

## Cooperative Learning in EFL Classes: A Comparative Study on Vocabulary Teaching\*

Eda ERCAN DEMİREL\*\*

### ABSTRACT

This present study aims to investigate the efficiency of cooperative learning and traditional instruction in terms of vocabulary recognition in foreign language teaching. In line with this purpose, the study searches for the answer of the following research question: "Is there a significant difference between the vocabulary learning performances of the students who were taught through cooperative learning method and the students who were taught through traditional methods?" and tries to find out whether students' vocabulary could be enriched through an instruction which emphasizes the role of cooperation rather than competition among students in teaching vocabulary. The study employs a quantitative research design comparing cooperative learning versus traditional method in terms of vocabulary learning/teaching. The instruments of the study cover a pre-test, a post-test, 8 reading texts, worksheets, posters, and quizzes. The test in concern- the vocabulary test- underwent a process with the guidance and supervision of language and scale development experts, and then was finalised to be used as the pre-test and post-test (Cronbach's alpha 0.83). The participants were freshmen at Selçuk University School of Foreign Languages (SOFL). The study was carried out in a four-week experimental process on two groups- experimental and control – each of which consisted of 18 students. A pre-test was applied at the beginning of the process to make sure if the two groups were equal in terms of their prior vocabulary knowledge and see the improvement afterwards. Throughout the study, the experimental group experienced learning vocabulary through Cooperative Learning (CL) and the control group was taught through traditional instruction- the gloss and the use of a monolingual dictionary with the same vocabulary syllabus for both groups. At the end of four weeks, a post-test -the same as the pre-test- was applied. Collected data was analysed through SPSS. The results indicated that the participants of the experimental group who had the Cooperative Learning experience led to better results in terms of vocabulary learning than the other students who were taught through the traditional instruction.

**Keywords:** Vocabulary Learning, Cooperative Learning, Student-based Learning

## Yabancı Dil Sınıflarında İşbirlikçi Öğrenme: Kelime Öğretimi Üzerine Karşılaştırmalı Bir Çalışma

### ÖZ

Bu çalışma, yabancı dil eğitiminde 'kelime tanıma' açısından işbirlikçi öğrenme ve geleneksel öğretim yöntemlerini verimlilikleri açısından araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu amaçla aynı doğrultuda olmak üzere çalışma, şu araştırma sorusuna cevap aramaktadır: "İşbirlikçi öğrenme metodu ile ve geleneksel metot aracılığıyla kelime öğrenen öğrencilerin arasında kelime öğrenme performansları bakımından anlamlı bir farklılık var mıdır?". Aynı zamanda mevcut çalışma bu bakımdan öğrencilerin kelime bilgilerinin rekabetten ziyade işbirliğinin önemini vurgulayan bir öğretim yöntemi ile zenginleştirilip zenginleştirilemeyeceği olgusunu da araştırmaktadır. Mevcut çalışma, kelime öğrenme ve öğretme bakımından işbirlikçi öğrenme ile geleneksel öğretim yöntemlerini karşılaştıran nicel bir araştırma modeline sahiptir. Çalışmada kullanılan materyaller; ön-test ve son-test olmak üzere aynı kelime bilgisi testi, her biri farklı konuları kapsamakta olan 8 farklı okuma metni, işbirlikçi öğrenme ile ilgili çalışma kağıtları, posterler ve kısa quiz çalışmalarını kapsamaktadır. Kelime bilgisi testi, dil ve ölçek geliştirme uzmanlarının rehberlik ve gözetimindeki bir sürecin sonucunda, gerekli değişiklikler, düzeltmeler, düzenlemeler ve eksiltmeler yapılarak ön-test ve son-test olarak kullanılmaya hazır hâle getirilmiştir (Cronbach's alpha 0.83). Katılımcılar, Selçuk Üniversitesi Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulunda (YADAM) öğrenim görmekte olan hazırlık sınıfı öğrencileridir. Çalışma, 4 haftalık deney sürecinde uygulanmıştır. Araştırma deseni kapsamında deneysel bir çalışma yürütülmüş ve bu süreçte her biri 18'er kişilik gruplardan oluşan deney ve kontrol grubu olmak üzere iki ayrı grup ile çalışılmıştır. Her iki grubun da mevcut kelime bilgisi bakımından eşit olduğunu tespit etmek üzere ve gelişimlerini kaydetmek açısından uygulama öncesinde her iki gruba da- deney grubu ve kontrol grubu- ön-test uygulanmıştır. Çalışma sürecinde deney grubu işbirlikçi öğrenme yöntemiyle kelime öğrenimini deneyimlerken; kontrol grubu geleneksel öğretim yöntemiyle aynı kelime gruplarını, kelime listesi ve İngilizce-İngilizce sözlük kullanarak öğrenmiştir. Edinilen veriler SPSS aracılığıyla analiz edilmiştir. Çalışmanın sonuçlarına göre geleneksel yöntemle kelime öğrenen kontrol grubu öğrencilerine kıyasla, işbirlikçi öğrenme deneyimini yaşayan deney grubu öğrencileri kelime öğrenimi açısından daha verimli sonuçlar elde etmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kelime Öğrenimi, İşbirlikçi Öğrenme, Öğrenci-Temelli Öğrenme

