Use of Mobile Apps for Enhanced Vocabulary Acquisition: A Comparative Study among Saudi EFL Students

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Abstract
The paper presents a methodological approach and a summary of the major findings of the study. The main aim of the research was to investigate the effects of using mobile apps on vocabulary learning outcomes and motivation among Saudi EFL learners. The study adopts a survey method, combining quantitative data from a questionnaire. The survey was done among intermediate and elementary students including the type of sampling. The significance of the study lies in the fact that appropriate vocabulary acquisition is essential for good communication, but acquiring new words and using them can be dull. The research aimed to explore innovative ways of learning vocabulary in a foreign language by using mobile technology and learners’ perceptions and attitudes towards such apps that provide fun-filled learning. The main question addressed by the research was whether using mobile apps for vocabulary learning would lead to better outcomes than other methods. The context of the study was Saudi Arabia, where English is taught as a foreign language. The research tools used were mobile apps for vocabulary learning, which were compared with other methods. The results showed that the groups that used mobile apps for vocabulary learning significantly outperformed the other groups on vocabulary tests, indicating that mobile apps can be an effective tool for enhancing vocabulary acquisition among Saudi EFL learners.

Keywords: English as a foreign language, mobile applications, mobile technology, vocabulary acquisition, vocabulary enhancement.

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Introduction

In this mediatized global village, English has become the foremost language that the majority of people use to communicate with each other around the world (Spolsky & Hohamy, 1999). The importance of English is evident in all the spheres of life like business, media, communication, governance, financial dealings, tourism, and also in the academic community at large. Many countries that do not have English as a First Language are keen on incorporating English into their curriculum. English plays a significant role in the education industry and therefore, it is imperative to enhance language learning in various ways. Learning vocabulary and having a good vocabulary are necessary for good communication (Nation, 2001). Nation has noted that a vocabulary of almost 6,000 to 7,000 words is needed to understand more than 90% of what is said or heard (Nation, 2001). Laufer (2001) says that vocabulary knowledge is strongly linked to writing and reading skills as well. It is linked to the academic performance of students.

Most people who learn English as a Second Language (ESL) or English as a Foreign Language (EFL) find it hard and stressful to learn a new language (Turgut & Irgin, 2009). Although most people are learning English, they think that learning English vocabulary is a boring and difficult activity. But this is certainly not true. There are ways of thinking that affect how much people want to learn and how well they learn. In a way, it is an attitudinal issue and this is the reason why they feel less confident in their ability to learn English. So, teaching and learning methods and strategies should change. Teachers should find more interesting ways to motivate students to learn English (Chang, Liang, Yan, & Tseng, 2013; Jong, Lai, Hsia, Lin, & Lu, 2013). Learning activities that come from instructional strategies affect how learners choose, get, and make sense of more information. The way they think and act comes to light by this method. Based on their learning environment, digital game-based learning can be used as a boosting way to teach English vocabulary. Games effectively increase learners’ learning motivation and interest to help them with active learning and flow (Ryu & Parsons, 2012).

To this end, wireless technology and mobile devices have been getting better over time. There has been a lot of talk about Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) recently. This could also be used to enhance the students’ vocabulary learning.

In the past decade due to mobile technology, there have been many innovative ideas. A case study done by Chang, Tseng, Liang, and Yan (2013) focused on the learning system among 125 high school students. They looked at how students kept using the system and what they thought about the benefits. This study shows that most students liked the idea of using mobile devices to learn English and thought that the system helped them learn English.

Hsu (2013) looked into how EFL students in different countries felt about MALL (Mobile Assisted Language Learning) and found that most of them thought mobile technology was a useful and practical way to learn a language. And thanks to the innovations in MALL, many English learning apps have come into play. They certainly show how convenient and useful smartphones are making learning vocabulary a part of everyday life.

