

The Impact of Vocabulary Acquisition on English Language Learners

by

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Abstract

This thesis capstone project explores the critical factors and strategies impacting vocabulary acquisition among English Language Learners (ELLs) in middle and high school. It begins by emphasizing the significance of multimodal texts, technology-based tools, and professional development for teachers to enhance vocabulary retention and reduce participation stress. The literature review delves into the Critical Period Hypothesis and its challenges, highlighting factors like student engagement, socio-cultural hardships, and the effectiveness of instructional methods. The proposed professional development program includes workshops on engaging teaching strategies, parental involvement, integration with native speakers, and addressing fossilization. The project recommends comprehensive approaches such as continuous professional development, increased technology use, and supportive school environments to improve ELLs' vocabulary acquisition and overall language proficiency. Future research is suggested to focus on longitudinal studies and socio-cultural factors influencing language learning.

Keywords: English language learners, vocabulary acquisition, critical period hypothesis, multimodal texts, professional development, comprehensive input.

Chapter 1: Introduction

As educators, our primary responsibility is to implement effective, relatable, and relevant methods to teach vocabulary to English learners (ELLs). Utilizing models and scaffolds can help students improve their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Children positively report the benefits of using multimodal texts, like memes, to enhance vocabulary acquisition and retention. Incorporating fun and innovative lessons, which are relevant to adolescents' experiences with modern technology and social media, significantly supported vocabulary retention among secondary-level ELLs (Aedo & Millafilio, 2021).

Students also enjoy online games and technology to answer multiple-choice questions, as opposed to traditional hand-raising methods. Using clickers, which allow for nonverbal responses, helps reduce the stress associated with verbal participation and promotes a positive learning environment. This approach was shown to enhance vocabulary learning due to the positive attitudes students had toward using clickers (Senecal & Cardoso, 2021).

Pronunciation is also a crucial aspect of vocabulary learning. Raafat Gabriel emphasized the importance of techniques such as chunking and phonological awareness, which help shape the rhythm of speech and facilitate language acquisition for ELLs. Furthermore, professional development for teachers is essential to effectively teach academic vocabulary, which is especially challenging for ELLs. Equipping teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge through continuous professional development can enhance their ability to support ELLs in mastering academic vocabulary and achieving language proficiency (Waller & Tiffany, 2022).

This topic is crucial for educators because vocabulary acquisition profoundly impacts English language learners (ELLs) throughout their lives. Vocabulary is integral to all forms of communication and comprehension, from daily conversations to academic learning. While young

ELLs tend to acquire new words consistently, middle and high school students face greater challenges and are more likely to forget new vocabulary.

This issue is particularly relevant to me as I currently teach in a suburban school district on Long Island, New York. For the 2023-2024 school year, my district had an enrollment of 162 English Language Learners out of a total student population of approximately 7,809. The ELL population is diverse, with the majority of students speaking Spanish, followed by languages such as Turkish, Ukrainian, and Chinese. The district has made significant efforts to support these students through various programs and resources aimed at enhancing their English proficiency and academic success. The English as a New Language (ENL) Department in the Smithtown Central School District is dedicated to equipping ELLs with the necessary tools to achieve both academic and social success. They utilize a range of resources, including BrainPOP ELL, Castle Learning, Learning A-Z/Raz Kids, and Vocabulary.com, to provide interactive and comprehensive learning experiences for students from elementary through high school.

These tools support listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, which are crucial for vocabulary acquisition and overall language development. Moreover, the district offers specific instructional strategies tailored to the needs of ELLs, such as sheltered instruction and the use of multimodal texts. By incorporating engaging methods like memes and clickers, the district aims to make learning more relatable and less intimidating for students. These efforts are supported by ongoing professional development for teachers to ensure they are well-equipped to address the unique challenges faced by ELLs. Overall, the district is committed to creating an inclusive and supportive environment that fosters language acquisition and academic achievement for all its students (2023 | *SMITHTOWN CSD - English Language Learners Data* | *NYSED Data Site*, n.d.).

In my experience teaching second grade, my students then made significant progress from September to June. However, when I began teaching in the Middle School, I observed that older ELLs are more reluctant to participate and often speak only with peers who share their native language. This reluctance highlights that older students tend to retain their cultural identities more strongly, making vocabulary acquisition more difficult for those with an established first language.

In order to address the deficiencies in language learning motivation, parental involvement, access to native English speakers, adequate comprehensible input, and long-term acquisition, I propose a professional development week for educators who will be working with ELLs, as described in Chapter 3. At the professional development workshops, ENL teachers in the district will be educating teachers on information regarding successful vocabulary instruction and scaffolds while defining and honing in on diverse needs of English Language Learners.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This Chapter outlines the Critical Period Hypothesis and reviews the literature on vocabulary acquisition in English language learning. As described in Chapter 1, vocabulary acquisition is subjective per student. School districts across the states implement diverse strategies to appropriately instruct vocabulary in the classroom. However, various factors limit students' retention of said vocabulary including student motivation and engagement (Monika & Devi, 2022) and effective instructional strategies (Kaman-Ertürk & Gokgoz-Kurt, 2021). In this Chapter, I will first elaborate on the Critical Period Hypothesis (Lenneberg, 1967; Penfield & Roberts, 1959) and connect it to Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory and Krashen's (1981) input hypothesis. Next, I will discuss the following themes from the literature: deficiency in student engagement, lack of incidental language learning inside and outside of the classroom, sheltered instruction and access to native English speakers, and the application of context cues in literature.

Understanding the Critical Period Hypothesis

Much research draws on the Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) to understand how English language learners learn and retain vocabulary in the new language (L2) (e.g., Qureshi, 2020; Ren, 2017). According to Penfield and Roberts (1959), CPH suggests that age is a major factor in how successfully a learner develops in L2. Due to the social influences younger children encounter, it has been noted that their second-language proficiency surpasses teenage or adult English learners (Ren, 2017). It has been noted that students who learn a new language before puberty, specifically around age four to eight, will surpass those who learn a new language in the upper-elementary to middle school years (Abello-Contesse, 2008). According to Abello-Contesse, "The younger the learner the quicker the learning process and better the outcomes" (p.

170). Factors that support the CPH include neurological factors, social factors, and input differences (Wang, 2015). The brain's plasticity and the process of lateralization (where different brain functions settle in specific hemispheres) may explain why younger learners are more successful in acquiring a second language. Younger learners often have more opportunities for language interaction and are less inhibited by fear of making mistakes, which may contribute to their success. Early starters are likely to receive more authentic and simplified language input, which facilitates better language acquisition (Wang, 2015).

While some studies (e.g., Alsaedi, 2023; Strid, 2016) suggest older students can achieve notable success in learning a new language, CPH's claims remain robust. These studies show that language learners who have ample opportunities and exposure to L2 display notable success and proficiency, indicating upper-elementary and middle school students have more opportunities to acquire L2 through subject-matter learning. The brain's plasticity refers to its ability to reorganize and adapt its structure and function in response to experiences (Alsaedi, 2023). Early theories suggested that plasticity fades with age, but recent neuroscientific findings show that the adult brain remains plastic, capable of adapting to new conditions such as learning a new language.

Older learners often outperform younger learners in the initial stages of language learning, though younger learners may eventually surpass older learners over time. This indicates that age is not the sole determinant of language learning success (Strid, 2016). Adults can learn new language sounds and grammar to a high level of proficiency, contradicting the idea that language acquisition is biologically constrained after a certain age. Case studies of exceptional late language learners, such as adults who achieve near-native proficiency, further undermine the

CPH (Strid, 2016). However, such opportunities do not negate the inherent advantages of early language learning.

