

## COMPARATIVE EFFECTIVENESS OF MIXED-LANGUAGE AND FULL ENGLISH CONVERSATION CLUBS ON VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT AMONG INTERMEDIATE ENGLISH LEARNERS IN UZBEKISTAN

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## O'ZBEKISTONDA O'RTA DARAJADAGI INGLIZ TILINI O'RGANUVCHILAR ORASIDA ARALASH TIL VA TO'LIQ INGLIZ TILI SUHBAT KLUBLARINING LUG'AT BOYLIGINI RIVOJLANTIRISHDAGI SAMARADORLIGINI SOLISHTIRISH

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## СРАВНИТЕЛЬНАЯ ЭФФЕКТИВНОСТЬ СМЕШАННЫХ И ПОЛНОАНГЛИЙСКИХ РАЗГОВОРНЫХ КЛУБОВ ПО РАЗВИТИЮ СЛОВАРНОГО ЗАПАСА СРЕДИ ИЗУЧАЮЩИХ АНГЛИЙСКИЙ ЯЗЫК НА СРЕДНЕМ УРОВНЕ В УЗБЕКИСТАНЕ

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**Abstract.** This study explores the impact of Mixed-Language and Full English Conversation Clubs on vocabulary development among pre-IELTS learners in Uzbekistan. Using a mixed-methods design, the research involved 16 students, divided into two groups, who participated in four 90-minute sessions focused on IELTS-related vocabulary. The Mixed-Language Conversation Club, which initially allowed native language support before transitioning to English, showed significant and consistent improvements in vocabulary acquisition compared to the Full English Conversation Club, which used English exclusively from the start. Quantitative data from pre- and post-tests and Likert scale surveys supported by qualitative insights from interviews revealed higher engagement and efficiency for intermediate learners in the Mixed-Language approach. The findings suggest that integrating native language support in the early stages of language learning can enhance vocabulary development and overall language progress.

**Keywords:** Mixed-Language Conversation Club; Full English Conversation Club; vocabulary development; pre-IELTS learners; language instruction.

**Annotatsiya.** Ushbu tadqiqot O'zbekistondagi IELTSga tayyorgarlik ko'rayotgan o'quvchilar orasida aralash til va to'liq ingliz tili suhbat klublarining lug'at boyligini rivojlantirishga ta'sirini o'rganadi. Aralash usullardan foydalanilgan tadqiqotda 16 nafar talabalar



ishtirok etdi. Ular ikki guruhga bo'lingan holda IELTS bilan bog'liq lug'atni o'rganishga qaratilgan 4ta 90 daqiqalik darslarga qatnashdilar. Boshlanishida ona tiliga yordam berish imkoniyati berilib, keyinchalik ingliz tiliga o'tgan aralash til suhbat klubi lug'at boyligini rivojlantirishda sezilarli va doimiy yaxshilanishlarni ko'rsatdi. To'liq ingliz tili ishlatiladigan Suhbat Klubi esa, faqat ingliz tilini boshidanoq ishlatdi. Ilmiy natijalar to'plangan oldin va keyin testlari, Likert shkalasi orqali so'rovnomalar va suhbatlardan olingan sifatli ma'lumotlar asosida o'rta darajadagi o'quvchilar uchun aralash til yondashuvi ko'proq samarali ekanligini ko'rsatdi. Tadqiqot natijalari shuni ko'rsatadiki, til o'rganishning dastlabki bosqichlarida ona tiliga yordamni qo'shish lug'at boyligini rivojlantirishni va til o'rganish jarayonini yaxshilaydi.

**Kalit so'zlar:** aralash til suhbat klubi; to'liq ingliz tili suhbat klubi; lug'at boyligini rivojlantirish; IELTS ga tayyorgarlik ko'ruvchilar; til o'rgatish.

**Аннотация.** В исследовании рассматривается влияние смешанных языковых клубов и клубов полного английского общения на развитие словарного запаса среди учащихся, готовящихся к экзамену IELTS, в Узбекистане. Используя методику смешанных исследований, в исследовании приняли участие 16 студентов, которые были разделены на две группы и прошли четыре 90-минутных занятия, направленных на изучение лексики, связанной с IELTS. Смешанный языковой клуб, где на первых порах разрешалось использовать родной язык, а затем происходил переход на английский, продемонстрировал значительные и стабильные улучшения в освоении лексики по сравнению с клубом полного английского общения, который с самого начала использовал только английский язык. Количественные данные, полученные в ходе предтекстовых и посттекстовых заданий и опросов по шкале Лайкерта, подкрепленные качественными результатами интервью, показали более высокую вовлеченность и эффективность учащихся среднего уровня при использовании смешанного языкового подхода. Полученные результаты свидетельствуют о том, что включение поддержки родного языка на ранних этапах изучения языка может способствовать развитию словарного запаса и общему прогрессу в изучении языка.

