case of vocabulary instruction, where much emphasis has to be placed on collaborative learning. Group activities should afford students an opportunity to work together and provide feedback to each other in reinforcing vocabulary learning for deeper understanding. Social interaction enables students to co-construct knowledge and obtain a subtler understanding of how vocabulary is used in communication.

To conclude, in this paper, the crucial role has been highlighted that creative methods of vocabulary building play in the process of vocabulary acquisition and communicative skills development. These findings indicate that interactive, contextualized, and collaborative methods have significantly positive effects on students' vocabulary retention and confidence in using new words. It is clear that the inclusion of such methods in the curriculum, along with constant professional development for teachers, will be essential as teachers and policymakers strive to create effective language classes. We can only expect to create proficient communicators who are also lifelong learners by encouraging a dynamic, engaging learning environment that cultivates such an aim in an ever-increasingly interdependent world. The insights drawn from such research will add to the issues already covered, hence ensuring that vocabulary.

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Genişletilmiş Özet

Giriş

Etkili iletişim büyük ölçüde dilin doğru bir biçimde ifade edilmesine ve anlaşılmasına bağlıdır. Bu süreçte güçlü bir kelime dağarcığı, bireyin kişisel, akademik ve mesleki başarısını önemli ölçüde etkileyen temel bir unsur olarak öne çıkmaktadır. Ancak, kelime dağarcığının önemine rağmen birçok öğrenci özellikle ezbere dayalı geleneksel yöntemlerin uzun vadeli hafızayı ve uygulama becerilerini desteklemede yetersiz kalması nedeniyle kelime öğreniminde güçlük yaşamaktadır. Bu alandaki araştırmalar; bağlamsal ve deneyim temelli öğrenme, iş birliğine dayalı etkinlikler ve teknolojinin eğitime entegrasyonu gibi yenilikçi tekniklerin öğrenilen kelimelerin kalıcı hale gelmesini ve etkin kullanımını desteklemede umut vadettiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Öte yandan, bu yöntemlerin uygulanmasına yönelik direnç, genellikle yetersiz eğitim olanakları veya kaynak eksikliğinden kaynaklanmakta ve önemli bir engel oluşturmaktadır. Bu çalışma, çeşitli eğitim ortamlarına uyarlanabilir olan ve araştırma temelli stratejiler aracılığıyla öğrencilerin iletişim becerilerini geliştirmeyi amaçlayan etkili kelime dağarcığı geliştirme yöntemlerini ortaya koyarak söz konusu boşluğu gidermeyi hedeflemektedir.

Kelime dağarcığı, etkili iletişimin temelini oluşturmaktadır. Zira kelime bilgisi, düşünce ve fikirlerin ifade edilmesini mümkün kılan bir köprü işlevi görmekte; anlama süreçlerini ve akademik başarıyı doğrudan etkilemektedir (Graves, 2006; Nagy & Townsend, 2012). Bu bağlamda çalışmanın temel amacı, kelime dağarcığını geliştirmeye yönelik geleneksel ve yenilikçi yaklaşımları dikkate alarak bu alanda yapılan araştırmaları incelemektir. Çalışmada kelime dağarcığının iletişimdeki rolü, çeşitli öğretim teknikleri ve bu tekniklerin öğrencilerin kelime bilgisi ile iletişim becerilerine etkisi, ampirik araştırmalardan elde edilen bulgular eşliğinde ele alınmaktadır.

Yöntem

Bu araştırmada, İngilizce öğrenen bireylerin kelime dağarcığı edinimi ve iletişim becerileri üzerindeki yenilikçi kelime öğretim tekniklerinin etkisini incelemek amacıyla karma yöntemli bir araştırma deseni benimsenmiştir. Nicel aşamada, deney grubuna yenilikçi yöntemlerle öğretim uygulanırken, kontrol grubunda geleneksel tekniklerle öğretim sürdürülmüş; grupların performansları yarı deneysel bir tasarımla karşılaştırılmıştır. Katılımcıların kelime bilgisi ve iletişim yeterlikleri ön test ve son testlerle ölçülmüş; elde edilen veriler tanımlayıcı ve çıkarımsal istatistik yöntemleriyle analiz edilmiştir. Nitel veriler ise yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler ve odak grup tartışmaları yoluyla toplanarak, katılımcıların deneyimlerine ilişkin derinlemesine bilgiler sağlanmış ve nicel bulgular desteklenmiştir.

Araştırmanın örneklemini, bir ABD devlet üniversitesinde İngilizce hazırlık programına kayıtlı 100 öğrenci oluşturmaktadır. Katılımcılar uygun örnekleme yöntemiyle seçilmiş ve deney ile kontrol gruplarına eşit olarak dağıtılmıştır. Nitel veriler, tematik analiz yöntemiyle değerlendirilmiş; katılımcıların deneyimlerinden elde edilen ortak kalıplar ve temalar belirlenmiştir. Deney grubunda, iş birliğine dayalı etkinlikler ve teknoloji destekli uygulamalar gibi yenilikçi yöntemler kullanılmış; kontrol grubunda ise geleneksel ezberleme yöntemleri izlenmiştir. SPSS yazılımı aracılığıyla gerçekleştirilen istatistiksel analizler, yöntemlerin etkililiğini nicel düzeyde ortaya koyarken; nitel bulgular, katılımcıların öğrenme sürecine ilişkin algı ve deneyimlerine ışık tutmuştur.