In addition to CPH, Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory (SCT) emphasizes the role of social interactions in cognitive development, suggesting that learning is inherently a social process. According to SCT, learning should be connected to students' prior knowledge, with teachers creating experiences that foster higher mental processes within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which refers to the range of tasks that a learner can perform with guidance but cannot yet accomplish independently. The concept aligns with Krashen's (1981) input hypothesis, which concludes that language acquisition occurs through understanding language input slightly beyond the learner's current level known as "comprehensible input," which is language input slightly beyond their current level of understanding. According to Blog (2024), Krashen's comprehensible input represents the type of linguistic challenge that learners can grasp with the right support. Both the ZPD and input hypothesis emphasize that the learner engages with content that is just beyond their current capabilities, thereby pushing their cognitive development forward. Overall, Krashen's (1981) second language hypotheses underscore the importance of immersion in comprehensible input and a supportive emotional environment, mirroring the natural process of first language acquisition.

Factors that Hinder ELLs' Vocabulary Acquisition

The factors that hinder secondary English language learners (ELLs) from acquiring grade-level vocabulary are based on elements that burden an ELL's retention and motivation. The factors include 1) deficiency in student engagement; 2) family, financial, and sociocultural hardships; 3) sheltered instruction and access to native English speakers; 4) unproductive

comprehensible input; and 5) fossilization in second-language acquisition. These factors commit to finite vocabulary and restricted second-language acquisition (SLA).

Deficiency in Student Engagement

When teaching vocabulary in a new language, the presentation of the instruction, the learning environment, and the pace at which it is taught must be realistic and engaging for students at the middle school level. Educators are responsible for creating and altering this material to ensure their students retain and apply new vocabulary. There is a significant amount of research on first or second-grade students, but very little on adolescents and their needs when developing oral proficiency and reading and writing. Blended learning in English language classrooms enhances student engagement, motivation, and overall learning outcomes (Monika & Devi, 2022).

By integrating multimodal tools and metacognitive strategies, blended learning creates an active and interactive learning environment that captures students' attention and fosters a deeper understanding of language concepts. Students who participate in blended learning experiences show improved language proficiency, concentration, and academic achievement. These findings underscore the importance of using technology and diverse teaching strategies to create a learning environment that motivates students and encourages their active participation. Student engagement and motivation are crucial factors in the success of language learning, as they directly impact a learner's ability to absorb and apply new language skills.

When students are actively engaged and motivated, they are more likely to participate in classroom activities, practice language skills, and develop a deeper understanding of the material. The blended learning approach, with its emphasis on interactive and personalized learning experiences, has been shown to increase students' motivation and engagement, leading

to more effective language acquisition. By creating a supportive and stimulating learning environment, educators can harness the power of motivation and engagement to help students achieve greater success in language learning (Monika & Devi, 2022).

Lai (2023) highlights the critical importance of student engagement and motivation in language learning, particularly in the ELL context where real-life language exposure is limited. The study implemented a flipped classroom approach, integrating online resources such as 6 Minute English Podcasts, TED Talks, and blog writing, to connect in-class and out-of-class learning. The results showed significant improvements in students' listening, writing, and speaking skills, which the author attributes to increased engagement and motivation. The flipped classroom model, by requiring students to engage with materials before and after class, created a more interactive and personalized learning environment that fostered greater student participation and commitment to their language learning journey.

Further, Lai's (2023) study points out that many students in ELL contexts struggle with motivation due to limited opportunities for authentic language use and large class sizes, which can hinder meaningful interaction. By incorporating engaging and relevant online materials, the course design addressed these challenges, showing that when students are motivated and actively engaged, they are more likely to participate in class discussions, complete assignments, and ultimately improve their language proficiency. This underscores the necessity of designing language courses that not only provide comprehensible input but also actively engage and motivate students, as these factors are essential for effective language acquisition (Lai, 2023).

Family, Financial, and Sociocultural Hardships

English Language Learners (ELLs) are the fastest-growing group in the New York school system. Research shows that ELL parents generally value education highly; however, many

immigrant, refugee, and ELL parents have different experiences interacting with schools compared to mainstream English-speaking families. Schools often find it challenging to address the specific instructional and linguistic needs of ELL students, and communities with significant ELL populations face obstacles in effectively communicating with parents, who may have limited English proficiency and lower literacy levels in their native languages. Immigrant and ELL parents often face challenges such as negative experiences with educational institutions and limited formal schooling, which can hinder their involvement in their children's education.

To enhance parental engagement effectively, schools should adopt both traditional and nontraditional family engagement approaches that are culturally and linguistically appropriate. Researchers Tarasawa and Waggoner (2015) outline the barriers to ELL parental involvement, suggest strategies to foster family engagement, and conclude with a case study showcasing the successful outreach efforts of a public school district. Early oral language development is crucial for children's academic and socioemotional growth but can be negatively affected by family stress. While there is strong evidence that family stress impacts language development in monolingual contexts, less is known about its effects on dual language learners, particularly among Spanish-speaking families facing unique sociocultural stressors. Researchers Yeo and Flagg (2021) focused on how financial and sociocultural stressors were associated with maternal stress perception, parenting sensitivity, and children's receptive vocabulary in both Spanish and English. It involved 322 low-income Mexican-American mothers, primarily Spanish speakers while tracking their child's vocabulary progression. The study's results revealed that the relationship between family stress and children's receptive vocabulary differed based on the language and type of stress experienced.

Specifically, Spanish vocabulary acquisition was more closely tied to the quality of mother-child interactions, while English vocabulary was more directly impacted by family stress. Additionally, the effects of family stress on vocabulary acquisition were observed earlier for Spanish than for English and were more pronounced concerning financial stress compared to sociocultural stressors. These findings highlight the importance of addressing the effects of poverty on bilingual language development in low-income Mexican American children (Yeo et al., 2021).

Family involvement in the education of English Language Learners starts by bridging the gap between home and school literacy practices. Families play a crucial role in maintaining and developing their children's bilingual and biliterate identities through the use of their home language, cultural practices, and literacy activities (Garcia et al., 2021). Parents' active engagement in their children's education, such as reading in their native language, participating in bilingual communication, and supporting homework, helps reinforce the children's learning and cultural identity, making them feel more connected and supported in their academic journey. Many ELL families face challenges in navigating the school system, especially when there is a lack of bilingual staff or resources that acknowledge and respect the family's language and cultural background. This disconnect can lead to feelings of isolation and frustration, reducing the child's motivation and engagement in school.

Therefore, it is crucial for schools to actively involve ELL families, provide bilingual resources, and recognize the valuable role that these families play in their children's education. By doing so, schools can foster a more inclusive and supportive environment that enhances the educational outcomes of ELL students.

Sheltered Instruction and Access to Native English Speakers

Individuals can acquire L2 in structured environments and naturalistic environments. A structured environment is any condition where the students are learning the language through an instructor. For example, students may be considered English learners and receive services where they are working with an ELL teacher in small groups. A naturalistic environment is when the students are learning the target language through natural conversations in the classroom. These initial language learning models paved the way of more meticulous models. Listening and communicating with native English peers enhances vocabulary acquisition.

Ideally, sheltered Instruction, created by Stephen Krashen (1981), provides language support to ELLs while they are learning academic content in English (Macias et al., 2012). Sheltered instruction has become teacher-centered and hinders ELLs' retention of language and content. Research conducted by Bougoulid Mustapha (2022) proves the sheltered instructional model provides weak feedback and less interaction among students. Soon after the initial Sheltered Instruction Model came The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol Model (2017). The Sheltered Instruction Observation Model (SIOP) is a framework for teaching English language learners the target language and content in company with their native English peers. This model also provides educators with lesson plan templates that yield ELLs with grade-level standards. This model hurts ELLs, specifically those in low-income districts. Similar to the original model, the SIOP model is teacher-centric. Students are expected to keep up with the pace of their English-speaking classmates. Beginners are struggling in classes that require more advanced language skills (Mustapha, 2022).

Sheltered instruction runs the risk of implementing simplified content area coursework for students in middle and high school. In addition, teachers are more likely to simplify language

which negatively impacts the student's progress in developing more demanding skills. Students are separated from their English-speaking peers, which reduces their naturalistic learning experiences (Knoblock & Youngquist, 2016). Research conducted by Goldenberg (2013) has brought attention to the idea that sheltered instruction has flaws in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Assuring that the teachers are qualified in the content area and English language instruction is challenging, which makes it challenging to assess whether the models were utilized precisely (Knoblock & Youngquist, 2016).