**Ключевые слова:** смешанный языковой клуб; клуб полного английского общения; развитие словарного запаса; учащиеся, готовящиеся к IELTS; языковое обучение.

## Introduction

Using the target language (L2) and reducing the use of the native language (L1) in the classroom is one of the most debatable topics in the field of teaching foreign languages. A majority of educators contend that a classroom environment where primarily L2 is used is the most effective for enhancing students' foreign language acquisition. According to Hlas (2016), "There is little doubt that maximizing the quantity and quality of language (TL) is the primary goal of foreign language teachers. The Council of Chief State School Officers (2002) highlighted the critical importance of consistently offering clear and understandable input in the target language during class, considering it a cornerstone of the foreign language acquisition process. Moreover, numerous researchers have

argued that a substantial incorporation of the second language (L2) leads to significant improvements in learners' acquisition due to increased exposure to the target language.

While some hold the firm belief that L1 should be entirely excluded from foreign language instruction, various researchers have highlighted the advantages of incorporating L1 in L2 learning. Chiou, citing Nation (2003), emphasized the positive effects of using L1 in language classes, noting that it can create a more welcoming and comfortable learning environment. Nation (16, 20–24) argued that although it might reduce full immersion in L2, integrating L1 into classroom activities can be a time-saving and motivational strategy, especially for students with limited English proficiency. Similarly, Mole (11, 259) pointed out that while exclusively using English in ESL classes can be effective, the strategic use of L1, such as through code-switching to explain complex concepts or grammar, might be more efficient and successful. Additionally, Dong (5, 30–35) supports the idea that L1 use in L2 classrooms can enhance comprehension and boost students' motivation to learn.

A conversation club is an informal group or gathering where people come together to practice speaking a language, typically a second language, through casual discussions. Conversation clubs have been widely recognized for their effectiveness in language acquisition. They offer a supportive environment where learners can practice speaking, listening, and using new vocabulary in real-life contexts. Research indicates that regular participation in conversation clubs leads to significant improvements in various language skills, including vocabulary, speaking, and listening (10;17).

In Uzbekistan, conversation clubs have proven particularly beneficial. Khodjaeva (8, 12–22) highlights that these clubs provide crucial opportunities for students to practice English in a supportive environment, thereby enhancing their vocabulary and overall language proficiency. This is particularly important in contexts where formal classroom instruction may not provide sufficient practice opportunities.

Despite the recognized benefits of conversation clubs, there remains a gap in understanding the comparative effectiveness of different forms of conversation clubs, specifically Mixed-Language Conversation Clubs and Full English Conversation Clubs. Mixed-language clubs, where both the native language and the target language are used, and full-English clubs, where only the target language is used, offer distinct approaches to language learning. By considering this, the study aims to investigate the influence of Mixed-Language and Full English Conversation Clubs on the vocabulary development of pre-IELTS learners in Uzbekistan. By utilizing both quantitative and qualitative approaches, the study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the effectiveness of these conversation clubs in enhancing the lexical knowledge of intermediate-level English learners.

**Research Questions:**

1. Which conversation club, Mixed-Language or Full English, is more effective in enhancing the vocabulary acquisition of pre-IELTS learners in Uzbekistan?
2. How do learners describe their engagement and interaction in both Mixed-Language and Full English Conversation Clubs?

This study is significant because it addresses a critical need in the field of language education in Uzbekistan. By comparing the effectiveness of Mixed-Language and Full English Conversation Clubs, the research provides valuable insights into which club may be more beneficial for vocabulary acquisition among pre-IELTS learners. These findings can inform language teaching practices and help educators design more effective language learning interventions, ultimately improving language acquisition outcomes for learners in diverse educational settings.

**Literature Review**

The efficacy of various instructional methods in enhancing vocabulary development among intermediate English learners has gained increasing attention in the field of language education. This literature review aims to synthesize findings related to the comparative effectiveness of mixed-language and full-English conversation clubs.

Conversation clubs have been widely recognized as effective environments for enhancing language acquisition. These clubs provide learners with opportunities for authentic communication, which is crucial for developing language proficiency (12). Research indicates that participation in conversation clubs can lead to significant improvements in various language skills, including vocabulary, speaking, and listening (3, 379).