Mobile Learning tries to incorporate gaming as it is an effective way to get people interested and also motivate them to learn words, which in turn helps them learn more. Smith (2013) et al. built a game-based English vocabulary learning system in the form of eBooks. These interactive eBook game designs made people more interested in learning English. Real-time learning Tools and Assistant Functions can help students improve their ability to read in English. Today’s innovations may soon become out of date, but teachers and students must start with...
current technology and they have to continue to build on this knowledge as technological advances will certainly happen in the future.

Smartphones and tablets are the two popular forms of technology that can be very useful for EFL students. Students in general already own or have access to one or more of these mobile devices. These devices facilitated with different apps can enhance their learning ability. Most people who use smartphones or tablets quickly learn how to use apps. The user-friendly nature of mobile apps and mobile devices has helped teach and learn languages more effectively as far as teaching and learning English as a second language is concerned. Mobile devices can be especially helpful when it comes to learning vocabulary. This study focuses on resources such as mobile apps that can enhance learners’ effort to learn new vocabulary as acquiring appropriate vocab items is of paramount importance in the effective acquisition of a foreign language. Based on the results of a survey questionnaire that focuses on how learners of different levels (Intermediate and Elementary Learners) are familiar with and effectively using them to learn new vocabulary, this study seeks to provide certain practical means through which mobile apps can be used to further language learning. The paper aims to investigate the effects of using mobile apps on vocabulary learning outcomes and motivation among Saudi EFL learners. The problems are stated below.

- **Vocabulary acquisition challenge**: Learning new words and using them in a foreign language is essential for good communication, but it can be boring and dull for learners.
- **Mobile technology potential**: Mobile apps can provide fun-filled and innovative ways of learning vocabulary in a foreign language, but their effects and learners’ perceptions are not well understood.
- **Research gap**: There is a lack of empirical studies that compare the outcomes and motivation of using mobile apps for vocabulary learning with other methods among Saudi EFL learners.

From the above observations, the study has the potential to fill this research gap and provide valuable insights into the effectiveness and motivation of using mobile apps for vocabulary learning among Saudi EFL learners. This study will contribute to the existing literature by shedding light on the benefits and challenges of incorporating mobile technology in language learning, ultimately informing educators and policymakers on how to enhance vocabulary instruction in Saudi Arabia.

The research objective is to investigate the impact of mobile app-based vocabulary learning on Saudi EFL learners' language proficiency and their motivation to learn English. Additionally, the study aims to explore the learners' perceptions and attitudes toward using mobile apps for vocabulary learning, as well as identify any potential barriers or limitations that may hinder their effective use.

**Literature Review**

The research article titled "The Effectiveness of Mobile Phones Applications in Learning English Vocabularies"(2023) investigates the effectiveness of mobile phone applications in learning English vocabulary among Jordanian students. By examining the usage patterns and learning outcomes of these applications, the research seeks to provide valuable insights into their effectiveness as a supplementary tool for English language learning in this particular demographic.
Another study is "The Effects of Mobile Game-Based Learning on Saudi EFL Learners' Vocabulary Acquisition" (2022). It examines the effects of mobile game-based learning on Saudi EFL learners’ vocabulary acquisition.

A comparative study was also considered, "A comparative study of the effects of social media and language learning apps on learners’ vocabulary performance" (2023). This compares the effects of social media and language learning apps on vocabulary acquisition. The comparative study seeks to shed light on the contrasting impacts of social media and language learning apps on vocabulary acquisition, offering valuable information for educators and learners in choosing suitable tools for language learning purposes.

A case study titled “Effects of a Mobile Game-based English Vocabulary Learning App on Learners’ Perceptions and Learning Performance: A Case Study of Taiwanese EFL Learners” (2019). It assesses the effects of a mobile game-based English vocabulary learning app on learners’ perceptions and learning performance.


The research gap identified from the above information is that there is a lack of studies examining the specific effects of a mobile-based English vocabulary learning app on learners' perceptions and learning performance among Saudi EFL learners. While there is a systematic review that provides an overview of mobile-assisted vocabulary learning research, it does not focus specifically on the use of mobile-based apps. Therefore, there is a need for further research to investigate the effects of such apps on language learning outcomes and learner perceptions in this context. Use of Mobile Apps for Enhanced Vocabulary Acquisition: A Comparative Study Among Saudi EFL Students is the gap identified.