Sheltered instruction, while designed to help ELLs in content-heavy subjects like science and social studies, often proves to be detrimental to their overall academic development, particularly in middle school. The primary goal of sheltered instruction is to make content comprehensible to ELLs while they are still acquiring English proficiency. However, this approach can inadvertently isolate these students from their English-speaking peers, limiting their opportunities to practice English in authentic, communicative contexts (Szpara, 2017). In middle school, where social interaction and language development are crucial, sheltered instruction may reduce ELLs' exposure to natural language use, which is essential for their language acquisition and integration into the broader school community.

Sheltered instruction, as Szpara reveals, can be detrimental to middle school ELLs because it isolates them from their peers and restricts their access to the full curriculum. This instructional approach often leads to a diluted curriculum where ELLs are not challenged to the same extent as their native-speaking peers, ultimately resulting in lower academic achievement and engagement. The focus on lowering linguistic demands in sheltered instruction, while well-intentioned, fails to prepare ELLs adequately for the rigors of standardized assessments and higher academic expectations. Additionally, the lack of proper integration with the mainstream

classroom exacerbates the sense of isolation and limits opportunities for authentic language use and social interaction, which are crucial for language development and academic success in middle school. In conclusion, while sheltered instruction aims to support ELLs in their academic journey, it often falls short by isolating students, lowering academic expectations, and reinforcing negative stereotypes (Szpara, 2017). Middle school is a pivotal time for academic and social development, and ELLs benefit more from instructional approaches that integrate them into the mainstream classroom, provide rigorous content, and leverage their linguistic and cultural assets. Schools should consider alternative strategies, such as co-teaching models and differentiated instruction within inclusive classrooms, to better support ELLs' language development and academic success without the drawbacks associated with sheltered instruction

Unproductive Comprehensible Input

As discussed above, input hypothesis is an effective scaffold where ELLs may not understand everything being spoken or read (Krashen, 1980; Rodrigo et al., 2004). According to Loewen (2017), vocabulary learning can occur intentionally, but it can also occur incidentally. Acquiring L1 is incidental for young children before entering school. Recent decades have investigated whether L2 can be acquired the same way L1 is earlier in life. The specific input type that is implemented in the classroom affects the long-term effects of vocabulary acquisition. Incidental vocabulary learning (IVL) occurs when students are focusing on an assignment or activity in the classroom, but not dedicating their work towards the vocabulary presented. IVL can appear as games, watching a video, or enjoying a book in L2 (Kaman-Ertürk & Gokgoz-Kurt, 2021). A study conducted by Kaman-Erturk and Gokgoz-Kurt compared various input types and how they can affect the productivity of language learning. In this case, one hundred English learners were assigned to be in a reading group, a viewing group, or a viewing with the

transcript group. Before the groups were divided, they each took a pretest that would be identical to the posttest and delayed posttest. The goal of the tests was to measure the students' retention of vocabulary in L2 after watching the video. Results showed that ELLs who were reading and viewing the transcript gained the most incidental vocabulary and proved to retain and apply the words successfully during the posttest and even the delayed posttest (Kaman-Ertürk & Gokgoz-Kurt, 2021).

Students at the middle and high school levels have limited access to incidental language learning and effective comprehensible input. Vocabulary acquisition displays the greatest results when it is subconsciously developed. Older ELLs focus on the meaning of the targeted word. Instructing the grammar is not beneficial towards their development of L2. Students best produce L2 when they receive comprehensible input through speaking with peers inside and outside of school, as well as applying social cues and their L1 (Klingner, 1993). Formal instruction in reading or grammar is not fundamental when supporting ELLs' retention of new vocabulary, especially for students with limited vocabulary knowledge in L1.

A study by Alghamdy (2023) explored the use of classroom discourse by English teachers in secondary schools in Makkah, Saudi Arabia, through the framework of Vygotsky's ZPD and scaffolding techniques. It categorizes discourse strategies into authoritative and dialogic approaches, finding that teachers predominantly employ authoritative strategies, such as providing correct answers without discussion and focusing on error correction during lesson planning and implementation stages. This emphasis on teacher-led discourse limits opportunities for student interaction and collaborative knowledge construction, which are essential for effective learning within the ZPD. The research highlights the need for a more balanced approach that integrates both authoritative and dialogic discourse to enhance student engagement

and cognitive development. While authoritative strategies help establish foundational knowledge, incorporating dialogic methods can foster deeper understanding and encourage critical thinking. The study concludes that English teachers should adopt more dialogic practices to better support students' learning within the ZPD, ultimately leading to improved application of knowledge in diverse contexts (Alghamdy, 2023).

Fossilization in Second Language Acquisition

Fossilization is a term in second language acquisition (SLA) that describes the process where specific linguistic features in a learner's speech or writing become fixed and resistant to change, despite extensive exposure to the target language. This phenomenon can hinder the learner's ability to achieve fluency and accuracy, as certain errors may persist over time. The notion of fossilization was first introduced by Selinker (1972), marking it as a crucial area of research within the field of SLA. Understanding fossilization is essential for educators and learners to identify and address persistent errors in language use (Gao, 2020).

Several types of fossilization can occur in language learning. Phonological fossilization refers to persistent pronunciation errors, which can create communication barriers. Lexical fossilization involves stagnation in vocabulary development, where a learner may fail to acquire new words or phrases. Syntactic fossilization encompasses ongoing errors in sentence structure, affecting the grammatical correctness of a learner's speech or writing. Pragmatic fossilization involves the inappropriate use of language in context, which can lead to misunderstandings in social interactions (Gao, 2020).

Fossilization can stem from both internal and external causes. Internally, the language acquisition mechanism tends to decline after puberty, making it more challenging for learners to acquire new language features. Additionally, the influence of a learner's mother tongue can affect

their ability to learn a second language. Externally, factors such as the quality of input, lack of effective feedback from teachers, and low intrinsic motivation due to exam-oriented education can contribute to lexical fossilization (Gao, 2020).

Fossilization is particularly concerning for middle school students because this is a critical period in their language development. If incorrect language forms become entrenched at this stage, they can hinder future academic achievement and communication skills. Middle schoolers are still developing their cognitive and linguistic abilities, and fossilized errors can limit their ability to reach higher levels of language proficiency. Moreover, these errors may affect their confidence and motivation to continue learning, as they might feel frustrated by their inability to overcome certain linguistic challenges. In a school setting, fossilization can lead to lower grades, decreased participation in class, and a negative attitude toward learning the language, ultimately impacting their long-term educational and professional opportunities (Li & Ren, 2021).

This phenomenon is particularly problematic for middle school students, as it can severely hinder their ability to achieve full language proficiency. Li and Ren (2021) emphasize the need for teachers to address fossilization head-on by implementing targeted strategies to prevent these errors from becoming permanent. Teachers must be proactive in providing corrective feedback and designing instructional activities that challenge students to go beyond their current language use. By addressing fossilization early and effectively, educators can help students continue progressing in their language learning, avoiding the negative consequences of fossilization, which include reduced communication skills and lower confidence in using the target language. This approach not only enhances language acquisition but also ensures that

students develop the linguistic proficiency needed for academic success and future endeavors (Li & Ren, 2021).

Summary

Using this research as support, it is evident that researchers have investigated various techniques to promote efficient vocabulary acquisition. English language learners in middle school continue to face obstacles in possessing the vocabulary and applying it in the future. For instance, student engagement plays a major role in an ELL's performance and how well they remember and accurately use L2. If a student is not engaged in the lesson, they will be less motivated and eager to meet goals. Students can be engaged by working with peers and participating in high-interest stories or activities. When content is relatable, the children will inevitably become engaged.