Vocabulary acquisition is a crucial component of language learning, influencing both comprehension and communication abilities. Research indicates that exposure to diverse linguistic contexts can substantially affect learners' vocabulary knowledge. Peters (19) demonstrated that out-of-class exposure to English language media significantly improves learners' vocabulary knowledge, suggesting that informal environments can complement formal instruction.

Furthermore, Bohlmann et al. (1, 1094) explored bidirectionality in self-regulation and expressive vocabulary among monolingual and dual-language learners. Their findings indicate that dual language learners exhibit distinct vocabulary development patterns, which may be influenced by the linguistic context in which they engage. This highlights the potential benefits of mixed-language environments, as they could cater to varying learner needs and backgrounds.

Interactive learning environments, such as conversation clubs, play a pivotal role in vocabulary development. Greenfader and Brouillette (6, 171–180) found that dramatization and movement activities in English conversation settings boosted language skills among learners, indicating the effectiveness of interactive methodologies. Additionally, Micán and Medina (13, 398–414) emphasized the importance of self-assessment in

vocabulary learning, suggesting that learners who actively engage in their learning process tend to achieve better outcomes.

The comparative effectiveness of mixed-language and full-English conversation clubs remains underexplored. While evidence suggests that mixed-language environments can provide contextual support for learners (1, 1094), the specific advantages of full English conversation clubs warrant further investigation. For instance, full English settings may immerse learners in the target language, potentially leading to greater proficiency but possibly inducing anxiety in less confident speakers (4).

Despite the insights gained from existing studies, several knowledge gaps persist. There is limited research directly comparing mixed-language and full-English conversation clubs on vocabulary development among intermediate learners. This literature review highlights the significance of conversation clubs in vocabulary development among intermediate English learners and underscores the need for comparative studies on mixed-language and full English environments. While current research provides foundational insights, addressing existing knowledge gaps will contribute to more effective language teaching practices and ultimately enhance learners' vocabulary acquisition.

### Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework provides a foundation for understanding and interpreting the phenomena under investigation. In the context of this study, two theoretical perspectives are particularly relevant: Translanguaging Theory and Direct Method Theory.

**Translanguaging** is an educational theory and practice that views the use of multiple languages by bilingual or multilingual individuals as an integrated and dynamic process rather than treating them as separate systems. Originating from the work of Cen Williams in the 1980s, the concept was later expanded upon by scholars like Ofelia García. Translanguaging recognizes that bilinguals naturally use their entire linguistic repertoire to make sense of the world, communicate, and learn. García and Li Wei (2014) describe translanguaging as a pedagogical approach that leverages students' full linguistic capabilities, allowing them to draw on both their first language (L1) and second language (L2) to enhance comprehension and expression.

In a classroom setting, translanguaging involves strategically using both L1 and L2 to facilitate learning rather than strictly separating them. For instance, a teacher might encourage students to discuss a complex concept in L1 before explaining it in L2 or to write notes in one language and present them in another. This approach acknowledges that language learning is not just about acquiring a new set of linguistic skills but involves complex cognitive and social processes. **Creese and Blackledge (2010)** argue that translanguaging can empower students by validating their linguistic identities and promoting deeper understanding, as it allows them to access and express knowledge across languages.

**Translanguaging** is particularly effective in multilingual classrooms where students have diverse linguistic backgrounds. By encouraging the use of all available languages, teachers can create more inclusive and



responsive learning environments. **Canagarajah (2011)** also supports this view, suggesting that translanguaging reflects real-world communication more accurately, where multilingual speakers frequently switch between languages depending on context, purpose, and audience.

The **Direct Method** (also known as the Natural Method) is a language teaching approach that originated in the late 19th and early 20th centuries as a reaction to the Grammar-Translation Method, which heavily relied on L1 for instruction and translation exercises. The Direct Method was developed by educators like **Maximilian Berlitz** and **Charles Gouin**, who believed that language learning should mimic the natural acquisition of a first language, focusing on the direct association between meaning and the target language (L2) without translation.

This method emphasizes immersive language learning, where L2 is the sole medium of instruction. Grammar is taught inductively, meaning that rules are learned through the practice of speaking and listening rather than through explicit instruction. Vocabulary is introduced in context, and there is a strong focus on oral communication, with students encouraged to think and respond directly in the target language. Berlitz (1915) argued that the Direct Method enables students to develop better speaking and listening skills because it avoids the interference of L1, thus promoting more natural language use.

One of the key principles of the Direct Method is that students should learn to associate words and phrases directly with their meanings in L2, rather than translating them from L1. This method relies heavily on visual aids, demonstrations, and interactive activities to convey meaning. **Richards and Rodgers (2001)** note that the Direct Method prioritizes the development of oral skills and spontaneous use of the language, making it particularly effective in settings where the goal is to achieve conversational fluency.