**Strategies for Vocabulary Acquisition and Mobile Apps for Learning: An Overview**

Components of Effective Vocabulary Instruction

Nation (2008) and Graves (2009) prominent researchers have highlighted the importance of providing learners with a better comprehensive, well-balanced vocabulary learning program. According to their model, an effective vocabulary program must contain four major competences and they are all interconnected. The following model is adapted from Nation (2008) and Graves (2009):

![Figure 1. Major competences for a vocabulary program (Nation, 2008 & Graves, 2009).](image-url)
Teach Words One at a Time

To teach words one at a time and for best results, one should teach each word deeply, long, and in a well-planned manner (Graves, 2009). As there are so many words to learn in English, teachers must be very strategic about the ways to teach explicitly in class.

Teaching Strategies for Learning Words

The second part is teaching strategies for learning words. The literature has a lot of information about how important it is to teach people how to learn words. Recognizing the way to use cognate words, using the dictionary, and looking for clues in the context are encouraged. While cognates between two related languages are common, cognates between all languages within a family are relatively rare—there are roughly 39 words that appear across the five primary Romance languages (McCann, Klein, & Stegmann, 2003). And of course, breaking down words into their parts so that students can understand what they mean is a good strategy.

Provide Language Experiences that are Rich and Varied

Learners need to be exposed to a wide range of language learning experiences. They should be able to learn it through listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Learners need to be exposed to a wide range of language learning experiences. This is because language is not only a tool for communication but also a way of seeing and understanding the world. As Federico Fellini, an Italian film director, once said: "A different language is a different vision of life." Learning a new language can open new doors, new perspectives, and new possibilities for learners. It can also enrich their cultural awareness, their creativity, and their critical thinking skills. Therefore, language learning is not only a cognitive process but also an emotional and social one. One of the most important additions here is that students must be encouraged to read from a wide range of sources and types of texts.

Foster Word Consciousness

Word consciousness is being aware of words and their meanings and being interested in them as well. Some specific ways teachers can help students understand words such as wordplay, getting students involved in original research, and teaching students about words (Garris, 2009). They can get students involved in original research and teaching of words. One of the most important ideas is that vocabulary is built up over time. This means that the learner needs to hear a word many times and also in different ways and context to really know about it (Nagy & Scott, 2000). In an EFL classroom, vocabulary must be taught in detail and then practiced for a long time in a meaningful way. Students need to know how to use strategies for learning words in an EFL classroom. They need to speak, listen, read, and write in English in a wide range of situations. They also benefit a lot from becoming more aware of interesting words. One way to get students to practice their vocabulary a lot and understand all the parts is to let them study on their own. Vocabulary apps can be used to help them with all of these four suggestions. Students use them and they want the best to build word awareness and create rich, varied language experiences that can help them over time (Deng, Qizhen, Trainin, & Guy, 2015).

Vocabulary Applications for Tablets and Smartphones

Various apps in recent times have been developed in a mind-boggling manner. Apps now come with translators, whiteboards, interactive quizzes, flashcards, and books. These are just some
of the things that can help a student learn new words. An EFL student needs to have tools on hand to help them learn a new language and culture (Asratie et al., 2023). It is like having a library and a personal tutor. Below is a list of recommended applications that can be very useful for teaching and learning vocabulary. There are options for both Android and iOS-based devices, and all of the apps can be quickly and easily downloaded from popular online stores. They can be found in both Apple Store and Google Play store for Android.

**Apps for the Dictionary**

EFL Teachers and students no longer have to carry around big, heavy dictionaries and other reference books. All those references can be found in a single book. The Dictionary.com app offers 2 million definitions and also a service to help find both synonyms and antonyms. This app can replace many reference books; it also has examples of sentences and can also be used through audio. This can be very useful for students who need to know not only how to spell and understand the words but also the correct pronunciation.

