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**EFL Learners' Attitudes towards the Use of Digital Tools to
Enhance Vocabulary Knowledge:
Case of First-Year Students at Tlemcen University**

Dissertation submitted to the department of English as a partial fulfilment of the requirements for Master' s degree in Didactics of Foreign Languages.

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DEDICATION

To

My lovely family

And my best friends

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ABSTRACT

In today's globalised world, new technological developments have emerged in the field of teaching and learning in general. Thus, exploring students' opinions and attitudes towards digital tools and their effectiveness in improving vocabulary knowledge is an essential aspect of language learning that requires additional research. In accordance with this thinking, the central focus of this inquiry is to gain a deeper understanding of first-year EFL students' attitudes towards digital tools used in vocabulary learning, as well as to gain insights into learners' experiences with these tools to demonstrate their effectiveness in improving their vocabulary knowledge. On account of this, a case study involving 47 first-year EFL students and five teachers from the Department of English, University of Tlemcen was carried out. The present study employed three different research instruments in order to bolster the credibility and validity of the research. Specifically, students' questionnaire, teachers' interview, and focus group discussion. This combination of research methods revealed that first-year EFL students' confront a multitude of vocabulary learning difficulties, mostly related to meaning, recalling, pronunciation, and spelling. Another notable finding from the study was that the majority of students showed positive attitudes towards digital tools used in vocabulary learning, and found them necessary to develop a deep understanding of word forms, meaning, and use, or word knowledge as a whole. Overall, this study sheds new light on the importance of digital tools in improving vocabulary learning and assisting in meeting vocabulary challenges.

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KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

CAVL: Computer Assisted Vocabulary Learning

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ICTs: Information and Communication Technology

L2: Second Language

MALL: Mobile-Assisted Language Learning

MS word: Microsoft Word

PDA: Personal Digital Assistant

PPT: Microsoft PowerPoint

X

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

General Introduction

At the core of language lies vocabulary, serving as the pillar of effective communication and the bedrock of language proficiency. The primary goal of every English language student is to achieve a higher level of language proficiency, which is an essential condition for conversing adeptly in the target language. Thus, in order to attain this goal, an extensive vocabulary is needed. However, it is also necessary to consider the other elements that also lead to language proficiency. Owing to this, foreign language learners often concentrate on developing and building their vocabulary through the use of a variety of techniques, methods, and tools. As the current epoch is the digital age, most of EFL learners' use high technology gadgets to learn and enrich their vocabulary stock. EFL learners have at their disposal a multifarious of technological instruments, including platforms, software, digital devices and applications, which may help them learn and improve their vocabulary, as well as their understanding of this vocabulary.

The ubiquitous accessibility of digital tools in language teaching and learning has sparked a mounting curiosity in students' inherent possibility to heighten vocabulary knowledge. Nevertheless, in the field of foreign language teaching and learning, the way in which EFL students' view these digital tools in vocabulary learning is still uncertain. Accordingly, this study strives to investigate EFL learners' attitudes towards the use of digital tools to enhance their vocabulary knowledge. This study may generate new information into the effectiveness of using digital tools in vocabulary learning. Another point to consider is that it can shape pedagogical practices, since recognizing students' opinions and stances towards these tools can make educators adopt and modify their teaching techniques and integrate these tools into their instructional practices.

This research aims to explore and survey the attitudes of first-year EFL students' towards using digital tools conducive to increase vocabulary knowledge. Addedly, this

project sets out to gain a deeper understanding of first-year EFL students' experiences with digital tools used in vocabulary learning, as well as to manifest their effectiveness in improving their vocabulary knowledge.

This research study is designed to investigate the following research questions:

Q1. What kinds of problems do first-year EFL students' face in learning English vocabulary?

Q2. What are the attitudes of first-year EFL students' towards the use of digital tools in vocabulary learning?

Q3. Does the use of digital tools affect first-year EFL students' vocabulary knowledge?

The following hypotheses have been developed based on the research questions provided above:

H1. First-year EFL students' encounter several difficulties in learning English vocabulary, including difficulties in understanding the meaning of words, their pronunciation, and spelling.

H2. Most first-year EFL students' hold positive attitudes towards digital tools used in vocabulary learning.

H3. Digital tools have a positive impact on first-year EFL students' knowledge of vocabulary as they can enhance their understanding of word forms, meaning, and use.