However, while the Direct Method has been praised for its focus on spoken language and immersion, it has also faced criticism for its lack of emphasis on reading and writing skills, as well as its demanding nature, which requires teachers to be highly proficient in L2 and adept at using it exclusively in the classroom. Despite these criticisms, the Direct Method remains influential, particularly in language learning programs that prioritize immersion and communicative competence.

### Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods design to investigate the influence of Mixed-Language and Full English Conversation Clubs on the vocabulary development of pre-IELTS learners in Uzbekistan. By utilizing both quantitative and qualitative approaches, the study aimed to provide a comprehensive analysis of the effectiveness of these conversation clubs in enhancing the lexical knowledge of intermediate-level English learners.

The participants in this study were pre-IELTS students, aged between 16 and 21, enrolled at the Language Academy in Fergana, Uzbekistan. Each group consisted of 8 students, with a total of 16 participants divided into two groups: Mixed-Language Conversation Club and Full English Conversation Club. All participants had an English

proficiency level equivalent to B1 on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). This ensured proficiency level facilitated a more accurate assessment of the intervention's impact on vocabulary acquisition.

To ensure appropriate placement, all participants underwent a general-level test, a MOCK IELTS exam covering reading, listening, writing, and speaking. This assessment confirmed their eligibility for the pre-IELTS course and enabled accurate division into the two groups. Additionally, participants completed a self-assessment vocabulary knowledge checklist or Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS) before the intervention began. This step was crucial for establishing baseline vocabulary proficiency and tailoring the instruction to address specific needs.

The vocabulary instruction covered a range of topics relevant to the IELTS examination, divided into two sections: Writing Task 2 and Speaking sections.

Writing Task 2 Topics:

1) *“Urban Planning and Zoning: In many cities, planners tend to arrange shops, schools, offices, and homes in specific areas and separate them from each other. Do you think the advantages of this policy outweigh the disadvantages?”*

2) *“Innovation and Profit vs. Social Responsibility: Innovation is often driven by the pursuit of profit and economic growth. However, some argue that it should prioritize addressing social and environmental issues. Discuss both sides and give your own opinion.”*

3) *“Charitable Donations: Everybody should donate a fixed amount of their income to support charity. To what extent do you agree or disagree?”*

4) *“University Competition: Nowadays, there is more and more competition for getting into university. Is this a positive or negative development?”*

Speaking Section Topics:

1) *“Education”*

2) *“Animals”*

3) *“Careers”*

4) *“Technology”*

These topics were chosen based on their alignment with common IELTS themes and their potential to provide a comprehensive vocabulary base. According to Schmitt (20) and Nation (15), diverse and relevant thematic vocabulary instruction is essential for improving lexical knowledge and language use.

The intervention consisted of four sessions for each conversation club. Each session focused on teaching vocabulary words through either writing tasks related to IELTS Writing Task 2 or speaking tasks related to the IELTS speaking sections. In the intervention phase, students were given a selection of topics for both writing and speaking tasks. Specifically, for the writing component, each student chose two out of the four provided Writing Task 2 topics. Similarly, for the speaking component, each student selected two out of the four provided Speaking

section topics. This choice allowed students to engage with topics that were most relevant or interesting to them, thereby enhancing their learning experience and motivation. The sessions were conducted according to topic-related lesson plans. Each session lasted 90 minutes.

### **Mixed-Language Conversation Club**

#### **Lesson Structure for Session 1:**

**Note:** This lesson plan outlines the structure for the first session. Subsequent sessions followed a similar path, with adjustments made according to the specific topics and vocabulary being covered. Each session maintained the core activities of vocabulary introduction, practice, application in writing, and peer review while adapting content to different IELTS-related topics.

##### **1. Warm-Up (10 minutes)**

**Activity:** Quick Introductory Discussion

**Description:** Initiate a discussion about urban planning and its impact on daily life. Allow students to express their initial thoughts in Uzbek, Russian, or English to facilitate understanding.

##### **2. Vocabulary Introduction and Practice (20 minutes)**

**Activity:** Present Vocabulary Related to Urban Planning

##### **Vocabulary List:**

Infrastructure, Zoning, Residential, Commercial, Mixed-use, Urbanization, Suburban, Metropolitan, Decentralization, Amenities, Congestion, Sustainable Development, Land Use, Spatial Distribution, Public Transport, Green Spaces, Urban Sprawl, Policy, Regulation, Community Cohesion, Accessibility, Density, Quality of Life, Economic Activity, Social Cohesion, Traffic Congestion, Neighborhood, Urban Renewal, Economic Segregation, Air Quality

**Explanation:** Introduce each vocabulary word using Uzbek and Russian translations. Provide visual aids to enhance comprehension. For instance, the word “infrastructure” was translated into Uzbek as “infratuzilma” and into Russian as “инфраструктура”, with English sentences to show usage.