There is also another app called the Free Dictionary. This app provides some additional information about words and shows the difference between words. Users can also make their own home pages with games, a language forum, spell-bee word games, and much more. Other most useful apps for vocabulary learning are the Advanced English Dictionary and Thesaurus. Even though its name is not very descriptive, it has more than 1.4 million words and a lot of good features that include synonyms and antonyms, hypernyms, hyponyms, and meronyms. This app also works when the user is not connected to the internet. And it has a tool that looks up words when the user copies them from another app.

**Apps for Translation**

There are a number of apps that can translate words into another language. These apps can help students who don’t know much English but will help them communicate quickly or look up the words in English. The number one choice would be Google Translate, which can translate words into 17 languages for free. It can also turn speech into text in 30 languages. This app lets users hear translations spoken out loud in 40 different languages and can also write translations of languages that don’t use the Latin alphabet. Even though no translation tool is perfect, Google Translate is one of the most accurate apps. Many translation apps can do different things. Teachers and students only need to look around to find the right translation apps. At the moment, the Day Translation app is one of the best translation apps for quick and accurate translations. It stands out because it is an app for both machine translation and human translation. The user gets instant translation or they can contact a human translator to get a professional translation that is 100% accurate and makes sense in its context. Students can also have the app to pronounce a word, or they can hear and repeat the right way to say words. This is an important app that can help EFL students improve their vocabulary learning.

**Vocabulary.com**

Vocabulary.com is a website that helps students to learn new words and improve their vocabulary. It offers a personalized learning system that adapts to the level and goals of the students. One can choose from thousands of word lists, or create their own. Students can also play fun games and quizzes to test their knowledge and earn points and badges. Vocabulary.com is more than just a dictionary; it is a comprehensive and interactive tool for mastering the language.
Magoosh

Unlike Vocablary.com, Magoosh is an online test preparation company that offers courses and practice questions for various standardized exams, such as the GRE (Graduate Record Examinations), GMAT (Graduate Management Admission Test), SAT (Scholastic Assessment Test), ACT: American College Testing, TOEFL: Test of English as a Foreign Language, IELTS: International English Language Testing System. GRE: The Graduate Record Examination is a standardized test that is required for admission to most graduate schools in the United States. It measures verbal reasoning, quantitative reasoning, and analytical writing skills. GMAT: The Graduate Management Admission Test is a standardized test that is required for admission to most business schools worldwide. It measures analytical writing, integrated reasoning, quantitative reasoning, and verbal reasoning skills. SAT: The Scholastic Assessment Test is a standardized test that is used for college admissions in the United States. It measures reading, writing, and math skills. ACT: The American College Testing is a standardized test that is used for college admissions in the United States. It measures English, math, reading, and science reasoning skills. TOEFL: The Test of English as a Foreign Language is a standardized test that measures the English language proficiency of non-native speakers who wish to enroll in English-speaking universities. It tests reading, listening, speaking, and writing skills. IELTS: The International English Language Testing System is another standardized test that measures the English language proficiency of non-native speakers who wish to enroll in English-speaking universities. It tests reading, listening, speaking, and writing skills.

Magoosh’s mission is to make high-quality test preparation accessible and affordable for everyone. Magoosh’s courses are designed by expert tutors who have years of experience in teaching and test-taking. Magoosh’s platform is user-friendly and adaptive, allowing students to study at their own pace and level. Magoosh also provides personalized feedback, video lessons, study plans, and support from tutors and peers. Magoosh has helped over 10 million students achieve their academic goals and improve their scores.

FluentU

Magoosh primarily deals with the preparation of competitive exams. The next app, FluentU is a language learning app that uses real-world videos to teach you Spanish, French, Mandarin Chinese, German, Japanese, English, Italian, Russian, and Korean. You can watch videos from different genres and topics, such as music videos, movie trailers, news, and inspiring talks. FluentU provides interactive captions that show you the definition and translation of any word in the video. The students can also take quizzes and use flashcards to review what they have learned. FluentU is a great way to immerse students in a foreign language and learn from authentic content.