In order to answer the research questions and meet the study objectives, the researcher opted for a mixed method research design with a sequential mixed method strategy. Additionally, the researcher employed a case study which aims to provide a detailed analysis of first-year EFL students' attitudes towards the use of digital tools to enhance their vocabulary knowledge. The data collection process involves the use of three research tools, namely, students' questionnaire, teachers' interview, and focus group discussion. As far as the sample population, 47 first-year EFL students

participated in this study, with 5 English language university teachers. After collecting and processing the data, the final step was the analyses and interpretations to draw out the final conclusions.

The present dissertation is divided into two consecutive chapters. The first chapter is dedicated to the literature review of the research study, and the second one is devoted to the research methodology and the study outcomes. In the initial chapter, the researcher provides conceptual underpinnings of the two concepts “vocabulary” and “digital tools”, besides a review and summary of the existing studies related to the research topic. In the next chapter, the researcher describes the research design, type of research, sampling method, data collection and analysis methods, and finally presents and discusses the results obtained in the study.

Chapter One

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1.1 Introduction

Digital tools have become an essential component of language teaching and learning in the 21st century. They are widely available and easily accessible platforms, websites, and devices used to facilitate language learning. Recently, there is a heightened interest in using digital tools in learning vocabulary. This interest was initiated by dint of the widespread availability of the Internet coupled with the acknowledgments that these tools have a tremendous influence on vocabulary knowledge. In this chapter, the researcher will provide a background and substantial information on two major concepts, namely “vocabulary” and “digital tools”. It is important to address that research studies tend to focus much more on second language students' attitudes towards the use of digital tools to enhance their vocabulary learning. Therefore, this investigation aims to examine EFL students' perceptions of digital tools in general in order to enhance their vocabulary knowledge in particular. Apart from the attitudes, this study will also explore the problems that first-year EFL students' encounter while learning English vocabulary, and see if digital tools can help them strengthen their lexical knowledge, and thus get rid of their vocabulary learning problems. Ultimately, in this section, the researcher will highlight previous studies that will be organized chronologically with the aim of evaluating and synthesizing these current studies relevant to this research being dealt with.

1.2 Definition of Vocabulary

It is widely known that words and vocabulary are the fundamental units for building and shaping any language. A word is “*a single unit of language that has meaning and can be spoken or written*” while vocabulary is “*all the words used by a particular person, or all the words that exist in a particular language or subject*”(Cambridge Dictionary). Simply put, a word is a single item, whereas vocabulary is the bunch of words that formulate the full-blown language. The term

vocabulary has manifold definitions. Accordingly, Hatch and Brown (2005) clearly state that vocabulary is “*a list or set of words for a particular language or a list or a set of words that individual speaker of language might use*” (as cited in Suardi & Sakti, 2019, p. 94). It is also described as “*the sum of words used by, understood by, or at the command of a particular person or group*” (The American Heritage Dictionary). Ultimately, Diamond and Gutlohn (2006) added that it is “*the knowledge of words and word meanings*” (as cited in Elmahdi & Hezam, 2020, p. 558). However, this knowledge can in no way be totally mastered yet, it can be expanded over time (Hiebert & Kamil, 2005).

1.3 The Importance of Vocabulary

Vocabulary is the essence of all languages, and without it no human being can express his feelings, thoughts and ideas. As Wilkins (1972) finely states “*without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed*” (as cited in Abuhabil et al., 2021, p.281). This statement underscores the great significance vocabulary plays in communication in the sense that without it humans cannot communicate or converse. Therefore, vocabulary can be seen as a key to a successful communication.

In second and foreign language learning, having a limited knowledge of vocabulary can negatively affect students' learning, and more precisely the learner's language proficiency that cannot be attained if he/she lacks vocabulary (Afzal, 2019, p. 82). In other words, language proficiency can be reached if the four domains of language: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, are highly mastered and these skills or domains necessitate a good command of vocabulary so that learners can listen, speak, read, and write. Thus, it can be inferred that a good vocabulary stock helps to build strong language skills and produce good communicators, readers, thinkers and even writers. Hence, it sounds as if learning a foreign language is mainly about learning its vocabulary (Wallace, 1982, as cited in Tahir & Tafat, 2021, p.10). In a

nutshell, it is imperative for learners to develop their vocabulary repertoire because it is one significant step towards language growth and development.

