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Task-Induced Lexical Engagement and Vocabulary Gains: Evidence from Scrabble-Mediated Instruction in a Nepalese EFL University Context

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Abstract

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Vocabulary is one of the crucial components of language learning, though traditional teaching methods often fail to engage learners actively in learning English. Guided by the Lexical Approach and Game-Based Learning Theory, this study examined the role of Scrabble-mediated tasks in enhancing EFL learners' vocabulary knowledge. Using a pre-experimental research design, thirty students participated in a one-month Scrabble-based intervention. A set of pre-test and post-test, consisting of 50 marks across seven types of items, was administered to measure the effect of the Scrabble game in enhancing students' English Vocabulary. The results demonstrate that the Scrabble game brought significant change in EFL learners' Vocabulary improvement. The findings highlighted that game-based learning can be a valuable aid to foster students' English vocabulary, specifically in EFL contexts like Nepal. Moreover, the findings also contribute to both empirical knowledge and practical approaches in EFL instruction.

Keywords: EFL students, higher education, interactive learning, Scrabble games, vocabulary learning

Introduction

Vocabulary knowledge plays a central role in second and foreign language learning. It incorporates learners' ability to comprehend input and express meaning across communicative contexts. Research shows that learners with a reasonable command of grammar often struggle to communicate effectively when their lexical resources are limited (Meara, 2008; Nation, 2013). Regarding the importance of vocabulary, Richards (2000) argues that vocabulary provides much of the foundation for how well learners listen, speak, read, and write. Despite its recognized importance, vocabulary development remains a persistent challenge for learners in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, particularly at higher levels of education. One of the major concerns in language pedagogy is that vocabulary instruction has been given less systematic attention than grammar and skills-based teaching. Vocabulary teaching has often been sidelined, and classroom practices have been heavily dependent on rote memorization and decontextualized word lists (Richards & Renandya, 2002). Such approaches may help learners to recognize words, but they rarely foster deeper lexical processing or active use. Therefore, a large number of EFL learners still experience difficulties accessing and using vocabulary in meaningful communication, even after years of formal instruction.

Such challenges are particularly evident in EFL contexts with limited exposure to English outside the classroom, such as Nepal. Many of the students know the basic grammatical rules, but they

do not have enough vocabulary to express their ideas confidently in the academic and communicative contexts of the university. Adhikari and Shrestha (2024) stated that one of the challenges in developing reading habits is the students' limited vocabulary knowledge. Moreover, studies done in Nepal reveal that traditional teaching methods do not actively engage learners in vocabulary learning, resulting in a lack of motivation and retention (Khatiwoda, 2013; Dhamala, 2016; Thapa, 2018). This illustrates how important it is to employ instructional methods that promote interaction with vocabulary and permit the acquisition of vocabulary beyond the surface level. Interest in the use of interactive and game-based methodologies for teaching vocabulary in English as a Foreign Language has been greatly increased. Research in different education contexts shows that the use of language games favors increased motivation, engagement, and vocabulary attainment as learners get numerous opportunities to hear and use the words (Fatimah & Masduqi, 2021; Ling & Abdul Aziz, 2022; Okyar, 2023). Game-based learning encourages learners to interact with words in ways that involve interaction, problem-solving, and collaboration, which are known to support stronger retention and use, rather than treating vocabulary as separate items to memorize.