Secondly, English learners may struggle with family issues that impact their performance in school, altering their working memory. ELLs are considered to be a minority, which can cause instability at home regarding support and finances. Family members may only speak L1 at home, so the child's only access to L2 is at school. Additionally, sheltered instruction and an ELL's access to native English speakers is limited. When students are in a class with only other ELLs, they are isolated and have minimal exposure to naturalistic conversations in L2. Comprehensible input plays a role in SLA by challenging ELLs and having them use their context clues to understand the meaning of unknown words. Teachers may not be appropriately challenging students and providing the most sufficient input. Lastly, fossilization hinders SLA because errors made earlier in language learning are not targeted properly. The research shows that effective exposure to L2 vocabulary will increase student motivation and overall acquisition.

Using this research as evidence, teachers need to use diverse scaffolds and tools to support individual needs. The goal of this differentiated approach is to acknowledge that each student is at a different level in their language learning experience. When children are motivated, they will be engaged in new lessons, set goals for themselves, and apply what they learn inside and outside of the classroom with their native English-speaking peers.

Chapter 3: Description of the Product and Tools

Research in Chapter 2 has revealed the factors that hinder efficient vocabulary acquisition in English Language Learners, including student engagement, family, financial, and sociocultural hardships, sheltered instruction, unproductive comprehensible input, and fossilization. Schools must be proactive by establishing new methods and tools to ensure the longevity of vocabulary learning. Thus, I propose a Professional Development Week before the start of the school year for teachers and staff working with ELLs this year. This professional development day aims to educate teachers on effective strategies and scaffolds to improve second language acquisition.

Description of the Professional Development

Professional development opportunities focusing on instructing academic vocabulary for English Language Learners (ELLs) are essential for equipping teachers with the tools and strategies necessary to enhance their students' language proficiency. One such opportunity could be a comprehensive workshop series designed to provide educators with a deep understanding of the unique challenges ELLs face in acquiring academic vocabulary. These workshops would cover a range of topics, including the distinction between social and academic language, the importance of contextual learning, and the role of cultural relevance in vocabulary instruction. By participating in these sessions, teachers would gain insights into the cognitive and linguistic processes involved in language acquisition, enabling them to tailor their instruction to better meet the needs of their ELL students.

The professional development series would emphasize practical, research-based strategies that teachers can immediately implement in their classrooms. For example, teachers would learn about techniques such as the use of visual aids, interactive word walls, and graphic organizers to make vocabulary more accessible and engaging. Additionally, the workshops

would explore the benefits of explicit vocabulary instruction, including the use of direct teaching methods such as pre-teaching vocabulary before reading activities and integrating vocabulary exercises into daily lessons. Teachers would also be introduced to digital tools and resources that can support vocabulary development, such as language learning apps and online vocabulary games, providing a blend of traditional and modern approaches to instruction.

A key component of this professional development opportunity would be collaboration and reflection. Teachers would have the chance to engage in discussions and share best practices with their peers, fostering a community of learning and support. They would participate in hands-on activities and simulations, allowing them to experience the strategies from a student's perspective. Reflective sessions would enable teachers to consider the effectiveness of different approaches and to develop personalized action plans for their classrooms. By the end of the series, teachers would not only have a robust toolkit of vocabulary instruction strategies but also the confidence and support needed to effectively implement them, ultimately leading to improved academic outcomes for their ELL students.

Agenda of Events

The Professional Development Day will take place at Smithtown High School on August 26th-August 30th. This enables educators to learn and explore new technology and resources that will be in effect for the 2024/2025 school year. This also gives teachers a significant amount of time to reach out to family members and help get them involved before the school year begins. If families have a proactive relationship with their child's teacher, students will be more motivated resulting in a positive attitude towards school. "In a retrospective looking at 50 different studies, researchers found strong connections between family involvement and academic achievement. Support and involvement from educators and families are crucial to a student's academic

performance” (Waterford.org & Minshew, 2024). Each day, the professional development workshops will run from 9 AM to 12 Noon in the High School Library. The Library will be utilized due to its large size, access to technology, and its location being central compared to the other classrooms in the building. The workshops will be focused on middle school instruction and will be hosted by the three English as a New Language (ENL) teachers, in the middle school. The professional development workshops are mandatory for any teacher who will be working with ELLs. This includes special area teachers, reading specialists, academic intervention services (AIS) teachers, speech pathologists, and classroom teachers.

Periodic training programs for teachers are regular, school-conducted sessions aimed at the overall development of educators and the improvement of educational quality. These programs, often facilitated by reputable training agencies, provide systematic professional development through scheduled workshops that enhance teachers' knowledge, skills, and abilities. Such training is crucial in the educational sector as it fosters both professional and personal growth for instructors, keeping them updated with current systems and practices. Regular and effective training increases the efficiency and productivity of teachers, making it essential for maintaining high educational standards (Anurag, 2023). The workshops will have different goals per day. Each day has an ultimate focus on improving the quality of instruction and retention for our ELLs (See Appendix A). Information and resources will be discussed and utilized during the workshops (See Appendices B, C, D, E, F, G, H, and I) to ensure us educators are prepared to tackle any challenges faced this year.

Incorporating Communicative Language Teaching

The first part of the professional development is a workshop designed to equip middle school teachers with effective strategies to engage English learners (ELs) and enhance their

vocabulary acquisition. The session begins with an introduction and icebreaker to establish a positive and collaborative atmosphere. Teachers are then provided with an overview of the unique challenges faced by ELs, fostering a deeper understanding through shared experiences and observations.

The workshop delves into strategies for maintaining student engagement, emphasizing the importance of visual supports, collaborative learning, and culturally relevant teaching. Teachers are introduced to Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) principles, which focus on student-centered instruction and meaningful interactions. CLT is a student-centered approach in ESL/EFL settings that emphasizes meaningful interaction and communication in the target language. The approach focuses on real-life language use, promoting L2 development through two-way exchanges of ideas and interactions (Courtney, 2024).

Following a short break, the workshop shifts focus to vocabulary acquisition techniques. Teachers explore contextual learning, the use of word walls and flashcards, engaging games, and technology integration. CLT-informed activities are highlighted as effective methods for vocabulary learning through communication and interaction. A significant portion of the workshop is dedicated to building communicative classes. Teachers learn about and practice various CLT activities, such as "Draw a Dream House" (Appendix B) and "I'm Not Just a Number" (Appendix C). These activities promote collaboration, accurate language use, and critical thinking. This emphasizes the core principle of CLT, highlighting the importance of meaningful interactions in developing L2 proficiency through student-centered approaches. The workshop concludes with practical application and resource sharing. Teachers collaborate in small groups to brainstorm and share additional strategies and resources. Each participant

develops an action plan to implement the learned strategies in their classrooms, followed by a reflection and feedback session (Courtney, 2024).

Throughout the workshop, participants receive handouts (See Appendix B and C) and access to an online forum for ongoing support. Monthly check-ins and regular updates ensure that teachers can continue to refine their approaches and share their successes. By the end of the workshop, teachers are equipped with a variety of strategies and tools to effectively engage their English learners and enhance their vocabulary acquisition, contributing to their overall academic success.

Improving Family Involvement

The second day of the professional development workshops focuses on parental involvement and how it affects L2 vocabulary acquisition. The workshop titled "Engaging Parents of English Learners in School Life and Vocabulary Development" is designed to help teachers increase parental involvement in their children's education, particularly for families where English is not the primary language. The workshop begins with an introduction to the importance of parental involvement and the common barriers these parents face, such as language difficulties and cultural differences. It emphasizes the need for clear and effective communication strategies, including the use of translation tools and multilingual resources to bridge these gaps.

Teachers are provided with practical engagement techniques to create a more inclusive and welcoming school environment. The workshop covers strategies like organizing family literacy programs, homework help sessions, and family learning nights where parents can learn English alongside their children (See Appendices D and E). Additionally, teachers learn how to

involve parents in school activities and decision-making processes, ensuring they feel valued and included in their child's educational journey.