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\*\*Assist. Prof. Dr., Necmettin Erbakan University, orcid no: 0000-0001-7686-1550, eercan84@hotmail.com

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## 1. Introduction

Traditional methods tend to focus on a teacher- based technique and dwell on the authority of the teacher in the learning and teaching process. Cooperative learning, on the other hand, employs the active participation of the student within the learning process. All in all, the theory dwells on 'learning' rather than 'teaching'. Cooperative learning focuses on the cooperation of the students enabling them to study and learn together in a warm, understanding, and welcoming atmosphere as Jacobs et al. suggested: "CL encourages students to see peers through the cooperative window, as resources, as people to share with, as fellow adventurers in the search for knowledge" (2002; x).

In the digital era, we need the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills- higher-level thinking skills, communication skills, and social skills as well as the basic skills at schools as Kagan (1994; 2:1) already suggested. Cooperative learning enables students to make use of their thinking, learning, and life skills. Cooperative learning gets the students collaborate, actively involved in learning (Jacobs et al., 2002; xi), help each other to learn (Shachar,2003;103) -peer learning-,have positive social relations (Sharan and Shaulov, 1990; 174), make a whole, feel a part of the group, and have feelings of commitment, which goes in line with the needs of the new era.

Along with the changes and the needs of the new era, this study aims to find out whether students' vocabulary could be enriched through an instruction which emphasizes the role of cooperation rather than competition among students in teaching vocabulary. Aiming to shed light on the efficiency of cooperative learning over traditional method in terms of vocabulary teaching, the study searches for the answer of the following research question: "Is there a significant difference between the vocabulary learning performances of the students who were taught through cooperative learning method and the students who were taught through traditional methods?"

### 1.1. Theoretical Background

The idea of cooperation and cooperative learning is not something new, rather as old as the humankind. Johnson & Johnson (2017) take it even far back to the first century. Historical roots of cooperative learning are holding on to nearly all theories: a part of social interdependence theory as being closely related to positive interdependence; a part of cognitive developmental theory as being a prerequisite for cognitive growth, a part of behavioural learning theory as providing incentives for individuals to participate in the groups' effort (Johnson et al., 1998; 29).

Kagan (1994; 4:5) asserted four basic principles of Cooperative Learning as "Positive Interdependence, Individual Accountability, Equal Participation, and Simultaneous Interaction". Heterogeneous Grouping, and Social Skills can be added to this list as well. Only when cooperation is structured competently (Johnson and Johnson, 2002; 95) with all elements, components, and principles, would it be possible to have the positive outcomes as anticipated.

*Positive interdependence* might be simply defined as depending on each other, mutually. The principle was also suggested as a key to success "Achievement is a we thing, not a me thing, always the product of many heads and hands" (Atkinson 1964 in Gillies and Ashman 2003; 142). Positive interdependence is simply cooperation. Mutual benefits and gains (Kessler, 1992; 8) are accepted as parts of the principle. When the students have the idea of being a group and being a meaningful whole, all together; common benefits are in concern, each participant of the group looks out for the common gains. Then, 'one for all and all for one' type of interdependence emerges and cooperative learning is achieved.