Suggestions on Using Apps

The apps discussed above were chosen because they are useful for helping students learn new words and they are also affordable, have good quality, and are easy to use. All of them can be used in classrooms by learners on their own to learn more. When students use these tools to learn regularly, they dramatically increase their access to knowledge of vocabulary in speaking, listening, reading, and writing (Mei, 2021). Also, the high level of interest that app-based materials tend to generate can help get people excited to write words in the process of learning new ones.

Teachers are encouraged to try out these resources and share them with students, show them how to use them well, and help students figure out which apps might be best for them based...
on their very own interests. Their interests, needs, and learning goals are also kept in mind while choosing these apps. Even though many students know how to use apps, they may need help learning how to use vocabulary apps effectively and strategically to help them learn more and achieve their own goals. When introducing a new app in an English class, teachers can use the following pattern adapted from Chamot and O’Malley (1994):

Figure 2. Introducing a App in a language classroom (Chamot and O’Malley, 1994, p. 331)

Lastly, learning is different in terms of skills, interests, and vocabulary and a teacher should help students set clear goals for themselves. For example, students might be asked to set goals for how many words they want their students to learn per day or per week and keep track of their progress in a way that suits them. Students could also use an app of their choice for a certain amount of time per day or month and then give an oral report about the experience. Teachers and students can come up with many more ideas for self-directed learning projects, and they can be done in and out of the classroom by working together.

Another important aspect of self-directed learning is the ability to reflect on one's own learning process (Kapur, 2018). Students should be encouraged to think about what worked well for them and what didn't, and to make adjustments accordingly. This could involve trying different study methods, seeking feedback from peers or teachers, or simply taking a break when feeling overwhelmed. By reflecting on their own learning, students can become more aware of their strengths and weaknesses and develop a greater sense of self-awareness. Ultimately, self-directed learning empowers students to take ownership of their education and become lifelong learners (Edoctrina, 2022).
Method

The main objective of the study was to find how effective a vocabulary mobile application can be on students’ learning performance triggering learning outcomes, confidence, and class participation. The applications and their contents were chosen based on the classrooms’ course syllabus. Since the survey was carried out in a relatively short span of time, the extraneous factors such as age were minimized and they did not affect the outcome. The learners were provided with a questionnaire regarding the use of mobile applications. All the students are from a public Saudi University.

The data collection was done in two phases. In the first phase, the survey was administered to the elementary level students. The second phase of data collection involved the intermediate-level students. The surveys were carried out online through Microsoft Forms.

Participants

The study adopts a survey method, combining quantitative data from a questionnaire. The survey was done among intermediate and elementary students from a public Saudi university in February. The survey was done among intermediate and elementary students. The participants of the intermediate level were 324, and the elementary level were 104. The participants were chosen based on their availability and willingness to participate in the survey and their consent was received before they could take part in the survey. Since the study was about vocabulary learning and the students were already placed in different levels based on their language proficiency level, no specific tests were required to determine their language proficiency.

To gather data for the study on vocabulary learning, research instruments were developed and administered to the participants. The instruments included a questionnaire that assessed the students’ current vocabulary knowledge and their learning strategies. These research instruments were designed to provide insights into the student's language proficiency and their progress in vocabulary learning. The participants' responses to these instruments were analyzed to conclude their vocabulary learning abilities at different levels of language proficiency.

Results

The study focus was mainly on students’ vocabulary learning through mobile apps and their use in their daily conversations. The questionnaire had 14 statements. The first statement was concerned with students’ familiarity with language learning apps. Ninety percent of Intermediate students and 83 percent of Elementary students were familiar with vocabulary apps which is quite an impressive percentage in both levels. The second statement consisted of a choice of apps the learners might be familiar with: Dictionary.com, GoogleTranslate, DayTranslations, Vocabulary.com, Magoosh, Fluentu, or other Apps. Learners of both levels are familiar with Google Translate, and they tend to be using other apps than the listed ones. The remaining 12 statements were designed in the form of a Likert scale, from strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree to strongly agree.