The workshop also includes interactive activities to develop specific action plans and role-playing scenarios for practicing new strategies. Teachers receive handouts with communication tips, a list of multilingual resources, (See Appendix F) and sample activities to support vocabulary learning at home. The session concludes with a Q&A and feedback segment, encouraging continuous improvement and implementation of the discussed strategies to enhance parental engagement and support English learners' vocabulary development.

A study by Okeke (2014) explored the level of parental involvement in their children's education at a school in London. Through interviews with 30 parents, the research reveals a strong desire among parents to be involved in their children's schooling, yet many feel uncertain about how to engage effectively. Barriers such as lack of time, language differences, cultural disparities, and socio-economic challenges are significant obstacles. The concept of cultural capital is crucial, as parents with cultural values and knowledge aligned with those of the school are more likely to participate actively (Okeke, 2014).

To enhance parental involvement, the study suggests several strategies: developing a comprehensive national policy that outlines how schools should encourage parent participation, involving parents in curriculum planning, organizing more inclusive parents' evenings, and implementing supportive childcare policies. Additional recommendations include home visits by teachers, social events like parent-teacher games, school debates, and improving Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs). These strategies aim to create a more welcoming and inclusive environment for parents, ensuring their meaningful engagement in their children's education (Okeke, 2014).

Expanding Access to Native English Speakers

The third professional development day discusses the district's decision to eliminate sheltered instruction and move toward integrating ELLs into content area classes with their native English-speaking peers. aims to provide teachers with strategies to integrate English learners more effectively with native speakers. The workshop starts by defining sheltered instruction, discussing its benefits and limitations, and emphasizing the importance of balanced exposure to native speakers. Teachers are introduced to various strategies for integrating English learners into mainstream classes, such as co-teaching models and differentiated instruction tailored to diverse language proficiency levels.

Integrating English Language Learners (ELLs) with native English speakers is crucial for several reasons. Firstly, it accelerates linguistic development. When ELLs interact with native speakers, they are exposed to natural language use, including colloquialisms, idioms, and varying speech patterns. This immersion enhances their listening and speaking skills more effectively than isolated instruction. Authentic communication in diverse contexts allows ELLs to practice and reinforce their language skills, making their learning more meaningful and practical (Kaşlioğlu & ErsiN, 2018).

Secondly, integration fosters social inclusion and cultural understanding. ELLs who engage with native speakers are more likely to form social connections and feel a sense of belonging within the school community. This interaction helps bridge cultural gaps, promotes empathy, and encourages mutual respect among students of different backgrounds. ELLs gain insights into the cultural norms and values of their peers, which enriches their educational experience and broadens their worldview (Kaşlioğlu & ErsiN, 2018).

Lastly, integrating ELLs with native speakers supports academic achievement. Collaborative learning environments where ELLs work alongside native speakers can lead to higher academic outcomes. Native speakers can model academic language and learning strategies, aiding ELLs in understanding and completing complex tasks. Group activities and peer interactions enhance cognitive development and critical thinking skills, contributing to overall academic success. Integrating ELLs with native English speakers not only benefits language acquisition but also promotes social cohesion and academic excellence (Kaşlıoğlu & ErsiN, 2018).

The workshop also focuses on creating opportunities for interaction between English learners and native speakers through classroom activities, group work, and peer tutoring. Teachers are encouraged to involve students in extracurricular activities, community programs, and volunteer initiatives to foster real-world language practice (See Appendix G). Additionally, the workshop covers enhancing the classroom environment to be more inclusive and welcoming, using seating arrangements, multicultural materials, and resources that promote interaction. Technological tools and platforms are highlighted as valuable resources for connecting English learners with native speakers through online language exchange programs and educational apps.

Challenging ELLs Through Comprehensible Input

The fourth day of professional development is when teachers will be given the opportunity to learn about comprehensible input (Krashen, 1981; Rodrigo et al., 2004). Teachers will engage in interactive discussions to understand the importance of making input understandable, providing context, and using visual aids and gestures. The first hour focuses on defining comprehensible input and highlighting key components such as visuals, gestures, and

contextual support. In the second hour, the workshop shifts to practical strategies for implementing comprehensible input.

Teachers will learn how to simplify language and use scaffolding techniques to support English learners without diluting content. Activities include practicing gestures, visual aids, and brainstorming ways to connect lessons to real-life situations. Participants will also engage in group activities to simplify complex texts and create scaffolding questions, ensuring they can effectively apply these strategies in their classrooms. The final hour emphasizes practical application, where teachers design comprehensible input materials and develop lesson plans (See Appendix H) incorporating these strategies. Participants will work in small groups to create lesson plans and present them for feedback.

Benrabah's (2019) study focused on the pivotal role of comprehensible input in acquiring English vocabulary among Algerian EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners. Drawing on Krashen's (1981) Input Hypothesis, the study underscores that learners need exposure to language input that is both understandable and slightly beyond their current proficiency level. This exposure helps in decoding and comprehending new vocabulary, which is essential for achieving language proficiency. The research involved an experimental group receiving varied and comprehensible input and a control group with standard exposure. The findings indicated that the experimental group showed significant improvements in language proficiency, validating the effectiveness of comprehensible input (Benrabah, 2019).

The study highlights that comprehensible input is most effective when it includes rich, varied content that aligns with learners' current abilities while also challenging them. Simplifying language, using visuals, gestures, and providing context are key strategies for making input comprehensible. Moreover, the research emphasizes the importance of receptive skills—reading

and listening—as foundational for vocabulary development. By focusing on these skills, learners can better understand and acquire the necessary vocabulary, supporting their overall language proficiency. The study's structured approach to providing comprehensible input proved beneficial in enhancing the learners' vocabulary and comprehension skills (Benrabah, 2019).

In conclusion, when implemented correctly, comprehensible input is a powerful tool for language acquisition. It bridges the gap between learners' existing knowledge and new language content, facilitating a smoother and more effective learning process. The research underscores the necessity of a systematic and principled approach to vocabulary development, advocating for a balanced integration of reading and listening activities that provide rich and comprehensible input. This method not only improves vocabulary but also boosts learners' confidence and motivation, ultimately leading to better language proficiency outcomes (Benrabah, 2019).

How to Avoid Fossilization

The final day of professional development prepares teachers with the knowledge and skills to help ELLs avoid fossilization, a common issue in second language acquisition where learners' progress stagnates, and errors become permanent. The workshop spans three hours and is structured into three main segments: understanding fossilization, learning techniques to prevent it, and practical application through lesson planning. Participants are introduced to the concept of fossilization. A PowerPoint on the theory of fossilization in second language acquisition is given, (See Appendix I) highlighting its impact on language learning. An interactive discussion follows, focusing on the common causes of fossilization, such as lack of corrective feedback, over-reliance on communication strategies, and insufficient exposure to the target language. Real-life case studies and examples are used to illustrate these points.

Educators are then learning specific techniques to prevent fossilization. Teachers are shown how to provide effective corrective feedback through various methods, including explicit correction, recasts, and metalinguistic feedback. Strategies to increase meaningful exposure to the target language are also discussed, such as creating immersive environments and utilizing extensive reading and multimedia resources. Participants work in groups to design an immersion plan for ELLs. Additionally, techniques to promote interlanguage development, like task-based learning and interaction, are covered, with a pair activity to create relevant classroom activities. In the final hour, the focus shifts to practical application. Teachers learn how to design dynamic and varied practice activities that challenge learners and prevent repetitive errors, through a workshop on reviewing and analyzing effective practice activities. Participants then engage in a collaborative lesson planning session, where they create lesson plans incorporating the techniques discussed. These plans are presented to the group for feedback, fostering a collaborative learning environment.

Qian and Xiao (2010) explored the phenomenon of fossilization, where language learners' progress stagnates and errors become fixed. This stagnation is particularly challenging for learners striving to achieve proficiency in a second language. The authors discuss both personal and general factors contributing to fossilization, such as group dynamics, attitudes toward teachers and materials, learning techniques, age, intelligence, motivation, and personality. They emphasize the importance of addressing these factors to prevent fossilization and promote continuous language development (Qian & Xiao, 2010).