In cooperative learning, all the students in the group have the same degree of responsibility, which is *individual accountability*. Sometimes in group work, all the work is done by some leaders of the group and the others do almost nothing. This is a big handicap for teaching, because the hardworking ones don't want to do their best and share the success with the others, so they study less than they can. Büyükkaragöz (1997; 102) names it as "exploitation effect". However, in cooperative learning all the members do something for the group, they have their roles and "to reach the team goal, all team members must master the targeted content or skills" (Slavin, 2014; 22-26). In this way, all the students feel responsible and successful for the work done, discouraging 'coasting' or 'hitchhiking' and 'taking a free ride' (Putnam, 1993; 17).

*Simultaneous interaction/ social skills* is also referred as “face to face promotive interaction” (Johnson and Johnson, 2002; 97) and “face to face interaction” (Putnam, 1993; 18). The aim of this face to face group work - cooperative groups - is to make sure that all the members interact with each other to understand the academic content and to complete the task at the end of the activity. This principle is based on the student-student interaction thoroughly while studying, communicating during the process, socialising and being in direct relation with the peers. Student- student interaction, rather than student- teacher interaction is preferred as the former one is thought to be more encouraging for the students.

*Equal participation* principle suggests that each student has the right to be successful, “to contribute to the success of the group, and to improve themselves” (Putnam, 1993; 20) and in this way, can do something for the team also for the self. They have equal roles and responsibilities. Equally putting something on the product, the students have the feeling of responsibility and participation for the success.

In cooperative learning, students are *grouped heterogeneously*. Otherwise a big gap occurs between the groups and one of the aims of cooperative learning –to minimise differences in class- would fail. The main difference between cooperative learning and group work can be simply defined as cooperative learning being delicately designed to make each one get across with the others to be able to inspire each other’s learning as Kessler (1992; 1) suggested.

## 1.2 Teacher’s Role

In Kessler (1992; 163), Wendy McDonell explains the roles of the teacher in cooperative learning classroom as follows: Inquirer, Creator, Observer, Facilitator, Change Agent; and gives the message “the teacher is the key” and “teachers make the difference”.

The first role of the teacher should be to have a sound grasp of the fundamentals of cooperative learning and the implementation of the concept into real classes (Gillies et al., 2008; 2) without missing the essence (Johnson and Johnson, 2002; 95). Within the process, to put theory into practice, the teacher prepares the learning environment accordingly in line with the cooperative learning principles. S/he prepares the classroom environment, lesson plans, activities, etc. appropriate for the students. Then the spirit of cooperative learning should be explained to the students because it’s quite different from the other methods. Students should understand that they have the power, authority on their own learning. Also, they should keep in mind that nobody can take a free ride in the group. In this way, they learn to be a part of the team. Students work together and make sure that everyone has completed the tasks given to each member (Slavin, 1995; 2). During the process, the teacher is always there, like an orchestra leader, organises the activities and lets the students go! Also, the teacher is always observing the process and helps when needed. There is no direct interference of the teacher on the students.

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Participants

The study was carried out with 36 prep-class students at Selcuk University School of Foreign Languages in 2007-2008 Academic Year. As the study was conducted at the very beginning of the Spring Term (March), the subjects were at early pre-intermediate level. The study was conducted by the researcher herself as the regular course teacher of both prep classes- experimental group and control group. The experimental group consisted of 18 students - 8 males + 10 females. Similarly, the control group consisted of 18 students: 12 males + 6 females. The ages of the students in both groups ranged between 18 and 19 with nearly similar social and educational backgrounds.

