

A review of the effects of media on foreign language vocabulary acquisition

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Abstract

The current review article is accomplished to evaluate the effectiveness of a variety of social media in learning a foreign language vocabulary among learners. Another objective is to give some suggestions for using social media in teaching vocabulary based on its influence on students' performance and teachers' and students' perspectives about this method of teaching and learning. The root of the article included several main features such as the authors, the aims, the participants, and the results or the implications of the study. Through the review article, it is clear that social media is one of the most efficient means to promote vocabulary learning among EFL and ESL learners since it involves several benefits that are demonstrated in the following articles.

Keywords: Media, EFL, ESL, Social media, vocabulary

Introduction

With the emergence of technology, people nowadays can get access to various media types that benefit both teachers and students in teaching and learning a foreign language. Thanks to social media, students can interact with others via chatting or even calling videos, learning from watching videos, and searching for information effortlessly. Therefore, the importance of media cannot be denied and should be applied appropriately in education. The teachers also play a main role in selecting effective applications from different media to provide their students with good learning conditions. Teachers should take some relevant applications into consideration that aim at motivating the learners' needs. Indeed, the learning activities of using media are abundant and attractive to learners as they involve live images, sounds, music, and even games related to learners' interest topics. According to Faizi et al. (2014), students themselves take advantage of social media for their means of communication and entertainment, such as playing games and watching television. Another important factor of social media is providing meaningful and comprehensible input that proves successful learning outcomes. Vocabulary is a major aspect of learning a foreign language that has a close connection with other skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Compared with the use of traditional methods of teaching a foreign language that depends on textbooks and teacher-centered approaches, students recently have opportunities to acquire vocabulary by themselves with the help of social media as well as teachers'

facilitation. Because of the new method itself, many researchers are now focused on analyzing the role of social media in acquiring foreign language vocabulary. Therefore, this paper reviews several articles that compared the effectiveness of traditional teaching methods and the application of media in the acquisition of a foreign language.

Literature review

Whether the application of media in teaching and learning a foreign language is positive or not, many authors carried out the five following studies based on quite similar participants and methods. That means the experimental approach focused on discovering the effects of many media types, including clips, games, youtube, computers, and iPad. The authors also paid attention to students' attitudes by giving them questionnaires and collecting the data to construct valuable techniques for improving foreign language acquisition. Besides, each study's elements are also briefly summarized so that the readers can understand easily.

Yuksel and Tanriverdi (2009) carried out a study to investigate the improvement of English vocabulary acquisition by applying English subtitles on a video among foreign language learners, Turkish students in particular. One hundred and twenty Turkish-speaking college students studied English as a foreign language engaged in the English courses to complete the treatment before being randomly divided into caption and no-captions groups. The pre-test and post-test analysis checked the significance of captions on gaining English vocabulary. The results reported a considerable achievement of both groups in the post-test compared to few distinctions in the pre-test. The caption group developed slightly more than the no-captions group. Therefore, watching movie clips with subtitles or not can be a helpful way to gain language vocabulary and enhance listening and comprehension skills.

Aghlara and Tamjid (2011) investigated a study about the impact of digital games on computers on foreign vocabulary acquisition among Iranian children. This study aims to compare the effect of learning vocabulary through SHAIEx – a digital computer game including multimedia and hypertext technologies – and traditional methods on enhancing children's vocabulary capacity. The participants of 40 young girls at the age of six and seven receiving no exposure to English were split into two groups of twenty, including an experimental group and a control group, and had the same 45-day course. In the experimental group, the children freely chose any games in SHAIEx that used many means of hypermedia and were suitable for their levels. Both groups then took a final exam to check their vocabulary knowledge. The data showed that children from the experimental group got greater marks than those in the control group; therefore, it is ensured that digital games offer significant benefits of vocabulary acquisition.

In the article, Kabooha and Elyas (2015) assessed how much vocabulary students can gain, how their retention can be improved, and their attitudes via Youtube Videos in reading activities. There were 100 female preparatory-year students from the age of 18 to 20 at King Abdul-Aziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, and four English teachers who were non-native speakers. An equal number of students were divided into three experimental classes, who then studied reading with video clips, and one control class who were taught by traditional methods within seven weeks. Firstly, to classify students' awareness of the target words in the context, a pre-test VKS was organized. Then, a post-test was also carried out to determine the vocabulary competence of students after the treatment. Finally, the questionnaires were used to record both students' and teachers' attitudes of using Youtube Videos in their study. The results indicated that Youtube video

clips played a crucial role in improving students' vocabulary acquisition and retention, and all the participants viewed Youtube videos as a helpful and effective way of learning vocabulary.

