

The Role of Digital Tools in Enhancing Vocabulary Acquisition in Second Foreign Language Learning

Chunhua Ren^{1*}, Lin Su²

¹School of General Education, Changchun College of Electronic Technology, Changchun 130000, Jilin, China

²School of Journalism and Publishing, Jilin Engineering Normal University, Changchun 130062, Jilin, China

**Author to whom correspondence should be addressed.*

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Abstract: The paper aims to examine the application of multimedia technology in expanding vocabulary in second language acquisition. Incorporating innovative technology such as mobile applications, gaming applications, websites, and other related online tools has increased learners' vocabulary mastery, engagement, and motivation levels. Interactional processes like media-embedded objects, teach-learning capacity algorithms, and feedback help learners receive the course in a personalized way that considers individual learning patterns or abilities. However, there are the following challenges: accessibility issues, total reliance on technology, and issues related to privacy. The following challenges affecting learning that arise from using gadgets: the digital divide, limited device access, and environmental issues that may distract a learner in a technology-enabled environment. Moreover, the security issue for data and the ethical question of users' information remain important too. Hence, the paper provides arguments that although these technologies contribute significantly to vocabulary acquisition, the challenge that emerges should be addressed by integrating technology in teaching and learning alongside conventional methods for vocabulary acquisition, which is a practical language acquisition tool that should not be monopolized.

Keywords: Digital tools; Vocabulary acquisition; Second language learning; Gamification

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1. Introduction

Acquiring vocabulary is a critical aspect of second language acquisition since it is the basis for language for communication and understanding ^[1]. Concepts like app-based learning and social media have now changed the typical approaches to learning interventions, giving learners much more interactive and personalized opportunities. This paper aims to investigate the use of ICT in teaching and learning vocabulary, focusing on a subject and area of advantages and disadvantages and possibilities of revolutionizing impressions on the second language acquisition teaching and learning process.

2. Overview of digital tools for vocabulary acquisition

Interactive, personalized, and effective means have become available for the acquisition of second language vocabulary due to digital tools. Mobile applications such as Duolingo and Memrise have attracted interest due to adaptivity and application and a game-like approach. It is an innovative learning app that employs an algorithm that matches the learner to a specific proficiency level while building the vocabulary. Applying achievements, points, and streaks encourages users to practice daily while creating a sense of accomplishment. Also, these tools use spaced repetition systems, an effective way to extend the time interval between the reviewing sessions for improved long-term memory of language learning. The features of these platforms make them attractive to learners of all ages, as the exposure is entirely interactive (**Figure 1**).