### 2.2. Instruments

Materials used in the study were a pre-test, a post-test and eight reading texts (2 each week). 50 target vocabulary items were selected from these texts according to their high frequency in the book-Password 1 (Butler, 2003), and a four-optioned multiple-choice vocabulary test was prepared. The test was edited and finalised after a supervising process of scale development and language experts. To ensure the test’s reliability, the test was piloted to 73 different prep students at Selcuk University, SOFL. At the end of the analysis procedure, some items were deleted in terms of reliability and validity issues. The finalized

version- a test of 35 items with Cronbach's *alpha* of 0.83 was conducted to different groups as part of the pilot study so that the duration and comprehensibility can be checked and set. The same test was in use as the pre-test and the post-test.

The materials used for the experimental group throughout the teaching process were eight reading texts. The target words were written in boldface so that the students were aware of their learning. Related to cooperative learning, some kinds of worksheets, posters, quizzes were also adopted.

The materials used for the control group throughout the teaching process were again the same eight reading texts as that of the experimental group. The target words were printed in boldface and the meanings of unknown words were presented in the right-hand margin, also with a gloss-sheet in English. The students were provided with monolingual dictionaries during reading sessions, as well.

### 2.3. Research Design

An experimental group and a control group were chosen among the same level of students (early pre-intermediate level students) at random. Eight reading texts were selected from the reading coursebook which was studied at school at the time.

Prior to the experiment, a pre-test was administered to both the experimental and the control group in order to determine the subjects' passive knowledge of the target vocabulary items. It also formed baselines for the results of the post-test. It should also be noted that the items were not studied before the pre-test.

The teaching process had eight sessions for both the experimental and the control group. The teaching process was all conducted by the same teacher, the researcher herself. Each session was carried out on the same day along four consecutive weeks. The duration of each session was 40 minutes. It should also be noted that each session covered the same sets of vocabulary items for each group. At the end of the teaching process, both groups were given the same pre-test as the post-test. The post-test was administered a day after the completion of the teaching process.

#### 2.3.1. Teaching/Learning process:

Experimental group: At the beginning of the study, the students were separated into groups of four or five heterogeneously and the students were informed about it. Each group was told to find a name for the group, which gave them a group spirit and they got to feel as parts of a whole. Then posters- wall notes that gave them a feeling of being together were put on the wall, e.g.: 'Great job!', 'Sink or swim together!', 'We need each other!', 'You're important for the group!', 'Your success is our success!', 'One for all, all for one!'.

Each session consisted of three main parts: pre-reading, while-reading and after-reading activities. In the first session, the teacher presented the text. In the pre-reading part, the teacher (the researcher as the regular teacher) asked some warm-up questions. The students were made to talk about the picture of the text. They also had guesses and predictions about the text. Later, 'Getting ready to read' exercises of the book were done. In this way, they had the general information on what the text would be about, also the students were motivated and eager to read. They had a need to check their guesses, they had a need and motivation to read.

In the while-reading stage, the students read the text silently first to get a general information about it. Then, the students read again while the teacher read aloud or played the audio. Students had the chance of reading the text twice and their level of comprehension was higher in this way. They also had the chance to hear the pronunciation of the new vocabulary items.

Then at the last stage, the teacher asked the students what the text was about. The students first discussed it as a group and then as a class. Then the teacher asked some comprehension questions about the text. Each student in the group was given a number. All Number 1s read the first paragraph, Number 2s the second and so on. In this way, each student in the group was responsible for a paragraph. They took notes and then told about it to their group mates. In this way, the text was read thoroughly again within the groups. When the students finished, each paragraph was given to a group. Each student in the group had a responsibility. The responsibilities and the duties were as follows: to get the general ideas from the text, to concern with the unknown words, to concern with what part of speech the new words

were, to find five words that summarise the text. The four students completed the tasks and the fifth member worked as an “encourager, checker, task master and active listener” as suggested by Kagan (1994; 14:10). This member was the group leader in a way. When they completed the task, they made their presentations for the class and the others took notes. Then each group made sentences with the new vocabulary items on what they understood about that paragraph.

At the end of the session, the teacher gave each group a mini quiz/worksheet about the text they studied. There was one worksheet for each group. The group members got together and completed one worksheet. Later on, the teacher checked and graded the worksheets to give the feedback as soon as possible. The grade was the group’s grade.

