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Thesis Title: Intentional Vocabulary Learning Using Web-based Flashcard System

Subject/major: Applied Linguistics

Institution: King Saud University, English Language and Literature Department

Degree: MA

Year of award: 2015

Supervisor: Dr. Maimoonah Khalil Alkhalil

Keywords: Academic vocabulary, learner perception, intentional vocabulary learning, vocabulary Retention, web-based flashcard

Abstract:

This study investigates the effectiveness of Quizlet, a web-based flashcard system, on academic vocabulary learning, vocabulary retention, and perceptions of undergraduate learners of English at a Saudi university. Only participants who were proficient in the 2000 Word Level Test (Schmitt, Schmitt & Clapham, 2001) were included in the study. Sixty-three fourth year female majors in English language and literature underwent a pre-test, immediate post-test, and delayed post-test design with control and experimental groups. The control group (n = 33) practiced target vocabulary using paper-flashcards while the experimental group (n = 30) practiced new words using web-based flashcards on Quizlet. Participants in both groups were exposed to 240 items from the Academic Word List (Coxhead, 2000) over a period of six weeks. An extended version of the Vocabulary Level Test (Schmitt, Schmitt & Clapham, 2001) was administered to both groups as a pre-test, immediate post-test, and two-week delayed post-test. The results revealed that both paper and Quizlet flashcards were effective in improving vocabulary learning and retention. However, no significant difference between the two types of flashcards was found, which indicates that paper and web-based flashcards are not differentially effective. Nevertheless, participants in the experimental group found Quizlet generally useful, easy to use, and relatively enjoyable.

Note: Citing this thesis, please use:

Alzeer, Sarah, N. M. (2015). *Intentional Vocabulary Learning Using Web-based Flashcard System*. King Saud University, English Language and Literature Department (Master's Thesis).

Retrieved from (Arab World English Journal Database. (ID Number: 184, May, 2017).

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