Among various word-based games, Scrabble plays a potential role in developing learners' vocabulary. It requires learners to actively retrieve words, consider spelling patterns, and form meaningful lexical combinations. Unlike many digital vocabulary tools that focus mainly on recognition, Scrabble prompts learners to productively engage with the lexicon, that is, to produce words from limited resources under the constraints of a context. Research suggests that this kind of active engagement can reinforce the link between form and meaning, and improve learners' capacity to recall and employ vocabulary (Hameed et al., 2020; Bouzaiane & Youzbashi, 2024). However, most of the existing research on Scrabble and vocabulary learning has been concerned with school-level learners or short-term effects, with little attention paid to university-level EFL contexts. Furthermore, even though language games have been shown to be effective overall in the learning of vocabulary in previous research in Nepal, such studies have been carried out mainly in primary and secondary education and have rarely focused on particular word games in higher education settings (Thapa, 2018; Dhamala, 2016). Empirical evidence of the effect of Scrabble-mediated tasks on vocabulary development of adult EFL learners at the university level is limited, especially in community colleges where resources and exposure to English are often limited. This gap is contextual and theoretical, as few studies have explored how word-game-mediated tasks lead to lexical engagement and depth of processing in EFL vocabulary learning.

This study is based on the Lexical Approach (Lewis, 1993), constructivist learning theory (Vygotsky, 1978), and game-based learning principles (Prensky, 2001). Those principles affirm that language learning happens in the best way when students actively deal with lexical units, create meaning in their interactions with others, and practice them continuously. The use of Scrabble is meant to enhance the process of lexical engagement among students, which in turn may lead to language learning and improved vocabulary use. Thus, based on the above-mentioned, this research examined whether or not the instructional approach based on Scrabble features improves English vocabulary proficiency of undergraduates at a community college in Nepal. More specifically, the investigation revealed whether working on Scrabble-embedded activities has a positive impact on vocabulary learning outcomes.

Review of Literature

In light of how important vocabulary is for learning a language, many researchers have examined various methods and techniques that facilitate vocabulary learning. The succeeding sections provide a review of literature on vocabulary teaching methods and their role in the learners' language proficiency in general.

Vocabulary and Language Proficiency in EFL Contexts

It is well-known that vocabulary knowledge is among the most important elements of language proficiency. Studies indicate that learners' ability to use and understand the language is affected by the amount of vocabulary they know (Nation, 2013; Schmitt, 2000). Wilkins (1972) stated that grammar gives the structure to the language while vocabulary provides its content. Supporting this view, Richards (2000) emphasizes that vocabulary forms the basis of learners' listening, speaking,

reading, and writing abilities. Vocabulary learning is an integral part of reading, which can be enhanced through students' engagement in various vocabulary learning activities (Adhikari & Shrestha, 2024). Concerning the development of vocabulary, Sigdel (2023) emphasized in their research that the use of realia for teaching English vocabulary enhances learning and leads to a reading culture. Similarly, Tiwari (2023) stated that guessing word meanings from context and seeking clarification from teachers or peers are useful strategies for developing students' vocabulary acquisition. In the same context, Paudel (2025) conceded that the use of multimodal glosses led to significant improvements in students' English vocabulary and its use. These studies demonstrate that learner-centered and multimodal instructional strategies are more effective than traditional approaches in enhancing English vocabulary acquisition and use. These accounts reveal that if the learners have a good repertoire of vocabulary, they do not hesitate to read any text.

Despite its central role, vocabulary learning remains challenging for many EFL learners, even at advanced stages of instruction. It is explained by Meara (2008) explains that the process of vocabulary acquisition is usually less systematic and slower compared to acquiring grammar rules. One reason for this is that vocabulary learning is not just a matter of remembering the meanings of words, but goes beyond this. Vocabulary learning involves processes of understanding several aspects of a word, its form, meaning, usage, etc. (Nation, 2013). If the learners do not have the opportunity to practice vocabulary on their own and turn passive vocabulary into productive vocabulary, their language learning will always remain incomplete.

Dimensions and Aspects of Vocabulary Knowledge

The knowledge of vocabulary stands on multiple foundations and comprises both receptive and productive parts. The receptive vocabulary includes the words that are recognized and interpreted by the students. Productive vocabularies are the words that can be utilized by the learners in their conversations and written assignments (Nation, 2013). Harmer (2008) mentions that an effective teaching program should support the movement from the recognition of the words toward their utilization rather than just contrasting active and passive vocabulary. The process of activating vocabulary use in the EFL context is more arduous since the students are not greatly exposed to the authentic use of language beyond the classroom. Apart from productive and receptive aspects, vocabulary knowledge consists of various linguistic components, for example, the meaning of a word, its pronunciation, its grammatical function, collocations, register, and word formation (Thornbury, 2002; Nation, 2013). The importance of morphological awareness is great and pivotal for the expansion of vocabulary as well as reading comprehension of EFL students (Mohammed, 2021; Yang, 2025). The above-mentioned facts support the idea that vocabulary teaching should aim to provoke deeper lexical processing rather than only memorization of the words.

