

MOBILE LEARNING: HOW SMARTPHONES AFFECT VOCABULARY ACQUISITION

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Abstract

This article explores the impact of mobile devices, particularly smartphones, on the effectiveness of English vocabulary acquisition. The author analyzes the advantages of mobile learning, such as accessibility, interactivity, and motivational factors. The article also addresses limitations and offers recommendations for the rational use of smartphones in foreign language lessons.

Keywords: mobile applications; vocabulary; lexical competence; English language.

Introduction

With the development of digital technologies and the widespread use of smartphones, English language learning has entered a new era. Mobile devices play a crucial role in vocabulary acquisition, as vocabulary forms the foundation for fluent communication. The aim of this article is to examine how smartphones can contribute to more effective memorization of new words and expressions.

It is well known that mobile phones provide easy access to materials and the opportunity to practice at any time and in any place. Another advantage is the limited screen size, which allows for more controlled content presentation compared to other learning materials [2, p. 20]. Mobile technologies offer students opportunities to engage all four language skills—reading, listening, speaking, and writing. Furthermore, learners become more motivated and engaged in the learning process. Teachers, in turn, should encourage students to integrate technology into their learning and offer opportunities to use

smartphones in the classroom. Students can employ mobile technologies in various types of learning [5, p. 4]. New vocabulary can be studied both in context and in isolation. Introducing new vocabulary should be done through the teacher's speech in the target language and through various forms of visual support. Vocabulary skills can be developed using warm-up and speaking exercises, which should then be applied in communication tasks aimed at improving listening and reading comprehension. Vocabulary development exercises activate students' cognitive processes and are designed to reduce lexical errors in communicative activities.

New words can be worked out in context and separately. Familiarization with new vocabulary should be carried out through speech delivered by the teacher in a foreign language, as well as using various types of visual accompaniment. To form lexical skills, warm-up exercises and speech exercises are used, which must then be used in communication to develop students' perceptual skills such as listening and reading. Exercises for the development of lexical skills activate the mental activity of students and are aimed at reducing the number of lexical errors when performing communicative tasks. To develop lexical skills in English lessons, students need to know situational, social, and contextual rules that are widely used by native speakers. There are many techniques that allow students to memorize new words and use them correctly in their speech.:

- highlighting words in a collocation;
- search for new words and phrases in the text;
- grouping words on different topics;
- search for synonyms, antonyms, etc.

At the same time, it is advisable to conduct text-based learning activities in the classroom. Modern educational approaches offer a variety of methods and techniques for presenting and activating vocabulary in students' speech. When selecting a particular teaching approach, the instructor should consider several factors, such as the students' age, their language proficiency, the objectives of the lesson, and the type of vocabulary being studied. In high school, students are expected to develop the ability to independently choose the most effective methods for organizing vocabulary learning. Additionally, students should be able to confidently apply the vocabulary they have learned in real-life situations. After becoming familiar with the new vocabulary, it is essential to conduct a series of practice exercises to initially reinforce the newly acquired vocabulary. These exercises are typically of a traditional nature, including:

- matching tasks
- filling in gaps
- multiple-choice questions
- completing sentences;

The process of reinforcing the acquired vocabulary is typically continued in the subsequent lesson. At this point, the instructor should direct the students' efforts towards developing their abilities to employ the newly acquired vocabulary in both receptive forms of communication (reading and listening) and productive forms (writing and speaking). It is crucial to adhere to a systematic approach when selecting tasks for the introduction, initial reinforcement, and subsequent consolidation of vocabulary.

This approach is beneficial for vocabulary expansion, as it reduces the number of individual elements and establishes a link between a new word and a concept from the native language.

Images can be divided into visual and auditory. Visual images are based on the association between a picture and a word that needs to be remembered. Students associate concepts in memory through meaningful visual images, making the learning process more effective. People often find it easy to establish a connection between verbal and visual symbols. Students can associate words not only with images, but also with sounds, creating auditory images. This approach is advantageous for expanding one's vocabulary, as it reduces the number of individual elements and establishes a link between a new word and a concept from the native language. They enhance the effectiveness of verbal learning by associating new sounds with those already familiar to students. For instance, students can establish a connection between the German word «katze» and the English word «cat».

Methodology

To conduct the research, the following methods were used: surveys of students from the Faculty of Foreign Languages, observation of their activity in mobile applications, and analysis of their progress in vocabulary acquisition over a specific period. Educational platforms and apps such as Quizlet, Duolingo, and Memrise were employed. Sixty students participated in the study. Over the course of one month, they used these apps in addition to traditional language lessons.

Results and Discussion

The results showed that students who actively used mobile apps demonstrated a significantly higher level of vocabulary retention—on average, 25–30% more than those who studied vocabulary only through textbooks. Particularly effective were features such as spaced repetition algorithms and the multimedia presentation of words through audio and visual support. An additional advantage was the

flexible and informal nature of mobile learning, which positively influenced student motivation.

However, some challenges were identified: certain students were distracted by non-academic functions on their smartphones, which reduced their concentration. Additionally, overreliance on mobile learning without a structured approach could lead to fragmented knowledge.

Conclusion

Mobile learning is an effective tool for vocabulary acquisition when used reasonably and in a controlled manner. Smartphones can significantly increase students' interest in language learning, create comfortable conditions for revising and reinforcing vocabulary, and enhance learner autonomy. However, they should be regarded as a supplement rather than a replacement for traditional teaching methods.

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