**Translanguaging Practice:** Initially, allow students to use their native languages to understand vocabulary meanings and construct sentences. Transition to English to practice using the new words in context.

##### **3. Vocabulary Racing (15 minutes)**

**Activity:** Sentence Creation Competition

**Description:** In small groups, students create sentences using the vocabulary words, competing to produce the most correct sentences within a set time limit.

##### **4. Worksheet Activity (25 minutes)**

**Activity:** Vocabulary Worksheet

**Description:** Distribute worksheets with:

**Vocabulary Matching:** Match words with their definitions.

**Fill in the Blanks:** Complete sentences using the vocabulary words.

**Descriptive Writing:** Write a paragraph about urban planning using specific vocabulary.



**Translanguaging Support:** Students may use their native languages if needed, but worksheets should be completed in English.

#### **5. Essay Planning and Writing (25 minutes)**

**Activity:** Structured Essay Planning and Writing

**Prompt:** “In many cities, planners tend to arrange shops, schools, offices, and homes in specific areas and separate them from each other. Do you think the advantages of this policy outweigh the disadvantages?”

**Description:** Guide students through brainstorming, outlining, and organizing their essays. Encourage vocabulary usage and provide support in Uzbek or Russian if needed.

#### **6. Break (5 minutes)**

#### **7. Peer Review and Discussion (25 minutes)**

**Activity:** Peer Review and Group Discussion

**Description:** Students exchange essays for feedback, focusing on content, structure, and vocabulary. Facilitate a discussion in English, with translanguaging as needed for clarification.

#### **8. Conclusion and Feedback (5 minutes)**

**Activity:** Reflection and Feedback

**Description:** Reflect on the lesson, discussing learned concepts and their application in writing. Provide individual feedback and encourage continued vocabulary practice.

For the Mixed-Language Conversation Club, the approach involved using translanguaging to support vocabulary learning. During the initial stages, vocabulary was introduced using Uzbek and Russian translations to aid comprehension. Visual aids and contextual sentences were provided to reinforce understanding. As the lesson progressed, students transitioned to English with some code-mixing, ensuring they practiced the new vocabulary in a fully immersive English environment by the end of the session. This approach facilitated effective comprehension and application of new vocabulary.

For the Full English Conversation Club, all sessions were conducted exclusively in English. Vocabulary was introduced and practiced without translations, relying solely on English definitions and contextual examples. Students were encouraged to engage fully in English, promoting the direct application of new vocabulary.

Data was collected through pre- and post-tests administered to all participants. These tests measured the students' vocabulary knowledge across the selected topics, allowing for a comparative analysis of the Mixed-Language and Full English Conversation Clubs' effectiveness. Additionally, qualitative data was gathered through two methods: interviews and observational notes. The VKS was adapted to fit the specific needs of this study by including 30 vocabulary words directly related to the chosen topics. This customized VKS included five levels of self-assessment:

Level 1: “I do not remember having seen this word before.”

- Score: 0 points
- Description: The student does not recognize the word at all.

Level 2: “I have seen this word before, but I do not know what it means.”

- Score: 1 point

• Description: The student recognizes the word but does not know its meaning.

Level 3: “I know this word; it means (provide a brief definition or translation).”

- Score: 2 points

• Description: The student can provide a basic definition or translation.

Level 4: “I can use this word in a sentence (write a sentence using the word).”

- Score: 3 points

• Description: The student can use the word correctly in a sentence.

Level 5: “I can use this word confidently in various contexts (write two sentences using the word in different contexts).”

- Score: 4 points

• Description: The student demonstrates confident and versatile use of the word in different contexts.

Each vocabulary word from the sessions was included in both the VKS pre-test and post-test to measure both recognition and productive use. However, in accordance with the design of the experiment, the administration of the VKS differed between the two groups. The **Full English Conversation Club** was given the VKS entirely in English, and participants were required to respond only in English. This format challenged students to define and use the vocabulary exclusively in the target language, which might have limited their ability to express more nuanced definitions or examples in the earlier stages of vocabulary acquisition.