Challenges in Teaching Vocabulary in EFL Classrooms

Although important, vocabulary has traditionally been neglected in language teaching. Richards and Renandya (2002) claim that vocabulary teaching tends to be overshadowed by grammar methods; therefore, little classroom time is taken for explicit vocabulary instruction. Word lists, translation, and isolated exercises are usually employed, which are helpful for immediate memory but are not effective for long-term retention and active use (Laufer & Goldstein, 2004). The problems mentioned above are particularly observable in the context of EFL in countries including Nepal, where learners do not have exposure to English outside the classroom. Research shows that many learners fail to acquire vocabulary sufficiently due to the lack of opportunities, stimulating learning materials, and teaching that is based on the teacher's role (Khataiwoda, 2013; Dhamala, 2016; Thapa, 2018). Thus, learners know very little vocabulary and feel uncertain about their communicative competence in English, especially when they reach the university level.

Game-Based Learning and Vocabulary Development

Researchers are investigating game-based learning to address many of the problems with traditional vocabulary instruction. Game-based learning is built upon the idea of focusing on meaningful experiences that involve engagement, interaction, and practice (Prensky, 2001; Gee, 2007). The research done in the area of English as a second/additional language shows that games can help to increase learners' motivation, participation, and vocabulary acquisition (Fatimah & Masduqi, 2021;

Ling & Abdul Aziz, 2022; Okyar, 2023). Games give learners a chance to use vocabulary through problem-solving, working with peers, and competing. Such tasks lead to more cognitive processing, which contributes to better vocabulary retention and transfer (Schmitt, 2000). Also, recent findings suggest that both physical and online word games can create a friendly learning environment conducive to vocabulary acquisition (Bouzaiane & Youzbashi, 2024). However, the effectiveness of game-based approaches may vary depending on task types, levels of students, and the amount of vocabulary involved.

Scrabble as a Word-Game-Mediated Vocabulary Tool

Scrabble has gained much popularity among word games because of its possible positive impact on vocabulary acquisition. Scrabble requires that players come up with words using a set of letter tiles, which prompts them to actively retrieve words, become aware of spelling, and use their lexical knowledge creatively. Studies show that vocabulary tasks of this kind assist in using vocabulary effectively and facilitate establishing firm connections between forms and meanings (Hameed et al., 2020; Hajar, 2019). Thus, through frequent engagement with vocabulary tasks that entail word production, Scrabble serves to reinforce vocabulary learning in a fun way. Multiple studies conducted in various EFL contexts demonstrate successful results of employing Scrabble in vocabulary learning. For instance, according to the findings of Hameed et al. (2020), even primary EFL learners who played Scrabble in their learning process showed a significant improvement in vocabulary development compared to those who did not. Similarly, positive results have been revealed at the secondary school level, where Scrabble inspired learners to use new words more actively (Kharisma, 2017; Sedewo, 2016). Research results suggest that Scrabble is a good teaching tool used to improve vocabulary proficiency. However, research regarding the effectiveness of the Scrabble game has mainly focused on children in schools and short-term interventions. Empirical research regarding the effectiveness of the Scrabble game among university-level students, especially for EFL learners who require academic and communicative language skills, is not available. Furthermore, most of the previous studies do not demonstrate how Scrabble activities can facilitate lexical engagement in depth, for instance, through synonymy, antonymy, contextualized use, and associative learning.