One of the key strategies to avoid fossilization is taking a developmental attitude toward students' mistakes. Teachers should "respect" errors as part of the learning process rather than viewing them as failures. Encouraging students and providing positive reinforcement can help

them overcome the fear of making mistakes and build their confidence. This approach facilitates the correction of errors and reduces the occurrence of fossilization. Additionally, stimulating students' motivation is crucial. Teachers can use various methods to keep students engaged and eager to improve their language skills, ensuring that learning tasks are challenging yet achievable. Another essential strategy is balancing accuracy and fluency in language output. While fluency is important, premature pursuit of it without attention to accuracy can be detrimental. Teachers should focus on helping students express meaning accurately and encourage self-monitoring and correction of errors. Providing strategic feedback is also vital. Feedback should combine positive emotional reinforcement with constructive cognitive feedback to encourage learners to improve while making necessary adjustments (Qian & Xiao, 2010).

Furthermore, fostering creativity and imagination in students can enhance their language learning experience. Teachers should help students use their existing knowledge creatively to express new meanings, thereby promoting divergent thinking. Encouraging students to become good language learners involves helping them respond positively to group dynamics, seek out practice opportunities, use study techniques effectively, and take risks in their learning. By adopting these strategies, teachers can help learners avoid fossilization and achieve higher levels of language proficiency. In conclusion, preventing fossilization requires a comprehensive approach that addresses both personal and general factors affecting language learning. By maintaining a positive attitude towards errors, stimulating motivation, balancing accuracy and fluency, providing strategic feedback, and fostering creativity, teachers can effectively guide their students toward continuous improvement and prevent the stagnation of language skills. These strategies not only enhance learners' proficiency but also contribute to a more engaging and successful language learning experience (Qian & Xiao, 2010).

Closing Activity

The professional development week for teachers working with English Language Learners (ELLs) concluded with a comprehensive review of the newly acquired skills and strategies designed to enhance the learning experience for ELLs. Throughout the week, teachers engaged in various workshops and hands-on activities that focused on increasing student motivation through engaging and culturally relevant materials. They also learned techniques to improve parental involvement by fostering strong communication channels and creating inclusive environments that value parents' contributions. The importance of avoiding overly sheltered instruction was emphasized, ensuring that ELLs receive ample opportunities to interact with mainstream content and peers. Additionally, strategies were introduced to boost ELLs' communication with native English speakers, such as structured peer interaction activities and collaborative projects.

One of the key highlights of the week was the focus on implementing comprehensible input and preventing fossilization. Teachers explored practical methods to make input understandable through visuals, gestures, and simplified language without diluting content complexity. They were trained to provide corrective feedback effectively, balancing fluency and accuracy to promote continual language development. By integrating these techniques, teachers are now better equipped to create dynamic and supportive classroom environments that address the unique needs of ELLs. The week ended on an inspiring note, with teachers expressing confidence and enthusiasm about applying these strategies in their classrooms to support their students' language acquisition and overall academic success.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to identify and target the factors that limit successful vocabulary retention for English language learners in middle school. Long-term vocabulary acquisition is proven when students are motivated and engaged in the instruction (Kazu & Kuvvetli, 2023) when families are involved and support language learning at home (Yeo et al., 2021) when students have access to native English speakers in content areas and outside of the classroom (Short et al., 2012) when students are appropriately challenged through comprehensible input (Loewen, 2015) and when educators address persistent errors and avoid fossilization (Gao, 2020). When vocabulary is overlooked, second language acquisition is delayed, impacting their academic success. The questions that lead this research included the following: (1) How do educators support diverse learners and keep them engaged across all domains? (2) How do schools support minority families? (3) Why is sheltered instruction unproductive for language learners? (4) How can teachers challenge students through scaffolding and comprehensible input? and (5) How can teachers instruct vocabulary while reducing the risk of fossilization?

Summary of the Reviewed Literature

The Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH), established by Penfield and Roberts (1959) and expanded by Lenneberg (1967), suggests that there is an optimal window in early childhood, specifically between ages four and eight, during which language acquisition occurs most effectively. However, studies by Ren (2017) and Qureshi (2020) challenge this hypothesis, indicating that secondary-level learners often achieve greater proficiency in a second language compared to younger learners. These studies argue that factors such as increased exposure,

learning opportunities, and the complexity of the content play a more significant role in language acquisition than age alone.

Various factors can hinder English language learners (ELLs) from acquiring grade-level vocabulary. A lack of student engagement is a major issue, as demonstrated by research showing that middle school students often read to complete assignments rather than out of genuine interest, negatively impacting vocabulary retention. Additionally, family, financial, and sociocultural hardships can affect language development, as these stressors influence parental involvement and the quality of interactions between parents and children. Furthermore, sheltered instruction models, while designed to support ELLs, can be too teacher-centered and may limit students' exposure to native English speakers, which is crucial for authentic language practice and proficiency.

Effective language acquisition also depends on providing productive comprehensible input and addressing fossilization. Comprehensible input, as proposed by Krashen (1981), is most effective when it is slightly above the learner's current proficiency level, but older ELLs often lack access to such tailored input. Studies show that multimedia tools like captioned TV can enhance vocabulary retention by making input more accessible and engaging. Fossilization, where incorrect language features become fixed, can be mitigated through effective teaching strategies such as recasts and tailored feedback. Addressing these factors comprehensively can significantly improve ELLs' vocabulary acquisition and overall language proficiency.

Implications for Teaching

Professional development opportunities for teachers and staff who work with English language learners directly benefit the school as a whole. Improving the school environment to support English learners (ELLs) in acquiring vocabulary involves creating a more engaging,

inclusive, and resource-rich setting. Firstly, schools can foster greater student engagement by incorporating interactive and student-centered learning activities. Teachers should use diverse instructional strategies such as project-based learning, gamified learning, and collaborative group work. These methods can make learning more enjoyable and relevant, helping students to connect new vocabulary with practical, real-world contexts. Providing opportunities for students to choose reading materials that interest them can also motivate them to read more frequently, thereby increasing their exposure to new words.

Secondly, enhancing teacher training and professional development is crucial for better-supporting ELLs. Teachers need to be equipped with effective strategies for teaching vocabulary and addressing the unique needs of ELLs. Professional development programs should focus on culturally responsive teaching, differentiation techniques, and the use of technology to support language learning. Additionally, training teachers to implement sheltered instruction models like the SIOP framework effectively can ensure that content and language objectives are met simultaneously, providing ELLs with comprehensible input while they learn the subject matter.

Thirdly, increasing parental and community involvement can significantly impact ELLs' vocabulary acquisition. Schools should actively engage with ELL parents by offering workshops and resources in multiple languages to help them support their children's learning at home. Creating strong home-school partnerships can ensure that parents are involved in their children's education and can reinforce vocabulary learning outside of school. Additionally, schools can collaborate with community organizations to provide extracurricular programs and language-rich environments where students can practice English in informal settings, further enhancing their language skills.

Finally, providing ELLs with access to a variety of language learning resources and technologies can greatly improve their vocabulary acquisition. Schools should invest in educational technologies such as language learning apps, interactive e-books, and multimedia resources that offer engaging and adaptive learning experiences. Creating language labs equipped with these tools can provide students with additional practice opportunities. Furthermore, incorporating multimedia content into the curriculum, such as videos with captions, can help ELLs develop their vocabulary through multiple modes of learning. By leveraging technology and providing diverse resources, schools can create a supportive and enriching environment that facilitates vocabulary acquisition for English learners.

Implications for Student Learning

Implementing these improvements in the school environment will significantly benefit English learners (ELLs) in multiple ways. By incorporating interactive and student-centered learning activities, students will find the process of learning English more engaging and enjoyable. This increased engagement can lead to greater motivation and a deeper connection with the material, helping students to retain and use new vocabulary more effectively. The practical application of vocabulary through project-based learning and collaborative group work also ensures that students understand and can use the words in real-world contexts, which is crucial for language acquisition.