The lesson plan explained above was also applied to the other reading texts in different sessions, as well. In some of the lesson plans, different activities were applied in the after-reading activities:

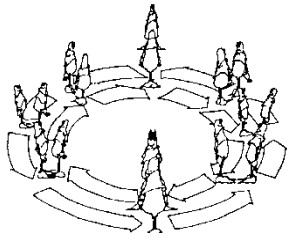


Fig.1: Inside Outside Circle  
(Kagan 1994; 10:11)

Students stood in two circles facing each other so that each student has a partner from the other circle. The teacher gave a keyword from the new vocabulary items and one student of the pair gave the definition and the other made a sentence using the word. When they decided that they finished, the circle rotated.

In most of the question-answer parts, *Numbered Heads Together* was used. It gave the students the chance to work, discuss together, and have turns to speak. *Think Pair Share* activity was also used to get the group members to have the opportunity to think, discuss, and share their ideas.

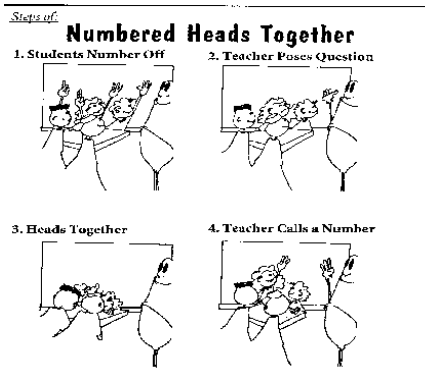


Fig.2 Numbered heads together  
(Kagan1994; 10:3/4)

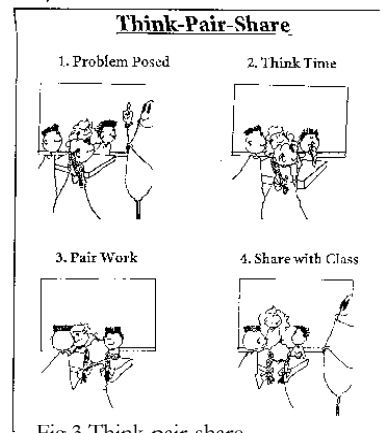


Fig.3 Think-pair-share  
(Kagan 1994; 11:2)

Control group: In each session the control group studied a reading text, each of which included ten to fifteen target vocabulary items. Each session consisted of three main parts: pre-reading, while-reading and after-reading activities. At the beginning of the session, the teacher presented the reading text. They had the pre-reading activities with warm-up questions, question-answer, and discussion sessions. The definitions of the target words were provided on the right-hand margin so that the students could have the meanings of the vocabulary items immediately. They were also given gloss-sheets in English “to facilitate incidental vocabulary learning” (Öztürk and Yorgancı, 2017; 644) and they were allowed to use monolingual dictionaries, as well. Thus, they could comprehend the text, and this would aid vocabulary learning.

In the while-reading stage, the students reread the text while the teacher read aloud or played the audio. For the after-reading part, the students had the comprehension exercises provided within the book. No additional exercises or worksheets were given to the students for the target vocabulary learning. The same procedure was also followed in the other sessions, as well.

#### 2.4. Data Analysis

The scores of the pre-test and the post-test were calculated into 100-score scale. After getting raw scores, the means and standard deviations for both groups on the pre-test and post-test were calculated. Next, the mean scores of the groups were compared by the application of t-tests. T- test was applied in order to compare the differences within each group. In addition, it was used in order to explore the differences between two groups. SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences), version 13.00 and Excel 7.0 were used for the data analysis.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Pre-Test

Since the study aimed at testing the students' vocabulary recognition ability, it was necessary to include a vocabulary recognition pre-test to determine whether the experimental and the control groups were equal at the beginning of the experiment. A second purpose of the pre-test was to obtain baselines which would be used to compare and evaluate the results of the post-test.