Although the previous research provides substantial evidence for the effectiveness of game-based vocabulary instruction, there are several limitations in the existing studies. First, the majority of the studies were conducted with school-aged populations, whereas the EFL learners at the tertiary level require more extensive and in-depth vocabulary instruction. Second, most of the studies do not separate various lexical dimensions and provide evidence for the general enhancement of vocabulary knowledge. Third, there is a lack of empirical studies conducted in the EFL context, such as Nepal, where there are limitations in terms of resources and exposure to the target language. Therefore, the present study aims to fill these gaps by investigating the effectiveness of Scrabble-based instruction on the enhancement of English vocabulary among bachelor-level EFL students. By examining the changes in the learners' vocabulary knowledge concerning different item types, the current study attempts to contribute to the existing body of literature with practical implications for vocabulary instruction in the EFL context.

Theoretical Framework

The present study was guided by three theoretical frameworks, including the Lexical Approach, Sociocultural Theory, and Game-Based Learning. These theoretical perspectives provide a comprehensive understanding of how Scrabble activities can facilitate lexical acquisition among the participants.

The Lexical Approach

The lexical approach was introduced by Lewis (1993), which, suggests that the input-output hypothesis is essential for language acquisition, meaning that learners need to store and retrieve lexical items and lexical patterns for language production. In other words, learners need to engage in extensive reading and lexical encounters to develop lexical proficiency. According to Nation (2013), vocabulary knowledge comprises lexical features (form and meaning) and use (word association, collocation, and word derivation). Therefore, the Lexical Approach views word knowledge as multifaceted and dynamic and require input, practice, and extensive exposure for successful acquisition. The Scrabble-

based activities align with the Lexical Approach because they require the participants to engage in lexical storage and retrieval, word association, and word derivation practices. For instance, the game requires the learners to memorize and recall the target words and use them in the game following the rules of the game. Therefore, the present study utilized the Lexical Approach to examine how Scrabble activities can facilitate the enhancement of word storage, recall, word association, and derivation among the participants.

Sociocultural Theory

Sociocultural Theory views learning as a social process that happens when learners interact with more knowledgeable others or engage in collaborative activities. Vygotsky (1978) concedes that learning occurs when learners operate within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which is achieved through reciprocal communication and interactions with others. Furthermore, language acquisition happens when learners engage in conversations and negotiate meaning with more proficient language speakers. The Scrabble-based activities provide an opportunity for the participants to collaborate and negotiate meaning while playing the game. In the process, the participants interact with each other to negotiate meanings and interpretations of words, which facilitates lexical acquisition. Therefore, the present study adopted the Sociocultural Theory to investigate how collaborative word game activities can facilitate the lexical acquisition of the participants.

Game-Based Learning

The concept of Game-Based Learning refers to the idea of using games as an effective tool for learning. Game-based activities are characterized by engagement, motivation, and experiential learning. According to Gee (2007) and Prensky (2001), Game-Based Learning facilitates lexical acquisition by making the process of learning fun and engaging while offering multiple opportunities for practice and feedback. Additionally, game activities require the learners to operate within a set of rules and offer rewards for meeting the set objectives, which increases the learners' motivation to engage in the activities. Scrabble activities provide a fun and engaging platform for lexical practice and offer feedback on the learners' performance. The participants operate within the set rules of the game and receive rewards for meeting the objectives of the game. Therefore, the current study also relied on the Game-Based learning concept to examine how the game can facilitate lexical acquisition among the participants. Since the present study aims to examine how the Scrabble word game can facilitate the enhancement of word knowledge among EFL learners in the universities of Nepal, it adopted three integrative theories: the Lexical Approach, Sociocultural Theory, and Game-Based Learning.

Methodology

This section presents the research design, participants involved in the study, tools for data collection, data processing and analysis process.

Research Design

The study adopted a pre-experimental one-group pretest-posttest design to examine the effect of the Scrabble word game on the participants' lexical growth. This design was mainly selected because of its ability to enable the researchers to examine the variance in scores or performance of a single group of participants at different times, especially when the use of a control group is not feasible (Dimitrov & Rumrill, 2003; Knapp, 2016). In this study, there is no control group because the interest was on observing a class of students with the intervention.

