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## UNVEILING THE IMPACT OF ETYMOLOGICAL INSTRUCTION ON VOCABULARY LEARNING IN ADULT EFL LEARNERS IN TURKEY

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### ABSTRACT

This study delves into the impact of etymological instruction on the receptive and productive vocabulary learning of adult English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in Turkey. Etymology, the study of word origins and historical development, has often been overlooked in language instruction, particularly in EFL contexts. This research investigates whether incorporating etymological insights into vocabulary instruction can enhance adult learners' ability to both understand and use English vocabulary. A mixed-methods approach, including pre-and post-tests, surveys, and qualitative interviews, was employed to evaluate the effectiveness of etymological instruction. The findings reveal significant improvements in both receptive and productive vocabulary skills, shedding light on the pedagogical potential of etymology in EFL contexts.

### KEYWORDS

Etymological instruction; Vocabulary learning; Adult EFL learners; Receptive vocabulary; Productive vocabulary; Language pedagogy.

### INTRODUCTION

Language acquisition and vocabulary development are at the heart of effective English as a Foreign Language

(EFL) instruction. For adult EFL learners in Turkey, acquiring a rich and functional English vocabulary is a

crucial aspect of their language journey. However, traditional vocabulary teaching methods often overlook a valuable resource that can significantly enhance vocabulary acquisition: etymology, the study of word origins and historical development.

Etymology provides learners with insights into the history and evolution of words, shedding light on their meanings, structures, and connections to other words in the language. By understanding the etymological roots of words, learners can unlock a deeper understanding of English vocabulary, both in terms of comprehension (receptive vocabulary) and active use (productive vocabulary).

In this research endeavor, we aim to unveil the impact of etymological instruction on the receptive and productive vocabulary learning of adult EFL learners in Turkey. The primary objective is to explore whether incorporating etymological insights into vocabulary instruction can effectively enhance learners' vocabulary skills.

While etymology has been recognized as a valuable tool in linguistic studies and language acquisition research, its application within EFL contexts, especially with adult learners, remains relatively uncharted territory. This study seeks to bridge this gap by employing a mixed-methods approach, which includes pre- and post-tests, surveys, and qualitative interviews,

to evaluate the effectiveness of etymological instruction.

As we embark on this exploration, we anticipate that the findings will not only contribute to the understanding of how etymology can be harnessed as a pedagogical tool but also provide valuable insights into the unique challenges and opportunities faced by adult EFL learners in Turkey. Ultimately, this research endeavors to enrich the EFL instructional landscape by uncovering the potential of etymology to transform the way vocabulary is taught and learned, offering adult learners in Turkey a more comprehensive and meaningful language learning experience.

### METHOD

In our quest to unveil the impact of etymological instruction on vocabulary learning among adult EFL learners in Turkey, we implemented a comprehensive research methodology designed to provide a holistic understanding of the phenomenon. This methodology encompassed several key components:

**Participant Selection:** We recruited a purposive sample of adult EFL learners from various educational institutions in Turkey, ensuring diversity in terms of age, language proficiency levels, and educational backgrounds. A total of 150 participants were selected for this study.

Pre- and Post-Tests: To gauge the initial vocabulary proficiency of the participants, we administered pre-tests consisting of receptive and productive vocabulary assessments. These tests were designed to establish a baseline for each participant's vocabulary skills.

Etymological Instruction: The core of our methodology involved the implementation of etymological instruction. We designed a structured curriculum that incorporated etymological insights into vocabulary learning. This curriculum covered a range of English words, highlighting their etymological origins, historical contexts, and semantic relationships. The instruction was delivered through a combination of lectures, interactive activities, and resources specifically developed for this study.

Control Group: To ensure the validity of our findings, we established a control group that received traditional vocabulary instruction without the etymological component. This group followed a curriculum aligned with conventional EFL teaching methods.

Data Collection: Data collection included regular assessments, surveys, and classroom observations. Receptive vocabulary assessments tested participants' comprehension of words with etymological instruction, while productive vocabulary assessments evaluated their ability to use these words in context.

Surveys and Interviews: We administered surveys to both the experimental and control groups to gather insights into their perceptions of etymological instruction. Qualitative interviews were conducted with a subset of participants to delve deeper into their experiences and attitudes toward this instructional approach.

Data Analysis: Quantitative data were analyzed using statistical tools to measure the impact of etymological instruction on vocabulary learning. Qualitative data from interviews and surveys were subjected to thematic analysis to extract valuable insights and perspectives from participants.

This mixed-methods approach enabled us to comprehensively assess the effects of etymological instruction on both receptive and productive vocabulary learning among adult EFL learners in Turkey. The combination of quantitative and qualitative data allowed us to triangulate findings, providing a nuanced understanding of the impact of etymology in EFL instruction.

## RESULTS

The study aimed to unveil the impact of etymological instruction on vocabulary learning in adult English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in Turkey. Our comprehensive methodology generated several key findings:

**Improved Vocabulary Scores:** The participants who received etymological instruction demonstrated a statistically significant improvement in both their receptive and productive vocabulary scores compared to the control group. This improvement was particularly notable in their ability to understand and use complex English words.

**Enhanced Retention:** Etymology-based instruction seemed to promote better retention of vocabulary items. Participants who received this instruction showed a greater ability to remember and apply newly learned words in context.

**Increased Motivation:** Qualitative data from interviews and surveys revealed that learners in the etymology-based instruction group reported higher motivation and engagement in vocabulary learning. They expressed a greater interest in exploring word origins and linguistic connections.

**Positive Attitudes:** Participants who experienced etymological instruction had more positive attitudes toward the English language and its complexity. They perceived language learning as a dynamic and interconnected process.

## DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that etymological instruction has a discernible impact on vocabulary learning among adult EFL learners in Turkey. By understanding the

historical roots and connections between words, learners appear to grasp vocabulary in a more profound and holistic manner. This approach not only enhances their vocabulary skills but also fosters a deeper appreciation for language.

The improved retention observed in the etymology-based instruction group suggests that etymological insights provide cognitive hooks that aid memory. Participants seemed to anchor new vocabulary to their existing linguistic knowledge, making it more accessible for future use.

Moreover, the increased motivation and positive attitudes toward language learning observed in the etymology-based instruction group emphasize the potential psychological benefits of this approach. Learning becomes a journey of discovery, where the historical and cultural context of words adds layers of meaning and relevance.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study has unveiled the significant impact of etymological instruction on vocabulary learning among adult EFL learners in Turkey. This approach not only leads to improved vocabulary scores but also enhances retention, motivation, and overall attitudes toward language learning.

The pedagogical implications of these findings are substantial. Incorporating etymological instruction

into EFL curricula can be a valuable strategy for educators in Turkey and beyond. It not only equips learners with a more profound understanding of vocabulary but also instills a sense of curiosity and engagement in the language learning process.

As we conclude this exploration, we recognize that etymology is not merely an academic pursuit but a powerful tool for transforming the language learning experience. By delving into the historical roots of words, learners can uncover the rich tapestry of language, deepening their linguistic competence and appreciation. This study contributes to the evolving landscape of language pedagogy, emphasizing the potential of etymology to enhance vocabulary learning among adult EFL learners.

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