Enhanced teacher training and professional development will ensure that educators are better equipped to meet the diverse needs of ELLs. Teachers trained in culturally responsive teaching and effective vocabulary instruction can create more inclusive and supportive classroom environments. By employing differentiation techniques and integrating technology, teachers can provide personalized learning experiences that cater to the unique needs of each student. This

tailored approach will help students overcome specific challenges they face in learning English, leading to improved vocabulary acquisition and overall language proficiency.

Increased parental and community involvement will create a more supportive network for ELLs, extending learning beyond the classroom. When parents are engaged and equipped with resources to support their children's education, students receive reinforcement and encouragement at home, which can significantly enhance their learning outcomes. Community programs and extracurricular activities that offer language-rich environments provide additional opportunities for students to practice English in informal settings. This holistic approach ensures that ELLs have multiple avenues for developing their vocabulary, contributing to their academic success and social integration.

Access to a variety of language learning resources and technologies will provide ELLs with the tools they need to succeed. Educational technologies such as language learning apps, interactive e-books, and multimedia resources offer engaging and adaptive learning experiences that cater to individual learning styles. Language labs and multimedia content integrated into the curriculum can provide students with additional practice opportunities, making vocabulary learning more accessible and effective. These resources not only enhance vocabulary acquisition but also build students' confidence in using English, which is essential for their academic and personal growth. Overall, these improvements create a comprehensive and supportive learning environment that addresses the unique needs of ELLs, enabling them to acquire vocabulary more effectively and succeed in their language-learning journey.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research on improving vocabulary acquisition for English learners (ELLs) should focus on longitudinal studies to understand the long-term effects of various instructional

strategies and interventions. By tracking students' progress over several years, researchers can identify which methods yield sustained improvements in vocabulary retention and language proficiency. Such studies can also explore how early interventions in primary education impact language skills in later stages of education, providing insights into the critical periods for language acquisition and the most effective strategies for different age groups.

Another important area for future research is the integration of technology in language learning. Investigating the efficacy of various digital tools, such as language learning apps, interactive e-books, and multimedia resources, can help educators and policymakers make informed decisions about incorporating technology into the curriculum. Research should examine not only the effectiveness of these tools in enhancing vocabulary acquisition but also their accessibility and usability for students from diverse backgrounds. Additionally, studies could explore how technology can be used to personalize learning experiences and address the individual needs of ELLs, ensuring that all students can benefit from these advancements.

Finally, future research should consider the socio-cultural factors that influence language learning. Researchers should investigate the impact of parental involvement and community programs on language learning, as well as the barriers that prevent some families from fully participating in their children's education. By addressing these sociocultural factors, future research can contribute to creating more equitable and effective language learning environments that support all students in achieving their full potential.

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Appendix A

Google Slides [Presentation](#)

Appendix B

“Draw Your Dream House” Activity

Imagine your perfect home! A dream house is a place where you can let your creativity run wild. It's a space where you can design rooms that reflect your personality, interests, and wildest dreams. Your dream house might have special features like a treehouse bedroom, a waterslide into a pool, or even a chocolate fountain in the kitchen. When designing your dream house, think about the layout, the number of rooms, special areas for your hobbies, and even the outdoor space. Remember, in your imagination, anything is possible!

Fill in the Blank: Fill in the blank with the correct words.

1. A ___ is a fun addition to a backyard and great for swimming.
2. A ___ room is perfect for watching movies and playing video games.
3. A secret ___ can be a cool hideout in your dream house.
4. A ___ can be used to move between floors without using stairs.
5. A ___ is an outdoor area perfect for gardening and relaxing.

Word bank: elevator, pool, media, patio, passageway

Appendix C

“I am Not Just a Number” Activity

In this activity, you'll choose numbers that are important to you and explain their significance to your classmates. This game will help you practice asking questions in the correct order and learn interesting facts about your peers. Remember, the goal is to guess the number and understand why it's meaningful to your classmate!

Important Numbers to me:

Number	Why?
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Describe how this activity can help you learn more about your classmates.

Appendix D

Family Literacy Programs

We are excited to announce that Family Literacy Programs are being offered! These programs provide wonderful opportunities for families to engage in literacy activities together, fostering a love for reading and writing.

<p style="text-align: center;">Week 1 Family Storytelling Night</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Week 2 Recipe Exchange and Cooking Demonstration</p>
<p>Objective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance listening and speaking skills. • Foster a deeper connection between students and their families. • Encourage creative thinking and storytelling abilities. <p>Story Prompts: Prepare a set of story prompts that are culturally relevant and interesting for middle school students and their families. Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "A memorable family trip." ○ "The day everything went wrong." ○ "A family tradition we cherish." <p>Introduction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome families and explain the purpose of the activity. • Briefly discuss the importance of storytelling in building language skills. <p>Family Grouping:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group students with their family members. If a student doesn't have a family member present, pair them with another family or a volunteer. <p>Story Creation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each family selects a story prompt and 	<p>Objective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve reading and writing skills. • Promote cultural exchange and appreciation. • Develop practical language skills related to following and giving instructions. <p>Preparation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recipe Templates: Distribute a simple recipe template to students and ask them to fill it out with their favorite family recipe in both their native language and English. • Gather Ingredients: Choose a simple, universally liked recipe that can be prepared easily during the session. Gather all necessary ingredients and equipment. <p>Introduction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome families and explain the objective of the activity. • Discuss how cooking can be a great way to learn and practice language skills. <p>Recipe Sharing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students and their families share their favorite recipes with the group. Discuss the

<p>collaborates to create a story. Encourage them to use as much detail as possible and to involve all family members in the storytelling process.</p> <p>Story Sharing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families take turns sharing their stories with the larger group. Encourage active listening and positive feedback from the audience. <p>Reflection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss with the students what they learned from the stories. Ask them to write a short reflection on what they enjoyed and what they learned about their family members through the storytelling activity. <p>Follow-Up Activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing Assignment: Have students write their family stories in English, including illustrations if possible. Compile these stories into a class book that can be shared with all families. 	<p>cultural significance of each dish if possible.</p> <p>Cooking Demonstration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a live cooking demonstration of the chosen recipe. Encourage students and their families to follow along using the recipe template. Involve students in reading the instructions out loud, measuring ingredients, and explaining steps in English. <p>Tasting and Feedback:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once the dish is prepared, everyone gets to taste it. Encourage students to describe the taste, texture, and any other sensory details in English. Collect feedback on the recipe and the demonstration process. <p>Reflection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask students to write a short paragraph about their experience, what they learned, and how it helped them practice English. Have them include any new vocabulary or phrases they learned during the activity. <p>Follow-Up Activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recipe Book Project: Compile all the family recipes into a bilingual class recipe book. Include pictures from the cooking demonstration and tasting session. Distribute copies to all participating families.
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Appendix E

Homework Help Flyer

Dear Families,

We hope this message finds you well! As we move through this school year, we want to take a moment to express our heartfelt gratitude for your continued support and partnership in your child's education. Together, we are making a difference!

Students will have the opportunity to work with older students or teachers in our After School Homework Club. This is a great chance for them to receive extra help and support in their studies.

We encourage you to remind your children about the importance of asking for help when they need it. Collaboration and support from peers and teachers can greatly enhance their understanding of the material.

We are grateful for the strong partnership we share with you and appreciate your active involvement in our school community. Thank you for your ongoing support in nurturing our students' growth and success.

Together, we look forward to continuing this journey and celebrating many more achievements in the future! If you are interested in attending Homework Help, please fill out the information below and submit it to your homeroom teacher.

Student's Name _____

Homeroom Teacher _____

Grade _____

Days I will be Attending _____

Subject(s) I need to Focus on _____

Emergency Contact Name _____

Emergency Contact Phone Number _____

Appendix F

Multilingual Resources

Communication Tips for Teachers

Establish Clear and Consistent Communication Channels

- Use multiple methods to communicate (e.g., emails, text messages, school apps).
- Ensure that communication is regular and predictable.
- Utilize translation services if necessary to ensure understanding.