Research Context and Participants

The study was conducted at a community college in Nepal. There were thirty (30) participants who were selected from a larger population of first-year bachelor students. The students were studying English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and hence had been exposed to the formal acquisition of the language throughout their school and college lives. They, however, lacked extensive exposure to the target language beyond formal classes. Convenience sampling was therefore used in this study since I taught them English as the instructor and hence had access to them as an intact group. The participants were informed of the research's aims and objectives. They were also assured of the confidentiality of the responses they provided as well as the fact that their performance would not be adversely affected

by their involvement in the study. Informed consent was sought and obtained from the participants before they were involved in the research process.

Instructional Materials

The Scrabble word game was used as the main instructional material. Physical Scrabble boards and instructions were used. The instructions were modified based on classroom needs to guide participants while playing the game. The game created opportunities for the participants to learn words, focus on the spelling of the target vocabulary, as well as think about the relations among the target words. Teacher-created vocabulary lists were also used. This involved developing lists of words from the course book used in the class. The lists were used throughout the study to supplement the Scrabble word game.

Research Instrument

A vocabulary achievement test was developed and administered as a pretest and a posttest. The test contained items that required multiple aspects of the participants' vocabulary knowledge such as word meaning, synonyms, antonyms, and use of the words in context, among other related aspects. Each set of items was rearranged to provide the participants with a different test format. Content validity of the test was established by the thorough evaluation of two university professors with long-term experience in teaching EFL. Moreover, a pilot study was also conducted among participants with similar characteristics to the target group to establish the reliability and relevance of the instrument. The suggestions of the participants who took part in the pilot study were considered, and adjustments were made before finalizing the test.

Instructional Procedure

The intervention lasted a total of five weeks and was done during regular instructional time. A pretest was initially administered to the participants to find out their baseline performance. After administering the pretest, the participants were engaged in the experimental intervention. Instruction took place by organizing the class into small groups. Each group played Scrabble games using the boards and tiles provided. The participants were also reminded of the instructional objectives of the games, which involved paying attention to vocabulary words and their meanings. The instructor also reminded the participants not to use any random words but only those they understood or those whose meanings they could ask the instructor or classmates. Scrabble sessions involved discussion of the words with peers as well as consulting dictionaries to verify word meanings. Each session created room for reflection, where the participants explained the meaning of the target words as well as discussed any difficulties they faced with individual words. The final stage involved administering the posttest forty (40) days after the start of the intervention to determine the effect of the intervention.

Data Analysis

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data collected. The tests included calculating the means and standard deviations of the performance of the participants on the pretest and posttest. A paired-samples t-test was also conducted to compare the performance on the pretest and the posttest. Analysis was done using relevant statistical software, and the level of significance was set at $p < .05$.

Results

This section reports the statistical findings from the pretest and posttest administered to thirty university-level EFL students. The results are presented in three parts: (a) descriptive statistics of total vocabulary scores, (b) item-wise comparison across vocabulary task types, and (c) paired-samples t-test results for overall vocabulary performance.

Descriptive Statistics of Pre-test and Post-test Scores

In Table 1 below, the descriptive statistics for the total number of correct responses in the pretest and posttest are presented. The mean score increased from 28.87 (SD = 7.74) in the pretest to 33.17 (SD = 9.74) in the posttest, resulting in a mean gain of 4.30 points. The lowest number of correct responses increased from 13 to 14. Similarly, the highest number of correct responses increased from 40 to 49. The 95% confidence interval for the mean difference was between 1.99 and 6.61.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics for Pre-test and Post-test Total Scores (N = 30)

Measure	Pre-test	Post-test	Gain
Mean	28.87	33.17	4.30
Standard Deviation	7.74	9.74	—
Minimum	13	14	—
Maximum	40	49	—
95% CI for Mean	[25.98, 31.76]	[29.54, 36.80]	[1.99, 6.61]

Note. Total possible score = 50. Gain = Post-test – Pre-test (paired).