Araştırma sürecinde bilgilendirilmiş onam alınmış, gizlilik esasları gözetilmiş ve katılım gönüllülük esasına dayandırılmıştır. Etik onay, ilgili üniversitenin Kurumsal Etik Kurulu tarafından sağlanmıştır. Bu kapsamlı tasarımıyla çalışma, yenilikçi kelime öğretim stratejilerinin öğretim

süreçlerine entegrasyonu konusunda uygulanabilir öneriler sunmayı ve kelime öğretimi alanındaki mevcut literatürde gözlenen boşlukları doldurmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Bulgular

Çalışma kapsamında, karma yöntemli tasarım aracılığıyla öğrencilerin kelime dağarcığı gelişimi ve iletişim becerileri üzerindeki yenilikçi öğretim tekniklerinin etkililiği değerlendirilmiştir. Nicel veriler, tanımlayıcı istatistikler ile eşleştirilmiş örneklem t-testi ve bağımsız örneklem t-testi kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Bulgular, deney grubunda yer alan öğrencilerin kelime dağarcığı gelişiminde anlamlı bir ilerleme kaydettiklerini ortaya koymuştur. Deney grubunun son test puanları, ortalama 20,2 puanlık bir artışla 62,3'ten 82,5'e yükselirken; kontrol grubunda bu artış 10,3 puanla 60,1'den 70,4'e ulaşmıştır. Bağımsız örneklem t-testi sonuçları, gruplar arasında istatistiksel açıdan anlamlı bir fark bulunduğunu göstermiştir (t = 5,25, p < .001). Ayrıca, Cohen'in d değeri 1,2 olarak hesaplanmış ve yenilikçi tekniklerin güçlü bir etkiye sahip olduğunu ortaya koymuştur.

Nitel bulgular, artan katılım ve motivasyon, gelişmiş kelime bilgisi kalıcılığı ve iletişim becerilerinde artan güven şeklinde üç ana tema etrafında toplanmıştır. Deney grubundaki öğrenciler, kelime oyunları ve etkileşimli etkinlikler sayesinde daha yüksek düzeyde motivasyon sergilemişlerdir. Rol yapma ve grup temelli etkinlikler aracılığıyla bağlamsal öğrenme, kelimelerin daha etkin şekilde hatırlanmasını ve kullanılmasını sağlamıştır. Akran etkileşimine dayalı iş birliği ortamı ise öğrenme sürecini derinleştirmiştir. Öğrenciler ayrıca, iletişimsel yeterliklerini geliştiren gerçek yaşam temelli etkinliklerde öğrendikleri kelimeleri kullanırken daha fazla özgüven kazandıklarını ifade etmişlerdir.

Nicel ve nitel bulgular birlikte değerlendirildiğinde, yenilikçi öğretim yaklaşımlarının hem kelime öğrenimini hem de dil öğrenimine yönelik tutumları olumlu yönde etkilediği görülmüştür. Nicel veriler, öğrenme çıktılarındaki gelişimi ortaya koyarken; nitel veriler, bu gelişimlerin ardında yatan öğrenme süreçlerini ve öğrencilerin yaşadığı deneyimleri detaylandırmıştır. Bulgular, Vygotsky'nin sosyal yapılandırmacı kuramı ile Folse'nin bağlamsallaştırılmış kelime öğrenimi yaklaşımı gibi kuramsal çerçevelerle örtüşmektedir. Bu doğrultuda, yenilikçi kelime öğretim yöntemlerinin kelime öğrenimi ve aktarımı üzerinde olumlu ve anlamlı etkiler yarattığı sonucuna ulaşmak mümkündür.

Sonuç ve Öneriler

Araştırmanın sonuçları, yenilikçi kelime öğretim tekniklerinin geleneksel yöntemlere kıyasla daha etkili olduğunu ve kelime dağarcığı bilgisinin kalıcılığı, uygulama becerisi ile iletişim yeterliklerinde önemli katkılar sunduğunu göstermektedir. Bu doğrultuda, kelime öğretimine etkileşimli ve ilgi çekici yöntemlerin (örneğin oyunlar, rol yapma etkinlikleri ve grup tartışmaları) dâhil edilmesi önerilmektedir. Öğretmenlerin, iş birliğine dayalı öğrenme ortamları oluşturarak akran etkileşimini teşvik etmeleri ve öğrencilerin bilişsel süreçlerini derinleştirmeleri önem arz etmektedir. Ayrıca dijital araçlar (örneğin çevrim içi oyunlar ve mobil uygulamalar) aracılığıyla sunulan öğrenme içerikleri, öğrencilerin katılımını ve motivasyonunu artırmada etkili bir araç olarak değerlendirilebilir.

Öğretim uygulamalarına ilişkin çıkarımlar, kelime dağarcığının kalıcılığını ve gerçek iletişimde kullanımını desteklemek amacıyla bağlamsal ve iş birliğine dayalı yaklaşımların önemine işaret etmektedir. Bununla birlikte, öğretmenlerin bu yöntemleri etkili bir şekilde uygulayabilmeleri için hizmet içi eğitim ve mesleki gelişim olanaklarının sağlanması gerektiği vurgulanmalıdır. Dinamik, etkileşimli ve öğrenci merkezli öğrenme ortamlarının teşvik edilmesi, öğrencilerin hem akademik hem de yaşam boyu öğrenme süreçlerinde gerekli olan dil yeterliklerini kazanmalarını destekleyecektir.