**Table 1. Independent Samples T-TEST Analysis for Pre-test Scores**

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p	Level of Significance
EXPERIMENTAL	18	53.666	17.756	0.424	0.677	P>.05
CONTROL	18	51.722	17.639			

According to Table 1, the mean scores of the experimental and the control group were calculated as  $53,666 \pm 17,756$ , and  $51,722 \pm 17,639$  successively. T- value being 0.424 at the 0.677 level of significance, no significant difference between the groups was found ( $P > 0.05$ ).

#### 3.2. Post-Test

The aim of the post-test, which was administered to the same groups after the vocabulary teaching process, was to compare the groups' improvement in their passive vocabulary knowledge. First of all, pre-test and post-test results were compared within both groups using T-Test. The statistical results are presented as follows:

**Table 2. Comparison of the Pre-test with Post-test Results within the Control Group- Dependent T-test Analysis**

THE CONTROL GROUP	N	MEAN	Std. Deviation	t	P	Level of Significance
PRE-TEST	18	51,722	17,639			
POST- TEST	18	71,722	20,192	6.294	.000	P<,05

According to Table 2, t value being 6.294 at the 0.00 level of significance, significant difference was found ( $P < 0.05$ ) between the mean scores of the pre-test and the post-test within the control group.

**Table 3. Comparison of the Pre-test with Post-test Results within the Experimental Group - Dependent T-test Analysis**

THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	P	Level of Significance
PRE-TEST	18	53,666	17,756			
POST-TEST	18	85,555	17,317	8.318	.000	P<,05

According to Table 3, a significant difference was found between the mean scores of the pre-test and the post-test within the experimental group considering the t value (8.318) at the 0.000 level of significance calculated by T-test ( $P < 0.05$ ).

**Table 4. Comparison of the Experimental and the Control Group for the Post-Test Results- Independent T-test Analysis**

GROUPS	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	P	Level of Significance
EXPERIMENTAL	18	85,555	14.308			
CONTROL	18	71,722	15.500	2.128	0.048	P<,05

According to Table 4, the mean scores of the experimental group were calculated as  $85,555 \pm 14.308$ , and that of the control group as  $71,722 \pm 15.500$  in terms of post-test scores. Accordingly, as a result of the t value (2.128) at the 0.048 level of significance calculated by T-test ( $P < 0.05$ ), it was found that there is significant difference between the experimental and the control group in favour of the experimental group.

Students themselves also expressed their ideas for feedback. All the students told that they liked the cooperative learning experience. They also stated that they learned in games and cooperative learning provided an easy way of learning vocabulary items. They liked the idea of being a part of a group and working together.

#### 4. Discussion

This study aimed at determining whether Cooperative Learning or traditional instruction of teaching vocabulary is effective in improving preparatory class young adult learners' vocabulary recognition. Therefore, it examined the test results of and the difference between two groups of students- a group which was taught vocabulary through cooperative learning and another group which was taught vocabulary through traditional teacher-based way. The study searched for the answer to the following research question: "Is there a significant difference between the vocabulary learning performances of the students who were taught through cooperative learning method and the students who were taught through traditional methods?"

The analysis of the participants' pre-test scores, which was conducted to compare the proficiency levels of both groups, revealed no significant difference between the two groups (see Table 1). It can be concluded that both groups were considered equal in their prior knowledge of vocabulary and the groups were found to be suitable to conduct the study.

Comparison of the pre-test with the post-test results of the control group- dependent t-test analysis indicated that there is significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores of the control group (See Table 2). Considering the results, it can be concluded that the subjects in the control group improved in terms of vocabulary recognition. Similar findings were derived for the experimental group, as well. There found to be a significant difference between pre-test and the post-test scores of the experimental group (See Table 3). Accordingly, students in the experimental group can be said to have improved in terms of vocabulary recognition. Findings indicated that both groups improved and performed better in the post-test. Table 2 and 3 displayed that both the experimental and the control group showed a significant improvement when they were compared within their groups. However, another comparison was made to see both groups' improvement on the post-test in order to explore the differences between them. Table 4 indicated that there is significant difference between the experimental and the control group. Considering the mean scores, it is clearly seen that although both groups improved (Table 2/Table 3), the experimental group scored significantly higher than the control group. So, this can be interpreted as a significant difference in favour of the experimental group, in other words, students who had cooperative learning experience scored significantly higher on the post-test than those who had traditional instruction.