In contrast, the **Mixed-Language Conversation Club** was allowed to respond more freely. While the test was administered in English, participants in this group had the option to define or discuss the vocabulary in Uzbek or Russian. This flexibility likely contributed to deeper comprehension of the vocabulary, as students could draw on their native languages to enhance understanding and expression before transitioning fully to English.

This difference in test administration is significant in interpreting the results, as it reflects the varying degrees of linguistic scaffolding provided to each group. The Mixed-Language group’s ability to use Uzbek or Russian may have enabled them to demonstrate a fuller grasp of the vocabulary during the tests, potentially resulting in higher post-test scores compared to the Full English group, where students had to rely solely on their English proficiency.

In addition to the VKS, a **Likert scale survey** was conducted with the help of “Google Forms.” This survey aimed to capture students’ engagement, perceived vocabulary improvement, and overall satisfaction with the learning experience. Following the intervention, **interviews** were conducted with each student individually to explore further their perceptions of the program, engagement levels, and the effectiveness of the vocabulary instruction provided in the Conversation Clubs.

## Results

To begin the analysis, an independent t-test was conducted to compare the **pre-test scores** between the Mixed-Language Conversation Club and the Full English Conversation Club. This comparison revealed a statistically significant difference between the groups' pre-test scores, with the Mixed-Language group scoring higher ( $t(62) = 7.82$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The average pre-test score for the Mixed-Language group was 63.97, while the Full English group had an average pre-test score of 58.06. These initial differences in vocabulary knowledge need to be considered when interpreting the overall effectiveness of each conversation club.

Following this, a paired t-test was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the **Mixed-Language Conversation Club** and the **Full English Conversation Club** in improving participants' language proficiency (table 1). The pre-and post-test scores were compared for each group, and key statistical results are summarized in the following sections.

**Table 1**  
*Test Score Analysis*

Club	Average Pre-Test Score	Average Post-Test Score	Difference	t-Statistic	Degrees of Freedom (df)	P-Value (two-tail)
Mixed-Language Conversation Club	63.97	85.47	21.50	-18.34	31	$3.40 \times 10^{-18}$
Full English Conversation Club	58.06	67.25	9.19	-14.87	31	$1.18 \times 10^{-15}$

The participants in the Mixed-Language Conversation Club showed a significant improvement in their test scores. The average pre-test score was 63.97, while the average post-test score increased to 85.47, resulting in a mean difference of 21.50 points. This considerable increase demonstrates that participants made meaningful progress in their language proficiency after participating in the club.

The statistical analysis yielded a t-statistic of -18.34 with 31 degrees of freedom. The corresponding p-value (two-tail) was  $3.40 \times 10^{-18}$ , far below the standard significance threshold of 0.05. This extremely small p-value indicates that the observed improvement is statistically significant and not due to chance. The results clearly suggest that the Mixed-Language Conversation Club had a strong and positive impact on language development among the participants.

Similarly, participants in the **Full English Conversation Club** also experienced significant improvements in their test scores, though to a lesser extent than the Mixed-Language Conversation Club. The **average pre-test score** for this group was 58.06, and the **average post-test score** increased to 67.25, leading to a mean difference of 9.19 points. While this improvement is smaller than that observed in the Mixed-Language Conversation Club, it still represents a substantial gain in participants' language abilities.

The analysis for the Full English Conversation Club produced a **t-statistic** of -14.87, with **31 degrees of freedom**. The **p-value (two-tail)** was  $1.18 \times 10^{-15}$ , again much smaller than the 0.05 threshold, indicating that the improvement in post-test scores was statistically significant. This suggests that the Full English Conversation Club also had a positive impact on participants' language proficiency.

To gain deeper insights into the participants' experiences and perceptions of the Mixed-Language and Full English Conversation Clubs, a Likert scale was employed as part of the quantitative data collection. The Likert scale is a widely used psychometric tool in social science research that measures attitudes or opinions by asking respondents to rate their level of agreement with a series of statements (11, 11–55). In this study, participants were presented with 10 statements related to their experiences in the conversation clubs, which they rated on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 indicates "Strongly Disagree" and 5 indicates "Strongly Agree."

The Likert scale survey was distributed to participants via Google Forms, ensuring ease of access and completion. Students were instructed to fill out the survey individually before the commencement of their respective interviews. This method allowed for the collection of candid and unbiased responses, which could be analyzed to provide a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences in both the Mixed-Language and Full English Conversation Clubs.

The responses were analyzed to calculate the average score for each statement across both groups—Mixed-Language Club and Full English Club. The average scores provided a quantitative measure of the participant's perceptions, which could be compared between the two groups to identify any significant differences in their experiences.