Han, M. & Niu, S. (2019). Effect of Computer Multimedia Assisted Word Annotation on A study was conducted by Han and Niu (2019) to analyze how computer multimedia affects Chinese students' English vocabulary acquisition in terms of supporting word annotation. The participants were 105 students from a Chinese university with a non-English major. Based on the two variables, including annotation mode and English levels, the students were divided into six groups of levels to took the quick vocabulary test and delayed vocabulary test. The results reveal that various annotations bring positive effects on incidental vocabulary depending on the levels of students. Among them, text+picture+voice annotation mode can be the best means of promoting the English language incidentally for high-level learners compared to few differences for low-level ones.

Furthermore, the combination of text+image+voice in a high-level test is the most beneficial mode of deepening vocabulary memory. At the same time, there is no considerable change in the text, meaning test, and the delay test of low-level students. As a result, the application of multimedia-assisted annotation is critical to improving learners' incidental vocabulary competence, especially in reading comprehension.

In the research, the utilization of iPad and its significance were examined by Wang et al. (2015). The authors compared the essential changes in students' vocabulary competence between learning English from iPad App and traditional teaching method. They evaluated how much information and communication technologies (ICT) benefited the learning motivation through students' perceptions. Seventy-two first-year students studying English in a Taiwanese private university who participated in the treatment were split into one experimental group looking with iPad app and a control group taught by the audio-lingual method. A t-test was used to analyze the progress of learning vocabulary, followed by a questionnaire for students in the experimental group to get their perspectives about ICT use. The results indicated that students' vocabulary proficiency was considerably improved via the iPad App that created a comfortable atmosphere and motivated students' needs to use ICT in the classroom.

The performance of Facebook and Youtube in learning a foreign language and their influence on ESL learner's vocabulary proficiency was determined by Abbas et al. (2019). The authors also explored how social websites can bring learners positive aspects of learning new words. The study was conducted with the participants of 25 students at International Islamic University who were given ten close-ended paper questionnaires and 10 English teachers answering five close-ended and five open-ended questions online. As a result, social websites are pretty attractive to learners because of their informative knowledge and exciting entertainment. However, only a few students agreed that Facebook and Youtube supported their vocabulary acquisition by employing other people online. Besides, many teachers gave positive feedback about the effectiveness of social websites in encouraging the learning environment and enhancing students' vocabulary proficiency.

Shao (2012) investigated a study to evaluate the efficiency of multimedia in facilitating learners' vocabulary acquisition as well as consider whether the multimedia application was practical for learners in gaining vocabulary or not. Eighty chosen participants were the first-year students aged 18 to 20 who were studying Computer Application University of Science and Technology Beijing and were at the same level of English proficiency. The experimental group

of 40 students received the multimedia application-based training called 'I Love English Vocabulary' software, whereas the other 40 students in the control group studied with the traditional instruction. It was found that the outcome of the research was promising after the data analysis. The implementation of the multimedia software was extremely optimistic for the learners as well as successfully improved their vocabulary acquisition. Although the adaptation of multimedia in the curriculum was not verified because of such reasons, the authors believed the learner's attitudes would be changed someday.

In the study, Ebrahimzadeh (2017) compared the use of traditional pencil-and-paper treatment and the application of commercial digital video games to EFL learners' vocabulary acquisition. Two hundred and forty-one male students studying at high schools at the age of 12 to 18 were assigned to be three groups of participants. The first group – Readers - learned new words by reading; the second group – Players – learned new words by playing a video game; and the third group – Watchers – observed two classmates compete. Following a pre-test, all students had to complete the post-test after the six-week sessions. The final findings indicated that the Players and Watchers' performance was higher than that of the Readers, and the Players performed as quite similar to the Watchers; DVG could be seen as an effective tool in promoting learners' vocabulary acquisition.