Regarding the research question of the study -"Is there a significant difference between the vocabulary learning performances of the students who were taught through cooperative learning method and the students who were taught through traditional methods?"- it can be inferred that there is significant difference between the experimental and the control group, moreover the experimental group showed greater progress from pre-test to post-test. This progress showed a substantial improvement in the experimental group's ability to learn English vocabulary through cooperative learning method. In short, the implementation of the cooperative learning in prep classes for vocabulary instruction within this study was proved to have worked under these circumstances.

Feedback from the students who experienced cooperative learning also supported the quantitative findings of the study. Along with the academic achievement, students mentioned the importance of social interaction, being a member of a group, team-work as things that they liked most throughout the process.

#### 5. Conclusion

"Cooperative learning can significantly increase student achievement (compared with competitive and individualistic learning) when properly implemented" (Johnson, et al., 2000; 14). In line with this, the findings of the study strongly confirmed that using cooperative learning method in vocabulary teaching results in success. Students stated that they had the feeling of being responsible for their own learning and



it helped getting better results. Using traditional methods also helped; however, the findings of the cooperative learning were more significant than those of the traditional one, which goes in line with “the overall positive effect of cooperative learning versus competitive or individualistic forms of instruction” as previously suggested (Sharan and Shachar, 1988; 1).

A study (Ahmad and Mahmood, 2010) was conducted on prospective teachers’ academic achievement and the results were found to be consistent with the present study in terms of cooperative learning versus traditional instruction comparison. Açıkgöz (1990) also commented on the success of cooperative learning over the traditional methods. Similarly, some other studies also suggested students’ academic achievement in EFL setting reading content (Marzban and Alinejad, 2014), educational field (Gull& Shehzad, 2015) and in psychology field (Tran, 2014) within the cooperative learning implemented class settings. As well as the academic achievement, some other studies also found out that cooperative learning provided efficiency in self-esteem, attitudes toward peers and school, improvement in relations among diverse group of students (Jacob, 1999; 15), and better attitudes (Ajaja and Eravwoke, 2010).

Results of the present study indicated that learners learn best when they are actively involved in the process of learning. This is consistent with the findings of Erdem Mete’s (2018; 42-43) study where it is stated that “activities which were more experiential...were found more enjoyable and helpful than the ones which were not”. The common saying about education also supports the idea: “I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand”. Rather than studying or dealing with a new language and its vocabulary on their own, the students feel more comfortable when they belong to a group. In line with the comments of the participants, cooperative learning provided this feeling of being together and a whole, made the learners more interdependent and responsible for the learning process.

The new and modern understanding of teaching and learning a language dwells more upon cooperative studies, atmosphere, groups, and attempts. This way of understanding emphasizes the importance of student-based learning rather than teacher-based ones. Cooperative learning provides and improves positive interdependence, face to face communication skills, social skills, taking the responsibility and the risks together, being a part of a whole, peer-tutoring and warm atmosphere for the learners.

The most important thing to be kept in mind is perhaps to make group work into real ‘cooperative’ teams. So, the teacher should understand the essence of cooperative learning and make the students get the idea thoroughly to get cooperative learning work. Putnam (1993; 15) supports the same idea, concluding that the group work is not enough.

Taking all study findings and results into consideration, it can be easily concluded that if cooperative learning method is properly adjusted into language classes, it results better than the traditional methods. Cooperative learning isn’t only for academic success of the students. Apart from improving the students’ classroom success, it also improves social skills. For a wider range of understanding of education, the curriculum and the classroom activities can be organized in a way appropriate for the cooperative learning method. Therefore, using cooperative learning in teaching more and giving more importance to it in the syllabus can result in both academic and social success. As cooperative learning provides conscious learning, it brings responsibility for the learners for their own learning. This makes the learners more aware of the learning process and they feel more powerful. When the teachers emphasize this feature of the cooperative learning, it helps getting better results towards autonomy.

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