1.4 Vocabulary Levels

Vocabulary is arranged into three levels:

Level 1: it consists of words that are familiar to the learner as he/she uses them in daily conversations. Thus, this level is called “ conversational speech” (BENRABAH, 2014, p.21). Examples of level 1 words: house, girl, cat, etc. (BENRABAH, 2014, pp. 21-22).

Level 2: it covers the words that are learned through reading and listening (BENRABAH, 2014, p. 22). It is also termed as “ academic vocabulary” . Examples of this level include: perspective, generate, initiate, etc. (BENRABAH, 2014, p. 22).

Level 3: it incorporates low frequency words belonging to special discipline or subject (BENRABAH, 2014, p. 22). That is, they are domain specific vocabulary belonging to a special jargon and including technical terms *per se*.

1.5 Types of Vocabulary:

Vocabulary is usually divided into two main categories: active vocabulary and passive vocabulary.

1.5.1 Active Vocabulary

Otherwise known as productive vocabulary or working vocabulary, it is defined by Hiebert and Kamil (2005) as “*the set of words that an individual can use when writing and speaking*” (as cited in Abuhabil et al., 2021, p. 280). That is, it consists of words that the learner knows and can easily utilize in order to produce the language. Additionally, productive vocabulary is recognised by Ruth and Stuart (1986, pp. 64-65) as the language items that the learner can use properly in productive skills.

1.5.2 Passive Vocabulary

Also referred to as receptive vocabulary or recognition vocabulary, it is defined by the British Council as “*the words that learners understand but don't use yet*”. Receptive vocabulary is the sum of words that learners are able to understand when doing the reading and listening (Ruth & Stuart, 1986, p. 64).

1.6 Vocabulary Instruction

Teaching vocabulary is an integral part of any English language course, as it aims to assist learners master a large amount of vocabulary items, so they can communicate and interact successfully, as well as attain academic excellence. Effective vocabulary instruction entails teachers to give plenty of invaluable chances for learners to gain and acquire tons of new words along with their connotations and denotations. In other words, learners should be exposed to regular and comprehensible instructions in order to develop a strong abundant repertory of words and their meanings. Nagy (2005, p. 28) states that effective vocabulary teaching should incorporate three main things: “*teaching individual words, extensive exposure to rich language, both oral and written, and building generative word knowledge*” .

In the past, vocabulary had a small share in language teaching programmes, that is, it was given a low priority. However, it has regained its value in the last decades since academics and scholars have realized its key role in language teaching and learning; also, the dramatic increase in the number of investigations associated with the study of vocabulary in the field of second and foreign language has led to this dilate.

1.6.1 Explicit and Implicit Vocabulary Instruction

Basically, language educators usually use two methods of teaching vocabulary which are explicit and implicit vocabulary instruction.

Explicit vocabulary instruction, alternatively known as direct instruction or traditional instruction, is defined by Archer and Hughes (2011) as a direct organized methodical teaching approach in which “*learners know that they are a part of the*

formal learning task” (Dörnyei, 2001). In this specific teaching learning approach, educators intentionally aim to teach the target vocabulary and it is the same for learners; they deliberately want to pick up these target language words. In simple terms, explicit vocabulary instruction embraces intentional design and delivery of information by the teacher to children (Spencer et al., 2012, p. 02). That is to say, it is a constant and purposive teaching. Marzban and Kamalian (2013) described explicit learning as a process wherein students are fully focused and aware of the learning process and its outcomes (as cited in Dorgan & Mede, 2016, pp. 243-244). Within the direct vocabulary instruction, teachers make use of various strategies among which definitions, synonyms, word lists, semantic mapping, realia, pictures, mimicry, explanation, and translation (Duin & Graves, 1987; Harmer, 1991, as cited in Riahi, 2018, p. 291).

Implicit vocabulary instruction is also known as contextual or indirect instruction. This method of teaching is drawn on the idea that through an indirect exposure to various instructional materials students are going to acquire new words (Shakouri et al., 2014, as cited in Doğan & Mede, 2016). Implicit learning is defined by Rieder (2004) as a spontaneous subconscious operation in which learners assimilate new words “*through exposure to a variety of contexts, reading, listening to a story being told, watching TV or taking part in a conversation*” (Riahi, 2018, p. 291). It should be noted that indirect vocabulary teaching provides students with useful and strategic skills such as guessing skills, and analytical skills that are mainly used to check word parts and context clues (Gu & Johnson, 1996; Nation, 2001 & Schmitt, 1997, as cited in Doğan & Mede, 2016, p. 244).