Appendix B shows the percentage-wise data of both groups based on the responses. The survey data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. In both study groups, the survey took place over a period of two months. Since the sample sizes in both studies were small, a normality test was done to see if the data set is normally distributed and to ensure that the results from the study can be generalized.
Table 1. *Test of normality (Shapiro-Wilk)*

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</table>

The normality test in both study groups were done using the Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogrove-Smirnov tests. However, for datasets smaller than 2000 elements, only the Shapiro-Wilk test is considered. In Groups One and Two, due to the small number of participants, the Shapiro-Wilk test results were insignificant with a p-value greater than .05 which indicates the data is normally distributed.

Table 2. *Descriptives*

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The descriptives of both groups are presented in Table Three. The Coefficient of Variation (CV) is a measure of relative variability that expresses the standard deviation of a data set as a percentage of its mean. It is also known as the Relative Standard Deviation (RSD) or the Variation Coefficient (VC). The CV is useful for comparing the variability of data sets with different units or different means. A low CV indicates that the data points are close to the mean, while a high CV indicates that the data points are spread out over a wide range of values.

The Survey Questionnaire aimed at studying students’ perceptions regarding four main points: Vocabulary learning performance, Confidence, Class participation, and the use of multimedia apps. Since the sample sizes in both studies were small, a normality test was done to see if the data set is normally distributed and to ensure that the results derived from the study could be generalized to assess students’ perceptions of these points. In general, items in the questionnaire were designed based on the reviewed literature to observe and seek students’ feedback on how their experience in learning through an application differed from the usual traditional learning. To observe the reliability of the data gathered from the questionnaires, a reliability test was done.
After the reliability tests, a descriptive statistic was produced based on the data derived from the questionnaires. According to the statistics derived from questionnaires for both the groups, the testing concludes that: 52.5% of students from both the groups agree that they enjoy learning when they use Mobile apps. 46.5% agree that their English has improved due to smartphones. A significant increase of about 84.5% students from both the groups have agreed that their ability to communicate has improved since they started using the English smartphone apps. Finally, 88.5% of students have agreed that Mobile app use has improved their ability to recall English words.

Discussion

By and large, the findings from the various quantitative and qualitative research techniques demonstrated the mobile application's high level of usefulness. This assertion is supported by the fact that using mobile applications in the educational process improved student performance in general and increased students' motivation to learn. Vocabulary development is an essential skill for language learners of all levels. Mobile apps can offer a convenient and engaging way to enhance one’s vocabulary through various features such as games, quizzes, flashcards, and a personalized feedback system. Turgut and Irgin (2009) have argued that it is stressful to acquire vocabulary traditionally. From this study, it becomes clear that using mobile apps can have a great impact on the students.

Some research articles discussed in the Literature specifically vocabulary acquisition help with the present discussion. “The Effectiveness of Mobile Phones Applications in Learning English Vocabularies” (2023), investigates the effectiveness of mobile phone applications in learning English vocabularies among Jordanian students. Similarly, this study studied the second article, “The Effects of Mobile Game-Based Learning on Saudi EFL Learners’ Vocabulary Acquisition” (2022), which examines the effects of mobile game-based learning on Saudi EFL learners’ vocabulary acquisition. The third article, “A comparative study of the effects of social media and language learning apps on vocabulary acquisition” (2023), compares the effects of social media and language learning apps on vocabulary acquisition. The comparative study seeks to shed light on the contrasting impacts of language learning apps on vocabulary acquisition, offering valuable information for educators and learners in choosing suitable tools for language learning purposes. From this, it is clear this study has identified the gap in examining vocabulary acquisition in Saudi students. It is clear the students acquire the skills in a pleasant and less stressful way.

Some of the benefits of using mobile apps for vocabulary development are:

i. They provide immediate and interactive learning opportunities that can suit different learning styles and preferences.

ii. They allow learners to access a large and diverse range of words and phrases from different contexts and domains.

iii. They enable learners to track their progress and review their performance over time.

iv. They motivate learners to challenge themselves and set their own goals for vocabulary improvement.