**Table 2**  
*Likert Scale Results*

Question	Mixed-Language Club (Average Score)	Full English Club (Average Score)
1. Engaging and interesting	4.6	3.6
2. Relevant vocabulary	4.7	4.0
3. Improved vocabulary	4.6	3.8
4. Helpful activities	4.8	4.0
5. Useful feedback	4.7	4.1
6. Interaction with peers	4.6	3.9
7. Increased confidence	4.7	4.0
8. Relevant topics	4.8	4.0
9. Effective structure	4.7	4.1
10. Overall satisfaction	4.8	4.0

As the table indicates, the Mixed-Language Club consistently received higher average scores across all questions, suggesting that participants in this group found the sessions more engaging, relevant, and effective compared to the Full English Club. This difference could be attributed to the flexible language use in the Mixed-Language Club, which may have

allowed participants to understand better and internalize the new vocabulary.

The qualitative analysis of student feedback from the Mixed-Language and Full English Conversation Clubs, collected through interviews conducted in Uzbek, provides valuable insights into their experiences with the Conversation Club sessions. Students frequently noted the interactive nature of the sessions as a significant benefit, with one participant commenting, "The sessions made me more confident in using English, especially during discussions. I could immediately apply the new words I learned, which made the vocabulary stick." The variety of topics was also appreciated, as it exposed students to a broad range of vocabulary relevant to the IELTS exam.

Despite these advantages, some challenges were reported. For instance, students in the Full English Conversation Club found the immersion demanding, particularly when trying to express complex ideas without relying on their native language. One student reflected, "It was tough at the beginning to speak only in English, especially when I wanted to explain something complex. But over time, it got easier." Additionally, difficulties in understanding vocabulary definitions provided exclusively in English were noted, with a student explaining, "When the teacher gave definitions in English, sometimes the definitions used other complex words I did not know. This made it tricky to understand the new vocabulary clearly."

Students offered several suggestions for improvement, such as incorporating vocabulary lists with translations in Uzbek and Russian. One student suggested, "It would be very helpful if we were given vocabulary lists with translations in Uzbek and Russian. This would make it easier to grasp the meanings of new words and learn them more quickly." Students from the Mixed-Language Club also expressed a desire for more such programs within their academy, noting the value of free sessions. A student commented, "It would be great to have more clubs like this at our academy. Also, having them for free is helpful and would encourage more students to participate and improve their English."

The feedback also highlighted the practical application of new vocabulary, with many students reporting its use in daily life and studies. As one student shared, "I used the vocabulary from the sessions in my practice essays for the IELTS Writing Task 2. It made my essays sound more sophisticated." Overall, students appreciated the structured support and feedback, with some expressing a desire for more frequent sessions. One student remarked, "I really enjoyed the sessions and feel that they have helped me a lot. I wish we could have these sessions more often." Another valued the instructor's feedback, stating, "The feedback I received was very helpful. It helped me understand where I was making mistakes and how to correct them."

### Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of this study suggest that both the **Mixed-Language Conversation Club** and the **Full English Conversation Club** positively contributed to the vocabulary development of pre-IELTS learners. However,



the **Mixed-Language Conversation Club** demonstrated more consistent and statistically significant improvements compared to the Full English group.

It is important first to acknowledge the differences in pre-test scores between the two groups, as revealed by the **independent t-test**. The **Mixed-Language Conversation Club** had a significantly higher average pre-test score (63.97) than the **Full English Conversation Club** (58.06). The independent t-test indicated that this difference was statistically significant ( $t(62) = 7.82, p < 0.001$ ), suggesting that participants in the Mixed-Language group began with a slightly stronger foundation in vocabulary. One potential reason for this discrepancy is the **Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS)** format used in each group. In the **Full English Conversation Club**, participants were required to provide all definitions in English, which posed a greater challenge for intermediate learners. Many students selected the option, "I have seen this word before, but I do not know what it means," which likely lowered their overall pre-test scores. In contrast, participants in the **Mixed-Language Conversation Club** were allowed to use **Uzbek** or **Russian** when defining words, which may have enabled them to express a more accurate understanding of the vocabulary in their pre-test. This initial difference in pre-test scores should be kept in mind when evaluating the overall effectiveness of the intervention, as the Mixed-Language group had a slight advantage before the study began.