1.6.2 Vocabulary Teaching Techniques

Teaching techniques are strategies used by teachers to facilitate the learning process. In vocabulary instruction educators use various teaching strategies to communicate the meaning of new words as well as to develop the learners' lexicon. It is worth mentioning that teachers are duty-bound to use the appropriate techniques so

as to achieve the best possible results. The present research paper is going to provide a list of the most common word teaching strategies suggested by authors, researchers and highly qualified teachers.

A. The Use of Context

Contextualisation is *“putting language items into a meaningful and real context rather than being treated as isolated items of language for language manipulation practice only”* (British council). Using context to teach second or foreign language vocabulary is typically a significant method teachers adopt in order to introduce new set of terminologies. Here, the target words are placed into sentences and then the learner guesses or tries to figure out its meaning depending on the context of the sentence. Additionally, learners can figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words through context clues which are defined by Miami Dade College (2005) as *“hints found within a sentence, paragraph, or passage that a reader can use to understand the meanings of new or unfamiliar words. It can appear in different forms such as definitions, examples, synonyms and antonyms”*.

Example: Hedgehog, a tiny savage animal, whose body is covered with sharp spines and it can turn into a ball when attacked by predators.

B. Role Plays

When teachers introduce new set of words, they want those words to be well retained and grasped by their learners. For this reason, teachers are always looking for more effective ways to teach vocabulary. Role play is a strategy in which students are required to act specific roles through saying, doing, and sharing (Altun, 2015, as cited in Alabsi, 2016, p.228). This kind of strategy results in greater comprehension of lexical items and their use in a real world context (Alabsi, 2016, p.288). Role play vocabulary is an authentic technique that has proven its effectiveness in vocabulary teaching and learning, as it endows students with a robust lexical competence that permits them to communicate successfully.

C. Antonyms

An antonym is “*a word that means the opposite of another word*” (Ellis, 2022). Teaching vocabulary through antonyms can grab the learner’ s attention especially if the teacher uses funny, challenging and enjoyable activities that make the learning atmosphere exciting. Examples of such are: funny/serious, hate/love, deep/hollow

D. Synonyms

A synonym is “*a word or phrase that has the same or nearly the same meaning as another word or phrase in the same language*” (Cambridge Dictionary). Teachers can use synonymy as a tool to expand their learner’ s vocabulary since it can provide immediate alternatives (Pavicic, 2003, as cited in Abuhabil et al., 2021, p.284). Also, it can intensify the learners' language skills and contribute to a wider understanding of the entire language. Examples of such are: fathom/deep, wide/large, content/happy.

E. Realia

According to the Online Etymology Dictionary, Realia is a Latin word derived from the adjective *reālia* which denotes “*real things, facts*”. Realia as an academic term are referred to as any authentic material used by teachers inside the classroom. In the area of vocabulary instruction, realia are defined as mediums that are used to clarify and teach vocabulary through tangible objects (Purnamasari et al., 2018, p.01). Using these tangible objects inside the study halls can boost the students' learning and make them link these objects to the actual world (Missy & O’ Donnell, 2014, as cited in Abuhabil et al., 2021, p. 285). Realia are deemed to be a powerful toolkit that enables learners to recall new lexical items (Richards & Rodgers, 2003, as cited in Abuhabil et al., 2021, p.285). It has positively affected the learning process, as it establishes an enjoyable learning environment and at the same time motivates and encourages learners to study (Purnamasari et al., 2018, p.07).

F. Dictionaries

Dictionaries consist of a great deal of knowledge about words, their meanings and usage (Harmer, 2007, p. 239). Harmer distinguishes two types of dictionaries, which are referenced dictionaries and production dictionaries. A referenced dictionary is used to check the meaning of words as well as other aspects, such as: pronunciation and spelling. On the contrary, a production dictionary is “*designed for students to use the other way around, starting with a meaning they wish to express and looking for the word that expresses it*” (Harmer, 2007, pp. 239-240).

Dictionaries are excellent tools for presenting the meaning and form of words due to the fact that they provide a wide variety of synonyms, definitions, and valuable examples.

G. Using objects, pictures, and gestures

Objects, pictures, and gestures are among the most worthwhile strategies that promote vocabulary development. These authentic tools make the meaning of terms more ingrained in the mind since learners visualize the words through concrete examples, and this increases the likelihood that they will be easily recalled.