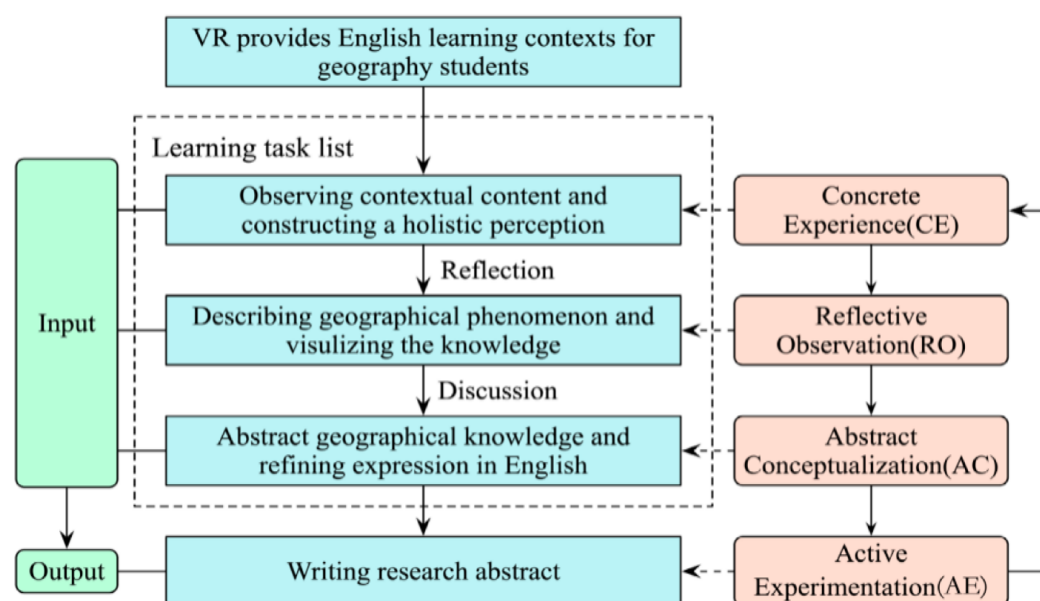


Figure 1. The interactive applications of digital tools

There are other learning apps, such as Quizlet and Kahoot, that have transformed the way we learn more advanced vocabulary. They have turned these learning tasks into something resembling a game. With Quizlet, users can make flashcards. These flashcards are then used in various games and quizzes, helping learners build up their word stock. The website is incredibly user-friendly. It is filled with icons, pictures, and audio elements, making it suitable for learners with different preferences and needs. Kahoot, on the other hand, is centered around quiz-based learning in group settings, often in educational institutions like schools. These apps do not just encourage learners to be more involved. They also take the monotony and stress out of learning new words, turning it into an enjoyable experience.

This is based on the understanding that the effectiveness of the mentioned digital tools is anchored on enhanced features for vocabulary gains. Using videos, sounds, and animation in the classroom helps facilitate learning since children have different intelligence types and make learning languages more fun. For example, using video clips and images makes it easier to focus on what the words mean. In contrast, sounds in the form of audio recordings introduce the learners to the intonation used in pronunciation ^[2]. Such algorithms as gamified ones utilized in Duolingo as well as Memrise monitor the performance of the learners, and adjust between the levels of difficulty of tasks that have to be accomplished. This makes for a more structured learning approach, where learners are never on either end of the bell curve of learning, making progress incrementally

and systematically. Hence, no one feels overstimulated or understimulated.

Essential for Memrise and Quizlet, the spaced repetition strategies help to use vocabulary at the best-reviewed time intervals. This has been confirmed by scholarly research to ensure learners recall the identified words before they forget and effectively increase their long-term memory span ^[3]. Additional advantages of the real-time knowledge check and progress updates include timely reinforcement based on learners' performance analysis. Performance indicators such as the accuracy rate, sequence, or number of finished lessons contribute to achievement and self-regulation outcomes.

3. Effectiveness of digital tools in vocabulary acquisition

The usefulness of technology applications in learning word sets can be seen from how they address the learners' cognitive, psychological, and individual differences and how the applications build on researched strategies to facilitate learning. Another advantage of this tool is in memory, as most of them have some sort of game integrated within them. The most popular learning platforms like Duolingo and Quizlet are designed as games that allow users to use the learning material repeatedly and actively. Reviewing, a common element in most learning applications, refreshes the memory with the help of spacing techniques backed up by substantial amounts of empirical evidence ^[4].

Another advantage of the learning formats mediated by digital tools is that they increase motivation in the learning process, which is a problem in mastering traditional forms of learning. This means that learners are more likely to remain consistent with vocabulary acquisition when this process is fun. Some examples of the gamification approach include the following: The use of gamified tools implies the replacement of monotonous learning tasks, such as reading or completing questionnaires, with dynamic activities that do not let the student get bored. Furthermore, the instant reinforcement and performance indicators of the platforms, such as satisfaction and learning achievement of the learners in tools like Memrise and Kahoot, have a more significant impact on the learners' retention rate or simply the learners' intrinsic motivation ^[5]. These psychological factors help to explain how learners stay on course in their language acquisition aspirations for the long term. **Figure 2** shows the content preparation process.