The **paired t-tests** revealed statistically significant improvements in both the Mixed-Language and Full English Conversation Clubs between the pre-and post-test scores. However, the degree of improvement varied substantially between the two groups. For the **Mixed-Language Conversation Club**, the post-test scores increased from an average of **63.97** in the pre-test to **85.47** in the post-test, resulting in a mean difference of **21.50 points**. The paired t-test yielded a **t-statistic of -18.34** with 31 degrees of freedom and a corresponding **p-value of  $3.40 \times 10^{-18}$** , indicating that this improvement was statistically significant. In the **Full English Conversation Club**, participants' post-test scores rose from **58.06** to **67.25**, with a mean difference of **9.19 points**. The paired t-test for this group produced a **t-statistic of -14.87**, also with 31 degrees of freedom, and a **p-value of  $1.18 \times 10^{-15}$** , confirming that the observed improvement was statistically significant.

While both groups demonstrated statistically significant gains, the larger improvement in the Mixed-Language Conversation Club suggests that the flexibility of allowing native language support played a crucial role in enhancing vocabulary acquisition. The **Mixed-Language group** outperformed the **Full English group** by a substantial margin, with a difference of **21.50 points** compared to **9.19 points** in the Full English group.

The results align with previous research emphasizing the benefits of **bilingual education** in supporting vocabulary development. According to **Cummins (2007)**, allowing learners to use their first language as a scaffold can significantly aid in understanding complex concepts and vocabulary. The **Mixed-Language Conversation Club** employed this strategy by permitting the use of **Uzbek** and **Russian** in the initial stages of learning

before transitioning to full English use. This scaffolded approach may have contributed to the group's superior vocabulary gains, as it enabled participants to grasp vocabulary concepts more deeply before applying them in English.

Conversely, the **Full English Conversation Club** did not provide the same level of native language support, requiring participants to operate in an exclusively English environment from the outset. While this method still resulted in significant vocabulary improvement, the **lack of scaffolding** may have hindered students' ability to comprehend and retain new vocabulary fully. **Nation (2003)** suggests that explicit vocabulary instruction, particularly when related to learners' existing knowledge, is critical for effective language acquisition. The Full English group's slower and less consistent gains may indicate that intermediate learners benefit from the inclusion of some native language support before transitioning to a fully immersive English environment.

The findings are also consistent with **Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1982)**, which posits that learners acquire language most effectively when they are exposed to comprehensible input slightly above their current proficiency level. In the **Full English Conversation Club**, the absence of native language support may have made the vocabulary input too challenging for some students, thus limiting their ability to achieve optimal gains. By contrast, the **Mixed-Language Conversation Club** provided more **comprehensible input** through the use of bilingual strategies, leading to more substantial improvements.

The results of this study have several practical implications for **language instruction**, particularly for intermediate learners. The findings suggest that a **mixed-language approach**, which incorporates native language support in the early stages of learning, can facilitate better understanding and retention of vocabulary. This approach aligns with Schmitt (22) and Nation (15), who emphasize the importance of thematic and contextually relevant vocabulary instruction for effective lexical development.

For educators, these findings indicate that **bilingual strategies** should be integrated into language teaching, particularly for learners at intermediate proficiency levels. By allowing learners to leverage their native languages initially, educators can create a more supportive learning environment, gradually transitioning to full immersion as students gain confidence and mastery over new vocabulary. This gradual transition can help learners better manage the complexities of new vocabulary and improve their overall language proficiency.

While this study provides valuable insights into the comparative effectiveness of **Mixed-Language** and **Full English Conversation Clubs**, there are several limitations to consider. First, the **sample size** was relatively small, and the study was conducted in a single educational context in Uzbekistan. Future research could expand the sample size and explore the effectiveness of mixed-language approaches in diverse educational settings and with learners at different proficiency levels.

Additionally, the study only measured **short-term vocabulary gains**. Future research could employ **longitudinal studies** to examine the long-

term effects of mixed-language versus full-English approaches on vocabulary retention and overall language proficiency. Such studies could also investigate the impact of different instructional strategies on other aspects of language learning, such as **grammar acquisition**, **speaking skills**, and **comprehension**.

In conclusion, this study highlights the advantages of the **Mixed-Language Conversation Club** in promoting vocabulary development among pre-IELTS learners. The mixed-language approach, which begins with **native language support** before transitioning to full English use, led to more significant and consistent improvements in vocabulary knowledge compared to the **Full English Conversation Club**. While the Full English group also demonstrated improvements, the **lack of native language scaffolding** may have hindered some learners' ability to grasp and retain new vocabulary fully.

These findings underscore the importance of **tailoring instructional methods** to learners' proficiency levels and incorporating strategies that facilitate both comprehension and retention of new vocabulary. Future research should build on these findings by exploring the effectiveness of various instructional methods in different educational contexts and with learners at varying proficiency levels. By doing so, educators can better understand how to optimize vocabulary instruction and support language learners in achieving their full potential.

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