

The use of Quizlet to enhance vocabulary in the English language classroom

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Abstract. This research focuses on vocabulary acquisition in foreign language learning. The latest trends of teaching as well as the huge advance of technology allow teachers to utilize online and mobile applications through diverse apps. This quasi-experimental design research investigated Quizlet, in its mobile version, on vocabulary acquisition in English as a Foreign Language (EFL). One group of A2 (according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) EFL learners at a state secondary school in Valencia (Spain) (N=24) participated in this study. Learners from the Treatment group (henceforth, T-group) underwent a pre-test and a post-test to assess their acquisition of the assigned vocabulary lessons which were extracted from the course syllabus. After utilizing Quizlet for vocabulary learning for the academic year 2017-2018, the results proved that these learners improved significantly their level of EFL vocabulary at the post-test. Accordingly, this research recommends utilizing Quizlet in its mobile version at secondary education.

Keywords: MALL, vocabulary, EFL, Quizlet.

1. Emergence of Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL)

Technology-enhanced language learning has widened the field of language teaching and learning (Abdollahpour & Maleki, 2012). This modification, according to Fageeh (2013), is shown by the latest technologies which revolutionized teaching and learning through scaffolding and complementing traditional classroom learning tasks and materials. The increasing use of mobile learning has become relevant in education since it is causing a new generation

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of Technology-Enhanced Language Learning (TELL) to emerge (Fageeh, 2013; Kimura, Obari, & Goda, 2011).

By 2015, there were seven billion mobile users in the world (International Telecommunication Union, 2015), representing around 96% of the world population. This widespread use of mobile phone usage makes MALL an inevitable extension of TELL since the mobile phones control all aspects of life (Chinnery, 2006).

MALL is believed to increase second language learning through the real world (Palalas, 2011) and transform the learning process into an informal, interactive, and ubiquitous experience (Kimura et al., 2011; Taj, Sulan, Sipra, & Ahmad, 2016), offering solutions to learning obstacles concerning time and place (Miangah & Nezarat, 2012). Latest applications allow learners to interact through the use of customizable e-flashcards, engaging games, and collaborative tasks. This research is necessary to help learners improve their vocabulary. Quizlet is an interesting example.

As an e-learning app, the efficacy of Quizlet on improving vocabulary is attributed to the increasing role of information and communication technology in all aspects of life. Teenagers are used to utilizing smart devices linked to the internet to perform most of their daily tasks. Moreover, Quizlet enhances active learning both inside and outside the classroom. Within the classroom, the *Live learning* mode offers students collaboration, since learners share information, so that learning becomes cooperative. For this, Quizlet is regarded as the perfect tool for learners to improve vocabulary.

2. Method

2.1. Aim of this study

Quizlet is a mobile and web-based application which utilizes learning modules composed of concepts and their definitions or descriptions. These study sets are introduced to learners through various learning modes which include flashcards, games, collaborative tasks, and quizzes that help learners master different topics and, particularly, languages and vocabulary. This research aims to analyze Quizlet as a tool to learn EFL vocabulary by learners whose L1 is Spanish. To achieve this, this paper pretends to verify that Quizlet improves learners' acquisition of EFL vocabulary.

2.2. Sample

One group of A2 level EFL learners participated in the research. The participants were chosen randomly. There was only the T-group, which included 24 learners who, aged between 14 and 15 years old, were studying their fourth year of compulsory secondary education at the time this experiment developed. These learners were studying at a state secondary school in Valencia.

Both the nature and content of the class was communicative since the teacher aimed to help learners become fully competent. The learners studied the English language for three sessions during the week at school, each session consisting of 45 minutes. Outside the school, the learners were required to limit exposure to English to, at least, between six and eight hours a week to make sure that no vocabulary gains were made outside of the treatment.