Zainal and Rahmat (2020) explored how social media influenced students' vocabulary acquisition and their interest in language learning skills and how social media affected language learning acquisition positively and negatively. The authors used the quantitative analysis design, which analyzed the data collected from questionnaires. Many students studying at both private and public universities in Malaysia were joined in the survey to share their attitudes and opinions on the application of social media in enrich vocabulary. According to students' responses, they agreed that it was highly useful as they tended to search for new words' meaning on social media and applied them into suitable contexts. Besides, the use of social media encouraged them to write and use English more frequently. Finally, social media was an efficient means of correcting grammar and spelling as well as learning new 'slangs' online.

In the study of Centinkaya and Sutcu (2019), the improvement of students' vocabulary sources was examined by the usage of Whatsapp to send messages with multimedia annotations together with students' views on Whatsapp and multimedia annotations' educational use. The participants included 59 girls and 53 boys studying grade 9th who took the English course with the same teacher. The combination of the quantitative methods with pretest and posttest and the qualitative one using open-ended question forms. Seventy-two words from the grade 11th coursebook were selected to be introduced and filtered by the expert to become reliable words for achievement tests. The multimedia annotation also involved three stages such as texts, pictures, and audio. As a result, students' vocabulary acquisition was more improved via using 'Text+Picture+Audio' and 'Text+Pictures' than other multimedia. Although a few students complained about the useless posts on the phones, many of them expressed positively to the usefulness of the treatment.

In 2013, Bakar and Nosratirad conducted a study to illustrate the significance of computer games acted as a learning tool in reinforcing adults' vocabulary learning. Three participants were chosen to join the treatment based on their equal English level as well as their volunteer to learn English, who, however, were required to have the ability to use computers. The method used for collecting data consisted of semi-structured interviews, observation, a check-list for self-report, pretests, posttests, and lists of vocabulary. SIM 3 game was selected as it involved meaningful

English words and its free connection. The results of the study showed that computer games not only raised students' awareness of independently learning English through games but also increased their levels of vocabulary proficiency. It was suggested that this learning technique can be applied as funny exercises for low-level students to practice their vocabulary learning.

Kurniawan is the author of a case study that was conducted to illustrate how social media affected students' English vocabulary as well as explained social media as an important role in students' vocabulary acquisition based on their respective usage. Tenth and eleventh-grade students who took part in the study also actively participated in social media for improving their English vocabulary. The questionnaire was used to answer the first question and the vocabulary test was carried out to gather data for the second one. The data revealed that many students with greater social media users got much higher scores than those who were lower social activeness. Based on the results, social media was confirmed as an effective means of language teaching and learning, vocabulary acquisition in particular.

The influence of WeChat – a popular social application in China – on the CFL learners' vocabulary achievement was examined by Pamintuan and et al. (2018). The purpose of the quasi-experimental study was whether there was any difference between the pretest and the posttest's treatment of the control group and the experimental group. Besides, the authors also illustrated some implications of this study for further study. Six males and twelve females at the age of 18-21 participated in the study within ten-day treatment using Wechat messaging, Official Accounts, and Mini Programs, who were Filipino students studying Chinese as a foreign language. Students' performance data was collected from the pretest and post-test, followed by the observation and checklists of students' behavior in acquiring new vocabulary. The results showed that WeChat could improve students' vocabulary acquisition and motivated their attitudes toward learning the Chinese language.

The research of Letchunmanan and Hoon (2012) aimed to investigate the potential effect of computer games on broadening ESL learners' vocabulary and what strategies should be used to acquire vocabulary among learners. The participants of this study were ten Form, Four students, at a semi-urban school. These volunteered students engaged in fourteen weeks of treatment – seven weeks studying vocabulary via traditional strategies that used dictionary, contextual clues, and semantic mapping and seven weeks studying through computer games. Pretest, posttest, and questionnaires were used as major methods to collect and analyze data. The results of the t-test illustrated that more learners studying with computer games were able to gain new words than those who learned vocabulary with traditional methods. However, there was no significant change in using new words in their writing essays. Furthermore, most learners found computer games interesting, joyful, and challenging in learning vocabulary.

Sivagnanam and Yunus (2020) carried out research in which they explored the positive effects of social media on enhancing pupils' vocabulary and several difficulties among pupils in using social media to study vocabulary. Thirty-one year 5 students and twenty-two year 4 students were the respondents of the study who were determined by purposive sampling method. The method of the study was questionnaires which included 6 sections followed by a final section. Students expressed whether they considered social media's features, what challenges they faced, and what motivation factor they got. The findings revealed that students found social media effective and motivated in learning vocabulary, whereas they also faced the challenges of wrong spelling usage and short forms in writing.