H. Translation

It is “*the process of changing something that is written or spoken into another language*” (Oxford Learner's Dictionaries). Translation is a teaching method that was first used to teach dead languages (Freeman, 1986, as cited in Laidaoui & Sekour, 2019, p.10). In the past, educators used to teach language by translating words and sentences from the source language to the target language because it was seen as a direct link between the word and its meaning (Thornbury, 2002, as cited in Bouzenoun & Labreche, 2016, p.52).

In fact, many EFL students usually turn to translation when they come across novel and ambiguous words. Thus, it can be seen as a blessing since it can simplify vocabulary acquisition. Translation has many positive benefits, the most notable of which is that it can be used with all levels of students (Newmark, 1988, as cited in

Laidaoui & Sekour, 2019, p.6). However, nowadays it is prevented from being used in EFL classes except in some cases because of the severe criticism it was subjected to and the spread of alternative methods of teaching languages.

I. Enumeration

An enumeration is an organized list of elements that can be used as a tool to show the meaning of words, by listing the different elements related to the word to be explained (Alqahtani et al., 2015, p.28). For example, the word “earthquake” it can be expounded by listing multiple items, such as: ground, shake, Richter scale, and aftershocks.

1.7 Vocabulary Learning

Learning vocabulary at first glance may seem simple, but in fact it is a complex process. It is not just a matter of acquiring words, but also of having a great knowledge about its structure, meaning, use, and interrelatedness with other lexical items. During this process learners will first notice, then retrieve and finally use these target words (Kanellopoulou et al., 2019 & Moody et al., 2018, as cited in Huei et al., 2021, p.136). Thus, it can be said that vocabulary learning is a stepwise process of acquiring a series of words.

Many EFL learners struggle with a vocabulary deficiency which has negatively affected their language development. Thus, it can be assumed that vocabulary is the mainstay of mastering a foreign language, and without an adequate or at least a moderate amount of vocabulary, students cannot use the language appropriately.

1.7.1 Incidental and Intentional Vocabulary Learning

Vocabulary learning can be divided into two distinct categories: intentional vocabulary learning and incidental vocabulary learning. The former is organized and predetermined, whereas, the latter is improvised and unpremeditated (Kuswatun, 2017, pp. 11-12).

As pointed out by Hulstijn (1992, p.113-125) incidental vocabulary acquisition is "*the learning of vocabulary as the by-product of any activity not explicitly geared at committing information to memory*" (as cited in Bouaouina, 2010, p.27). That is to say, it is an implicit transfer of knowledge. Elliy (1992) also maintained that incidental vocabulary acquisition is "*non-explicit in so far as it does not include an explicit learning intention to be looked for*" (as cited in Bouaouina, 2010, p.27). Hunt and Beglar (1998) added that extensive reading and listening can be a direct source to incidental vocabulary learning (as cited in Alemi & Tayebi, 2011, p.82). From the definitions above, it can be concluded that incidental vocabulary learning is a type of learning in which the student's attention is not directed at learning, but instead at how language is used.

According to Hulstijn (2006), intentional learning is a way of learning, in which students know that they are part of a learning activity and that they will be examined in certain aspects of it. He also stated that it involves the use of intentional retention techniques which means that the learner wants to retain the information in his brain through practice and drills. Barcroft (2015, p.51) provides another definition of intentional vocabulary learning saying that during this process, learners deliberately and with a full concentration try to learn the new lexical items (as cited in Sinyashina, 2020, p.94).

1.7.2 Vocabulary Learning Strategies

There are certain strategies that students of English as a foreign language adopt as they try to understand and figure out the meaning of unknown words. These strategies are called vocabulary learning strategies which are part of language learning strategies and learning strategies as a whole (Nation 2001, p.217, as cited in Kaidi & Ketteb, 2017, p. 12).

Cameron (2001, p. 92) described vocabulary learning strategies as "*actions that learners take to help themselves understand and remember vocabulary items*" (as cited in Alabsi, 2016, p.228). That is to say, they are useful procedures that facilitate

the learning of vocabulary. The New Standard of National Curriculum in China (2003) defined these strategies as disparate techniques and acts that help EFL learners acquire vocabulary knowledge and evolve their language proficiency. Intaraprasert (2004) has provided a similar definition arguing that with a view to find out the meaning of words and to enlarge vocabulary size, students use a range of strategies and actions (as cited in Alabsi, 2016, p.228).