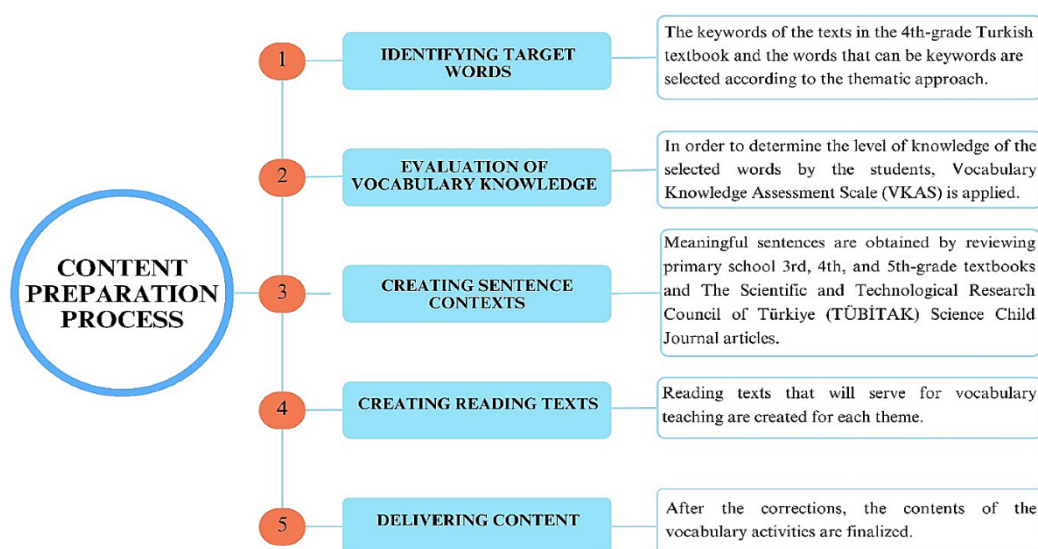


Figure 2. Content preparation process

Regarding accessibility, these tools are inclusive because listening and viewing materials are also easily customizable as compared to written text, since they can be accessed anytime and anywhere, and learners can integrate vocabulary practice into their daily schedules. Such an approach helps provide those with little time to study or no full-fledged access to language classes with properly arranged vocabulary study. Further, the elements of tools like Kahoot facilitate group learning for the students, which supports class interaction as well as the sharing of knowledge among them.

4. Challenges and limitations of using digital tools

There are also limitations to using ICTs in middle vocabulary learning and teaching, even as they are very accommodating and helpful. These issues cover technicalities, teaching-learning context, and student data protection, which may either enhance or hinder the teaching and learning practice with such tools in plural environments.

One of them is availability, that is, the possibility to access the website or the content of the website as a whole. Not all students, for instance, can easily get a connected device or even internet connectivity to benefit from digital enhancements. This is an issue for students from underdeveloped regions or economically weaker backgrounds who still face poor or no internet connection and inferior technology. Although devices can be used, learners' perspectives can entail some problems depending on the availability and utilization of devices for both novice and disabled learners, as well as learners with visual or motor inabilities ^[6].

Such technical imperatives erect a digital dichotomy, which may, in effect, further isolate some segments from the advantages of learning facilitated by technology. **Figure 3** shows the source of personalization.



Figure 3. Source of personalization

Other issues include education-related questions on how the over-emphasis of the use of technological support influences the teachers' role, with a tendency to mostly depend on the technological tools rather than the teacher. Although the possibility of flexible and engaging learning has been established by websites and

applications, traditional tutoring and practitioners' customized feedback cannot be replaced. However, this reliance on technology sometimes creates a culture that makes everyone the same, leaving the learner behind with no special attention to the problems they are facing during learning ^[7].

However, students learn in an environment infused with technology, and at the same time, are fully aware that such a learning environment may be distracting.

Privacy and data security can be noted down as another significant constraint. Most LMSs obtain abundant information about the user and their learning preferences as well as the performance data to improve learning personalization. As this data collection improves learning delivery, questions arise about managing this information. The use of such data may not be appropriate or secure and only increases the risk of ethical breaches to users' privacy. For instance, due to poor understanding or lack of knowledge of policies regarding information sharing, young learners, or learners who are learning for the first time, may contribute private information that may be misused ^[8].

Ethical issues are broader than data use and generation, including dependency on technological support to improve the education system. While emphasizing technology integration, such as the use of apps and websites, it is possible to overlook other forms of instruction, interpersonal communication, and social networks inherent in group work and authentic practice. Such concerns call for moderation, wherein technology is incorporated while not eliminating face-to-face interaction in the classroom learning process.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the present study has revealed that incorporating and using digital tools in the learning process of second language vocabulary acquisition has several advantages, such as improved memory, motivation, and a personalized approach to learning. As will be evidenced by research findings, mobile applications, game-based learning, and online dictionaries have been observed to enhance learners' interaction and their ability to develop comprehensible vocabularies. However, glitches like technical constraints, technology dependency, and privacy issues must be solved for equal and efficient utilization. Disconnectivity may be seen in a lack of devices or the internet, which reduces the kind of learning that may be received, along with concerns of excessive amounts of rephonologization, which can be detrimental to learners.

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