Some of the challenges can be summarized as follows:

i. They may require a stable internet connection and sufficient storage space on the device, which may not be available for all learners.
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ii. They may not cover all the aspects of vocabulary knowledge, such as pronunciation, collocation, register, and usage.
iii. They may not provide enough guidance and support for learners who struggle with vocabulary learning or have specific learning difficulties.
iv. They may not be compatible with the curriculum and assessment standards of the formal education system.
v. They may not account for the individual differences and needs of the learners, such as their prior knowledge, interests, goals, and preferences.

Limitations

Of course, this study has certain limitations to consider. First, the study sample size was small. Therefore, it was difficult to generalize the study with more statistically significant results. Also, the period the students in the study were exposed to mobile applications was relatively short. A longer period might have provided additional deeper insights. In addition, there was no scope to investigate student-perceived vocabulary retention during the follow-up period, though this fact has been confirmed by various studies. Another limitation of the study is related to the methodological design which does not allow us to explore how teachers can monitor their students in the use of mobile apps to be active language learners.

Conclusion

The main aim of the research was to investigate the effects of using mobile apps on vocabulary learning outcomes and motivation among Saudi EFL learners. The conclusion of the research indicates that mobile applications are a useful tool in education, specifically for vocabulary development. The research findings demonstrate that using mobile applications in the educational process improved student performance in general and increased students’ motivation to learn. Mobile apps offer a convenient and engaging way to enhance one’s vocabulary through various features such as games, quizzes, flashcards, and a personalized feedback system. The findings from the various quantitative and qualitative research techniques demonstrated the mobile application’s high level of usefulness. Vocabulary development is an essential skill for language learners of all levels.

About the Author

Yaseen Azi completed his general education in Saudi Arabia. Dr. Azi holds MA in Linguistics and PhD in Educational Linguistics. He is an applied linguist and discourse analyst interested in the interconnections between the language system, language use, interaction, and context. Dr. Azi’s work centers on the analysis of language use for education purposes and in multiple settings and contexts. He appeals to a multiplicity of theoretical approaches related to pragmatics, discourse analysis, perception, classroom discourse studies, second language studies, and sociolinguistics. Dr. Azi teaches courses on how to approach language learning from conceptualization-based linguistic viewpoints. ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3409-5178

References

Alhebshi, A. A., & Gamlo, N. (2022). The Effects of Mobile Game-Based Learning on Saudi EFL Foundation Year Students’ Vocabulary Acquisition. Arab World English Journal, 13 (1) 408-425. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol13no1.27Asratie, M. G., Wale, B.
Use of Mobile Apps for Enhanced Vocabulary Acquisition


Use of Mobile Apps for Enhanced Vocabulary Acquisition: A Comparative Study of Saudi EFL Learners’ Perceptions

Dear Participant,

This short questionnaire is done to understand your familiarity with the use of Language Apps and to analyse how they have helped you to improve your English vocabulary. All your answers will be confidential.

1. I am familiar with language learning apps. Yes No

2. If yes, choose all the apps you have used some time or the other:
   i. Dictionary.com
   ii. Free Dictionary
   iii. Google Translate
   iv. Day Translations
   v. Vocabulary.com
   vi. Magoosh
   vii. Fluentu
   viii. Any Other: __________

3. I find that visuals, audio, and examples presented in Apps help me to retain new vocabulary. Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

4. The experience of using a mobile app to test my vocabulary knowledge is more entertaining and less stressful than using a paper and pencil. Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

5. I enjoy learning when I use Mobile Apps. Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

6. I’ve gained a lot of self-assurance due to the English smartphone apps. Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