Vocabulary learning strategies are grouped into different classifications or taxonomies. There is the Oxford classification (1990), the classification of O'Malley and Chamotte (1990), the classification of Joe and Johnson (1996), and finally the classification of Schmitt (1997) (Letchumanan et al., 2016, p.174). This research paper is going to provide a detailed description of Schmitt's (1997) Taxonomy, since it is considered to be the most common and inclusive taxonomy, besides "*it offers a number of advantages not found in other taxonomies*" (Catalan, 2003, as cited Kaidi & Ketteb, 2017, p.14).

Schmitt' s taxonomy is classified into two major branches, namely discovery strategies and consolidation strategies. Discovery strategies deal with word meaning, and they are divided into two sub branches which are determination and social strategies. Consolidation strategies on the other hand, are those techniques used in word retention, and they contain four sub branches that are social, memory, cognitive, and metacognitive strategies (Kaidi & Ketteb, 2017, p.14). This taxonomy contains fifty eight strategies divided as follow: first, discovery strategies which comprise nine determination strategies and five social strategies. Second, consolidation strategies that encompass three social strategies, twenty seven memory strategies, nine cognitive strategies and five metacognitive strategies (Kaidi & Ketteb, 2017, pp.13-14).

1.7.2.1 Discovery Strategies

Discovery strategies are "*strategies that are useful for the initial discovery of a word's meaning*" (Schmitt, 2000 p.135). That is to say, when learners first encounter a

new word they try to find out its meaning through the use of these strategies which are divided into two categories: determination strategies and social strategies.

A. Determination strategies “*are used by an individual when faced with discovering a new word's meaning without recourse to another person's expertise*” (Schmitt, 2000 p.135). Put differently, the learner attempts to find the meaning of the ambiguous word himself and without asking others. They involve surmising from the learner linguistics knowledge or L1 cognate, using context, or using reference sources such as dictionaries.

B. Social Strategies on the other hand, entail asking somebody else about the meaning of new words, i.e., a teacher or a schoolfellow (Schmitt, 2000 p. 135).

1.7.2.2 Consolidation Strategies

They are “*those useful for remembering that word once it has been introduced*” (Schmitt, 2000 p. 135). In other words, consolidation strategies are specific techniques used to recall the meaning of new words. They include memory, cognitive, metacognitive and social strategies.

A. Memory Strategies

Memory strategies (traditionally known as mnemonics) involve “*relating the word to be retained with some previously learned knowledge, using some forms of imagery, or grouping*” (Schmitt, 2000 p.135). Examples of memory strategies include: image word’ s meaning which is helpful for word retrieval, and grouping which means that individuals group words into categories to facilitate their recall (Schmitt, 2000, p.135; Kaidi & Ketteb, 2017, p.15).

B. Cognitive Strategies

Cognitive strategies are like memory strategies however, they do not focus on manipulative mental processing, but on repetition and mechanical means (Schmitt,

1994, as cited in Kaidi & Ketteb, 2017, p.16). It includes strategies like oral and written reiteration, glossaries, and vocabulary notebooks.

C. Metacognitive Strategies

Schmitt (2000) described metacognitive strategies as “*a conscious overview of the learning process and making decisions about planning, monitoring, or evaluating the best ways to study*” (as cited in Kaidi & Ketteb, 2017, p.16). Simply, metacognitive strategies are tactics used by the learner to review his learning. For instance, choosing the best techniques to study or revise, skip/pass new word, and assessing oneself through word tests (Kaidi & Ketteb, 2017, p. 16).

D. Social Strategies

Social strategies involve communicating with other individuals to acquire novel lexical items. They incorporate strategies like speaking to a first language speaker and working in groups (Kaidi & Ketteb, 2017, p.17).

1.8 Vocabulary Knowledge and the Four Macro Skills

Vocabulary knowledge is one of the most significant requirements for successful language learning. Milton and Fitzpatrick (2014, p.1) described lexical knowledge as an “elusive concept” because yet, there is no inclusive definition of what word knowledge might cover. Vocabulary knowledge has been divided into several classifications, including receptive and productive knowledge and breadth and depth knowledge. However, these classifications still did not capture exactly what is deeply involved in knowing a word which made vocabulary scholars agree on the fact that lexical knowledge is multifaceted (Laufer et al., 2004; Milton, 2013, as cited in Vu & Michel, 2021, p.2). According to Nation (2001), vocabulary knowledge encompasses three major elements, namely word form, word meaning, and word use. First, word form involves knowing both the spoken and written form of a word as well as knowing its parts, i.e., prefix, word root, and suffix. Second, word meaning requires being acquainted with form and meaning in addition to concepts, referents, and associations.