Item-wise Comparison of Vocabulary Performance

Table 2 exhibits item-wise descriptive statistics as well as paired-samples t-test results for different vocabulary task types. The total vocabulary score significantly increased from pretest to posttest, $t(29) = 3.77$, $p < .001$, with a moderate effect size (Cohen's $d = .56$). With statistically significant improvements for all item types, $p < .05$, except selection items on which students' performance slightly decreased, multiple choice, matching, true/false, opposite, same meaning, and use items demonstrated gains from pretest to posttest. The most substantial improvement was observed for matching items, M gain=1.60, followed by opposite meaning items, M gain = 1.30, and similar meaning items, M gain=1.27. No statistically significant change was found for selecting items, which showed a small decrease in mean score.

Table 2
Item-wise Descriptive Statistics and Paired-Samples t-test Results (N = 30)

Item Type	Max	Pre-Mean (SD)	Post Mean (SD)	Mean Gain	$t(29)$	p	Cohen's d
Selecting Item	6	5.13 (1.14)	5.00 (1.17)	-0.13	-0.79	.436	—
Multiple Choice	6	2.70 (0.95)	3.50 (1.38)	+0.80	3.75	<.001	0.68
Matching Item	6	3.10 (1.42)	4.70 (1.16)	+1.60	6.18	<.001	1.13
True/False Item	8	5.47 (1.57)	6.33 (1.24)	+0.86	3.24	.003	0.59
Opposite Meaning	8	3.20 (1.54)	4.50 (2.10)	+1.30	4.24	<.001	0.77
Similar Meaning	8	3.40 (1.85)	4.67 (2.02)	+1.27	4.03	<.001	0.73
Contextual Use	8	5.57 (1.25)	6.43 (1.22)	+0.86	3.91	<.001	0.71
Total	50	28.87 (7.74)	33.17 (9.74)	+4.30	3.77	<.001	0.56

Note. Cohen's d : 0.2 = small, 0.5 = medium, 0.8 = large.

Paired-Samples t-test for Total Vocabulary Scores

Table 3 presents the results of a paired-samples t-test for the total vocabulary scores. There was a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the pretest and posttest, $t(29) = 3.77$, $p < .001$ (two-tailed), $SD = 6.25$. The effect size was (Cohen's $d = 0.56$), which means that the change was moderately sized.

Table 3
Paired-Samples t-test for Total Vocabulary Scores (N = 30)

Test	Mean Difference	SD of Differences	t	df	p	Cohen's d
Post – Pre (Total)	4.30	6.25	3.77	29	<.001	0.56

Discussion

The present study aimed to investigate the effect of the Scrabble-based activity on the students' English vocabulary. The results of the study revealed that the total score of the students' vocabulary improved after the intervention. The mean of the pre-test and post-test was 4.30 and 8.60, respectively. The effect size of the study was found to be moderate (Cohen's $d = 0.56$). The range of the students' total score was slightly higher in the post-test than the pre-test.

The item analysis of the pre-test and post-test revealed that the students' performance on the Matching, Similar Meaning, and Opposite Meaning items improved significantly after the intervention. The reason behind this result could be that the Scrabble-based activity required the students to make

connections between the words. A similar result was found in the Multiple Choice, True/False, and Contextual Use items. The Selecting Item category did not show improvement in the students' performance. The Selecting Item category was intended to measure the students' passive vocabulary. The Scrabble-based activity did not help the students improve their passive vocabulary.