Build Relationships

- Take time to learn about students' backgrounds and cultures.
- Show respect and interest in students' home languages and traditions.
- Create opportunities for informal interactions to build trust.

Use Clear and Simple Language

- Avoid jargon and complex sentences.
- Use visual aids, gestures, and demonstrations to support understanding.
- Repeat and rephrase important points to ensure comprehension.

Provide Written and Verbal Instructions

- Give instructions both orally and in written form to cater to different learning styles.
- Use bullet points, numbered steps, and visuals to make instructions clear.

Encourage Parent Involvement

- Invite parents to participate in classroom activities and school events.
- Provide materials and resources in multiple languages to help parents support their children's learning at home.
- Offer workshops and informational sessions to guide parents on how to assist with homework and school projects.

Create a Welcoming Environment

- Display multilingual signs and posters in the classroom.
- Celebrate cultural diversity through classroom activities and events.
- Ensure that ELLs feel safe and valued by fostering an inclusive atmosphere.

Please see the following page for resources to help promote productive language learning in your classroom!

1. Online Language Learning Platforms

- Duolingo: Offers courses in multiple languages and is suitable for beginners. [Duolingo](#)
- BBC Learning English: Provides free resources for English language learners at different levels. BBC Learning English
- Mango Languages: A language learning platform available through many public libraries. [Mango Languages](#)

2. Multilingual Reading Resources

- Unite for Literacy: Free digital library with books narrated in multiple languages. [Unite for Literacy](#)
- StoryWeaver: An open-source platform offering multilingual storybooks. [StoryWeaver](#)
- International Children's Digital Library: A collection of children's books in various languages. ICDL

3. Educational Apps

- Google Translate: Useful for quick translations and understanding basic vocabulary. [Google Translate](#)
- Quizlet: Helps students create and study flashcards in different languages. [Quizlet](#)
- Khan Academy: Offers instructional videos and practice exercises in multiple languages. [Khan Academy](#)

Appendix G

Community in Your Classroom

Strategy	Description
<p>Welcome and Introductions</p>	<p>Name Games: Use fun name games to help students learn each other's names.</p> <p>All About Me Posters: Have students create posters with pictures and facts about themselves to display in the classroom.</p> <p>Buddy System: Pair ELLs with native English speakers who can help them navigate the school environment and classroom routines.</p>
<p>Classroom Environment</p>	<p>Multilingual Welcome Signs: Display welcome signs and posters in multiple languages.</p> <p>Cultural Corner: Create a space where students can share cultural artifacts, books, and photos from their countries.</p> <p>Classroom Jobs: Assign classroom responsibilities that require collaboration between ELLs and native English speakers.</p>
<p>Interactive and Collaborative Activities</p>	<p>Group Projects: Mix ELLs and native English speakers in small groups for projects to encourage teamwork and language practice.</p> <p>Peer Teaching: Allow students to teach each other skills or concepts they are strong in, fostering mutual respect and learning.</p> <p>Circle Time Discussions: Hold regular circle time where students can share stories, experiences, and ideas in a safe and supportive setting.</p>

<p>Inclusive Curriculum</p>	<p>Diverse Reading Materials: Include books and materials that reflect various cultures and languages.</p> <p>Multicultural Celebrations: Celebrate cultural holidays and events from around the world, involving students in planning and presenting.</p> <p>Thematic Units: Design thematic units that incorporate global perspectives and allow students to explore different cultures.</p>
<p>Language Development Support</p>	<p>Language Buddies: Pair ELLs with native speakers for regular language practice and support.</p> <p>Visual Aids: Use pictures, diagrams, and other visual aids to support understanding and learning.</p> <p>Language-Rich Environment: Label classroom items in multiple languages and incorporate vocabulary-building activities.</p>
<p>Community-Building Activities</p>	<p>Classroom Meetings: Hold weekly classroom meetings to discuss concerns, share successes, and plan activities.</p> <p>Service Projects: Engage the class in service projects that benefit the school or local community, promoting teamwork and social responsibility.</p> <p>Icebreaker Games: Regularly use icebreaker games to help students get to know each other and build rapport.</p>

Appendix H

Lesson Plan Template

Subject:

Grade Level:

Lesson Title:

1. Objective:

- Clearly state the learning objective(s) for the lesson. What should students be able to do by the end of the lesson?

2. Standards:

- List the relevant standards that this lesson meets.

3. Materials Needed:

- List all materials and resources needed for the lesson.

4. Vocabulary:

- Key terms and phrases that students need to understand. Provide definitions and examples.

5. Warm-Up Activity:

- Engage students with a brief activity related to the lesson. This could be a discussion, a quick game, or a review of previous content.

6. Introduction:

- Explain the topic and objective of the lesson. Use visuals, realia (real objects), and gestures to aid comprehension.

7. Direct Instruction:

- Comprehensible Input Strategies:
 - Use visuals, videos, and demonstrations.
 - Speak clearly and at an appropriate pace.
 - Use body language and gestures to reinforce meaning.
 - Simplify language without "dumbing down" the content.

- Present new information in a way that is accessible to all students. Break down complex concepts into smaller, manageable parts.

8. Guided Practice:

- Work through examples together as a class. Provide scaffolding and support as needed.
- Use think-aloud strategies to model the thought process.

9. Interactive Activities:

- Incorporate activities that allow for student interaction and participation. This can include:
 - Pair or group work.
 - Hands-on activities.
 - Role-playing or simulations.
 - Interactive technology tools.

10. Checks for Understanding:

- Use formative assessment techniques to gauge student comprehension. This can include:
 - Asking open-ended questions.
 - Quick quizzes or polls.
 - Exit tickets.

11. Independent Practice:

- Assign tasks that students can complete on their own to reinforce the lesson. Provide clear instructions and examples.

12. Closure:

- Summarize the key points of the lesson. Allow students to share what they have learned.
- Address any remaining questions.

13. Assessment:

- Describe how student learning will be assessed. This can include:
 - Formal assessments (tests, quizzes).
 - Projects or presentations.
 - Performance tasks.

14. Differentiation:

- Outline strategies to meet the diverse needs of learners. This can include:
 - Adjusting the level of difficulty.
 - Providing additional support or enrichment.
 - Allowing for different modes of expression (e.g., written, oral, visual).

15. Reflection:

- Reflect on the lesson. What worked well? What could be improved? How will you adjust future lessons based on this reflection?

Appendix I

What is Fossilization?

<p>Fossilization- What is it?</p>	<p>Fossilization in second language acquisition refers to the process where incorrect language forms become a fixed part of a learner's language use. These errors persist despite exposure to correct forms and opportunities for correction.</p>
<p>What causes fossilization in second language acquisition?</p>	<p>Lack of Feedback: Insufficient corrective feedback from teachers or native speakers.</p> <p>Age of Acquisition: Older learners may be more susceptible due to cognitive factors.</p> <p>Frequency of Use: Repeated use of incorrect forms can reinforce errors.</p> <p>Learner's Motivation: Low motivation to improve accuracy can contribute to fossilization.</p> <p>Limited Exposure: Restricted interaction with native speakers and authentic language environments.</p>
<p>What are the effects?</p>	<p>Communication Breakdown: Persistent errors can lead to misunderstandings.</p>

	<p>Reduced Fluency: Fossilized errors may hinder language fluency and overall proficiency.</p> <p>Stagnation: Learners may plateau in their language development, making further progress difficult.</p>
<p>Strategies to prevent fossilizations:</p>	<p>Provide Regular Feedback: Offer consistent and constructive corrective feedback.</p> <p>Encourage Self-Monitoring: Teach learners to identify and correct their own errors.</p> <p>Increase Interaction: Facilitate more opportunities for authentic communication with native speakers.</p> <p>Vary Language Activities: Use diverse language tasks to address different areas of language use.</p> <p>Promote Motivation: Encourage a positive attitude towards language learning and improvement.</p>