An experiment on the impacts of multimedia factors, including visual texts, spoken texts, and graphics in a Web-based self-instruction learning program on the increasing of students' vocabulary acquisition, was carried out by Kim and Gilman (2008). All 172 middle school students were split into six groups in which they were taught with different methods. The testing methods were applied including pretest, posttest, retention test, and an attitude inventory. The findings showed that students who received visual texts and added graphics or visual texts added graphics, and added spoken texts would score higher than groups learning with other types of instruction. This means that the use of visual texts combined with graphics was offered to be an efficient way to improve students' vocabulary acquisition.

According to Mousavi and Gholami, how students acquired vocabulary incidentally through watching flash stories with or without subtitles was examined in 2014. Moreover, the authors also focused on the differences between the related influences of watching stories with or without English subtitles on elementary EFL learners' incidental acquisition of vocabulary. Ten males and eighteen females elementary level EFL learners participated in the study. They were divided into two experimental groups - one was taught by watching flash stories with English captions (group A) and another group would watch flash stories without captions (group B). The control group only read flash stories through English texts (Group C). A placement test and a pilot test were conducted to create suitable groups of participants as well as the suitable target vocabulary. A t-test also was involved in examining how many words students got after their treatment. The results demonstrated that both group A and group B had a development in vocabulary improvement compared to low scores of group C. Furthermore, there were no important differences between the scores of group A and group B. Therefore, it is more effective to watch flash stories with or without captions than to read a file.

An analysis of the application of online games to vocabulary learning among university students was stated by Yip and Wan (2006). The purpose of this study was to demonstrate how online games affected students' vocabulary learning and evaluated their attitudes about the strength and the weakness of online games in vocabulary learning. The subjects involved 100 freshmen studying English as a foreign language at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. The first three classes – A, B, and C – learned the target vocabulary from websites as the experimental group while the second three classes – D, E, and F – were exposed to the target vocabulary from the lessons as the control group. All respondents were required to take a pretest before taking a learning process, followed by a posttest, survey questionnaires, and interviews. The findings showed that online vocabulary games learners outperformed learners who had face-to-face lessons to acquire and retain new vocabulary. Both learners and teachers considered online games when they learned vocabulary as online games offered entertainment and motivation in learning a language.

Akkuzu (2015) experimented with the use of a game-based application to investigate its effects on primary and secondary learners' English vocabulary acquisition. Besides, the author also evaluated those learners' views on the performance of the game-based application that they used for their English vocabulary learning. There were 33 males and 31 females at the age of 6 (Grade 2) and 16 (Grade 8) who joined in the treatment. The respondents were not familiar with mobile equipment but also had the level of proficiency from beginners to pre-intermediate. To enhance learners' new word knowledge, the author used a vocabulary game during their lesson. A variety of methods were applied, such as a pre-test, a post-test, a survey on learners, and a semi-structured interview with teachers. The post-test results revealed that most classes' levels had high

improvement in their vocabulary knowledge, unlike the grade 2nd students with slight changes. According to the interview, both teachers and students gave positive opinions towards using games in learning English because of their exciting and colorful visual aids, which helped them learn new words easily. Due to the efficiency of game-based applications, it should be considered to use in learning language classrooms.

The use of music and songs was examined in the study of Kuśnierek in 2016 which aimed at exploring what extent music and songs helped students enhance their memorization of vocabulary when they learned English through music and songs. The participants of the study included two groups of twenty-eight students at the age of eleven to twelve who have learned English for five years. Within the two-week lessons, three types of data collection instruments were introduced involving a preliminary questionnaire, an evaluation questionnaire, and teacher observations. Additionally, a pre-test was offered before the lessons and a post-test was used after the treatment to evaluate their knowledge. The findings showed that many students were into music and agreed that songs were an effective tool for them to learn vocabulary. Based on the post-test results, students were able to remember the words longer after their repetition of listening to songs.

Implications for future research

Based on the findings of twenty studies, it is concluded that the use of media has great significance for the process of acquiring foreign language vocabulary for students. Media thus should be more explored and developed in the classroom so that learners can reach their target language easily and interestingly. Teachers should take advantage of technologies in teaching and apply differently selective means of media that suitable for students' proficiency to gain the most effective results.

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