The findings of the study could be explained by the theories of language learning and teaching. The study's results were consistent with Krashen's (1985) Input Hypothesis. The Scrabble-based activity provided the students with rich input, which led to an increase in their vocabulary. The findings of the study were also consistent with the Lexical Approach (Lewis, 1993). The Scrabble-based activity helped the students to develop their lexical competencies. The Constructivist theory (Piaget, 1972; Vygotsky, 1978) also explained the findings of the study. The students interacted with each other and developed their language skills while playing the game. The Game-Based Learning theory (Prensky, 2001; Gee, 2007) also explained the study's results. The Scrabble-based activity motivated the students to learn vocabulary. The competitive nature of the game created a positive learning environment for the students.

The present study's findings contributed to the existing body of knowledge on the effect of the Scrabble-based activity on the EFL students' vocabulary. The majority of the previous studies conducted in Nepal focused on the effect of the Scrabble-based activity on the vocabulary of the primary and secondary students (Khatiwoda, 2013; Dhamala, 2016; Thapa, 2018). The present study was conducted to explore whether the Scrabble-based activity could also be helpful for university-level students in improving their vocabulary. The findings of the study revealed that the Scrabble-based activity was effective in improving the students' vocabulary from the basic to advanced level. The Scrabble-based activity could be used as an effective teaching-learning strategy to help the students to learn vocabulary. The Scrabble-based activity could be used as a complementary method along with the traditional methods to make the process of vocabulary learning interesting and engaging for the students.

Conclusion and Implications

The present study investigated the effect of the Scrabble-based activity on the students' English vocabulary. The study was conducted among the first-year Bachelor students of a community college in Nepal. The study adopted the pre-test/post-test design. The participants of the study were thirty students who were selected through the convenience sampling technique. The participants took part in the pre-test and post-test. The post-test was conducted after the one-month intervention. The intervention involved conducting the Scrabble-based activity. The test items of the pre-test and post-test were developed based on the categories of Selecting Item and Using Item. The items of the test were developed to measure the students' receptive and productive vocabulary.

The findings of the study revealed that the Scrabble-based activity had a positive effect on the students' vocabulary. The students' total score in the post-test was significantly higher than their total score in the pre-test. The item analysis of the test results showed that the students' performance on the Matching, Similar Meaning, and Opposite Meaning items improved significantly after the intervention. The findings also revealed that the students' performance on the Multiple Choice, True/False, and Contextual Use items improved after the intervention. The only category that did not show any improvement in the students' performance was the Selecting Item category.

The findings of the study had theoretical and practical implications. The findings of the study were consistent with the theoretical underpinning of language learning and teaching. The study's findings were consistent with Krashen's (1985) Input Hypothesis, which states that language acquisition occurs when learners are exposed to input that is comprehensible to them. The Scrabble-based activity provided the students with comprehensible input, which led to an increase in their vocabulary. The findings of the study were also consistent with the Lexical Approach (Lewis, 1993). The Scrabble-based activity helped the students to develop their lexical competencies. The Constructivist theory (Piaget, 1972; Vygotsky, 1978) also explained the findings of the study. The students interacted with each other and developed their language skills while playing the game. The Game-Based Learning theory (Prensky, 2001; Gee, 2007) also explained the study's findings. The

Scrabble-based activity motivated the students to learn vocabulary. The competitive nature of the game created a positive learning environment for the students.

The present study had several limitations that should be considered while generalizing the study's findings. The study was conducted among a small sample size. The study was conducted in one educational setting. The intervention in the study was short-term. The study did not consider the students' motivation and learning strategies. Future research could be conducted with a larger sample size. The future study could be conducted in different educational settings. The future study could be long-term to explore the students' retention of the newly acquired vocabulary. The future study could consider the students' motivation and learning strategies. The findings of the study provided practical implications for the EFL students and teachers. The Scrabble-based activity could be used as a complementary method along with traditional methods to make the process of vocabulary learning interesting and engaging for the students. The Scrabble-based activity helped the students to develop their lexical competencies from the basic to advanced level. The Scrabble-based activity could be used for university-level students to motivate them to learn vocabulary. The findings of the study could be used by policymakers and educational administrators to develop the curriculum and the pedagogy of the EFL classes in higher education institutions.

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