7. Due to the increased visual examples provided by the apps, I have found that I remember the words better. Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree
8. My confidence for classroom evaluation increase when I practice using the language apps.
   | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral Agree | Strongly Agree |
   |                 |          |               |               |
9. My interactive competence has increased from the time I started using these apps.
   | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral Agree | Strongly Agree |
   |                 |          |               |               |
10. My ability to communicate has improved since I started using the English smartphone apps.
    | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral Agree | Strongly Agree |
    |                 |          |               |               |
11. Mobile apps are more practical than textbooks.
    | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral Agree | Strongly Agree |
    |                 |          |               |               |
12. Browsing for different resources in the web is tiresome.
    | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral Agree | Strongly Agree |
    |                 |          |               |               |
13. Mobile app use has improved my ability to recall English words.
    | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral Agree | Strongly Agree |
    |                 |          |               |               |
14. My confidence in English class has increased as a result of my ability to complete exercises at my own pace and in a setting that is useful to me.
    | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral Agree | Strongly Agree |
    |                 |          |               |               |

Appendix B

Analysis of Survey Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Intermediate</th>
<th>Elementary</th>
<th>Inferences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SD D N A SA</td>
<td>SD D N A SA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I find that visuals, audio, and examples presented in Apps help me to retain new vocabulary.</td>
<td>4 2 13 58 22</td>
<td>4 3 20 40 23</td>
<td>Most of the students agree that visuals play a major role in retaining vocabulary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The experience of using a mobile app to test my vocabulary knowledge is more entertaining and less stressful than using a paper and pencil.</td>
<td>4 4 37 32 22</td>
<td>4 6 17 42 29</td>
<td>Over 70% students think that gaining vocabulary knowledge through apps is more entertaining than being stressful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I enjoy learning when I use Mobile Apps.</td>
<td>2 25 15 30 27</td>
<td>4 1 22 45 26</td>
<td>Both the groups have positive agreement regarding enjoyment on using mobile apps.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I’ve gained a lot of self-assurance due to the English smartphone apps.</td>
<td>2 4 44 33 17</td>
<td>3 5 36 16 38</td>
<td>Both groups reported a positive influence on the increase in their confidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Due to the increased visual examples provided by the apps, I have found that I remember the words better.</td>
<td>3 1 15 37 44</td>
<td>3 1 20 43 31</td>
<td>Visuals have helped both the groups to retain vocabulary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>My confidence for classroom evaluation increase when I</td>
<td>4 3 17 59 17</td>
<td>3 4 17 57 18</td>
<td>Increase of confidence level is mostly positive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice using the language apps.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
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<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>9</strong> My interactive competence has increased from the time I started using these apps.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>10</strong> My ability to communicate has improved since I started using the English smartphone apps.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>11</strong> Mobile apps are more practical than textbooks.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>12</strong> Browsing for different resources in the web is tiresome.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>13</strong> Mobile app use has improved my ability to recall English words.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>14</strong> My confidence in English class has increased as a result of my ability to complete exercises at my own pace and in a setting that is useful to me.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*All values are in percentages.

*SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neutral, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree*
Appendix C
Research Ethics Committee Approval

Standing Committee for Scientific Research - Jazan University (HAPO-10-Z-001) | Reference No.: REC-44/07/514
Research Title: Use of Mobile Apps for Enhanced Vocabulary Acquisition: A Comparative Study of Saudi EFL Learners’ Perceptions. | Date of decision: 30 January 2023
Principal Investigator: Dr. Yaseen Ali Mohammed Azi | Sponsor: -

The following item [✓] I have been received and reviewed in connection with the above study to be conducted by the above investigator:

[✓] Application for Research Ethics Committee approval
[✓] Research proposal/protocol
[✓] Patient Information Sheet & Consent Form
[✓] Questionnaire
[✓] Investigator’s CV.

The committee’s decision is:
[✓] Approved
[ ] Modification required (item specified below or in a companying letter)
[ ] Rejected (reasons specified below or in a companying letter)

Comments: Investigator is required to:
1. Report any protocol deviation/ violations to the Ethics Committee.
2. Provide progress and closure reports to the Ethics Committee.
3. The principal investigator has to contact the responsible person at the research site or the responsible entities for obtaining permission for research implementation and disclosure of the outcomes before publication.

Chairman of Standing Committee for Scientific Research

Dr.\ Hassan Ahmad Alhazmi

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