2.3. Research tools

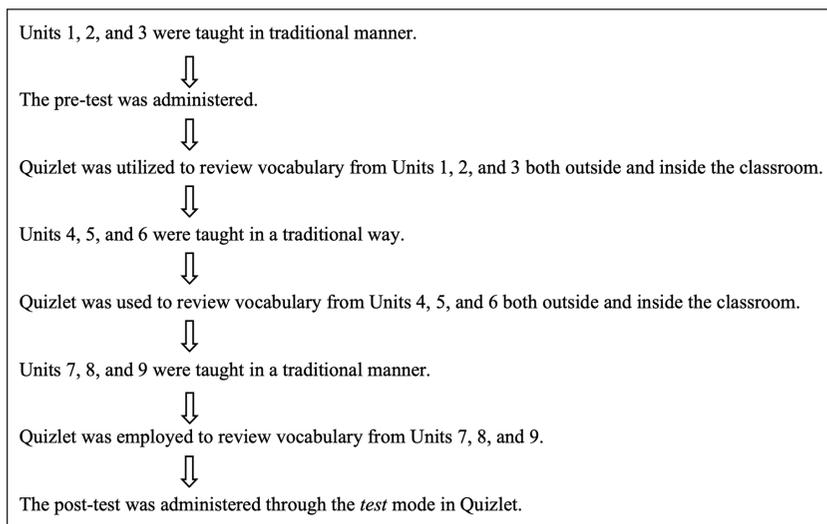
This study utilized a quasi-experimental research design including a pre-/post-test group design. Thus, two tests were administered to the learners participating in this experiment. Each test covered five different types of tasks: written, matching, multiple choice, true/false, and spelling. These two tests assessed learners' acquisition of nine units of the course syllabus. The top score of each test was 15 marks divided between the five tasks.

2.4. Procedures

The pre-test was administered after the first three units of the course, and before utilizing Quizlet. The learners' outcomes were recorded for further correlation to the scores of the post-test, which was offered at the end of the academic year after the last three units were taught. During the year, the learners were required to study the three units, which were previously assigned, utilizing Quizlet both outside and inside the EFL classroom. These students attended lessons for three weeks where the same units were taught utilizing *Learn*, *Flashcards*, and *Live learning* modes. Additionally, they were asked to install Quizlet in its mobile version and learn the assigned units outside the school through other learning manners (*Write*, *Test*, *Match*, and *Spelling*).

The researcher designed a learning set for each unit where illustrations, paraphrasing, and L1 annotation are employed to explain the meaning of the new words. Next, a diagram is shown to make clear the organization and timeline of the different tasks (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Organization and timeline of the different tasks



The outcomes of both the pre-test and the post-test were then analyzed in order to verify the hypothesis research.

3. Outcomes

The learners achieved the outcomes which are shown in Table 1 below. It should be mentioned that the t-tests were paired samples since we are measuring changes in the same students.

Table 1. Mean scores and t-test outcomes of the scores (Cohen's *d*)

	Measure, mean (SD)		t-Student		<i>d</i>
	Pre	Post	t(23)	p-value	
TOTAL	5.98 (1.22)	7.39 (1.05)	-14.035	< 0.001	2.86
WRITTEN	5.75 (1.57)	7.21 (1.72)	-7.669	< 0.001	1.56
MATCHING	5.67 (1.55)	7.25 (1.65)	-15.402	< 0.001	3.14
MULTIPLE CHOICE	5.46 (1.77)	6.83 (1.52)	-6.382	< 0.001	1.30
TRUE/FALSE	5.67 (1.79)	7.21 (1.59)	-7.73	< 0.001	1.58
SPELLING	7.38 (1.79)	8.46 (1.32)	-3.844	0.001	0.78

The written variable is lower in the pre-test than in the post-test. The matching variable is lower in the pre-test than in the post-test. This happens again with the

multiple choice. The same occurs with the true/false variable and, lastly, outcomes of the spelling variable are higher in the post-test than in the pre-test.

4. Discussion and conclusion

In general, the mean scores implied that there was a significant improvement of the outcomes of this group. The media of the post-test is 7.39, significantly higher than the pre-test (5.98). However, the Standard Deviation (SD) of the scores of this group at the post-test was only 1.11, which is slightly lower than the SD at the pre-test (1.22). The difference in SD between both tests was very small. This suggests that their scores were more homogenous after studying with Quizlet, and hence involved that the effect of the application on all participants was more consistent in comparison with the classic methods where a huge modification between the learners' outcomes were witnessed.

Related to the outcomes of the different variables in [Table 1](#), we can clearly see that the results improved significantly at the various post-tests in comparison with the corresponding pre-tests. Moreover, the total media of the post-test is notably higher than the pre-test. This means that the participants in the experiment improved their level of EFL vocabulary through Quizlet. This significant improvement of the outcomes in the various post-tests may result from the mobile version specifically, such as out-of-class exposure as well as immediate feedback. For this reason, it is recommended that learners practice vocabulary through Quizlet.

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