Third, word use entails the knowledge of the syntactic functions of a word, collocations, and constraints of use such as register and frequency (Nation, 2001, as cited in Milton, 2013, p.59). This classification includes both receptive and productive knowledge, besides it illustrates the breadth and depth of vocabulary knowledge making it more practical and discerning (Vu & Michel, 2021, p.2).

Nation (1994) said “*Vocabulary is not an end in itself. A rich vocabulary makes the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing easier to perform.*” That is, huge vocabulary stock provides backing to all four macro skills. Thus, it is an essential component for learners to be able to comprehend and produce the language.

1.8.1 The Listening Skill

Some research, although not enough has been conducted to show the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and listening skill. Many researchers presumed that listening comprehension is inextricably linked to vocabulary knowledge since different kinds of listening can result in vocabulary development. Existing studies generally conclude that “*vocabulary can be learned from purely aural input, but that uptake is generally less than that obtained from written input*” (Milton & Masrai, 2021). Kelly’ s (1991) proved through his investigation that a deficiency in lexis is one of the major obstacles that lead to inefficient listening comprehension (as cited in Teng, 2004, p.35). Moreover, Qian and Lin (2020, p.70) argued that in reading, students can get back to the context of the sentence to understand the meaning of words. However, this is not the case in listening; since it is a rapid moving process, that necessitates the capacity to acknowledge words phonologically, and students usually find this difficult. Therefore, it is deduced that knowledge of vocabulary is a prerequisite for discourse comprehension (Rost, 2011, as cited in Astar et al., 2021, p.95).

1.8.2 The Speaking Skill

Basically, the lack of vocabulary items prevents EFL students from progressing and succeeding (Macis & Schmitt, 2017, as is cited in, Khan, et al., 2018). Thusly, those who possess a good command of vocabulary can hold conversations easily. Unlike, those who have limited lexical knowledge, they will struggle during communication and writing. Many experimental investigations have been conducted to reveal the connection established between lexical knowledge and speaking skill (Koizumi & In' nami, 2013, p.900). They came to the conclusion that vocabulary is the most significant aspect of communication because it allows students to communicate their thoughts. Whereas with limited vocabulary, we find that communication and interaction can barely happen. Subsequently, effective speaking relies heavily on word knowledge.

1.8.3 The Reading Skill

As a matter of fact, extensive vocabulary size offers monumental advantages to EFL learners, the first of which is for reading comprehension. The correlation between reading comprehension and lexical knowledge has provoked the investigators' attention. Hence, many inquiries have been carried out to investigate the relationship between reading comprehension and lexical knowledge. Pearson (2007) asserts that lexical knowledge and reading comprehension have an intricate relation, or they are interdependent in the sense that the former allows learners to understand the meaning of words while the latter, in turn, creates opportunities for the learner to meet novel words. Similarly, Nation (2001) emphasised the relationship between lexical knowledge and reading comprehension alleging that vocabulary knowledge helps foreign language students to understand the meaning of texts and likewise reading permits students to enlarge their vocabulary repository (as cited in Al-Khasawneh, 2019, p. 24). According to McCarthy and Wigglesworth (2001) a thorough reading is perhaps the best resource for students to discover new words (as cited in Choo et al., 2012, p.454). Based on this idea many experiments were carried out to show the effectiveness of this strategy in teaching and learning vocabulary. To illustrate, a recent

study in Indonesia showed that extensive reading gave undergraduate students' positive results in improving their vocabulary repository (Lekawael & Ferdinandus 2021, p.345). Similarly, Mechekef and kismoune (2022) reached the same conclusions that learners have positive stances towards extensive reading. Eventually, vocabulary size is the key to reading comprehension.

1.8.4 The Writing Skill

According to Muslikh (2014) vocabulary mastery can have a certain degree of effectiveness towards writing skill; learners will be able to write in English language if they possess a large percentage of lexis. Hedge (1990, p. 5) states that a careful selection of lexical items, grammatical patterns, and sentence structures lead to a successful writing. It is worth mentioning that, most teachers when doing written production, they give more emphasis to good grammatical forms of sentences. More than that, Ellis (1994) added that Syntactic errors do not affect learners' understanding as lexical errors. Thus, vocabulary deserves more concerns, and needs to be the focal point of language instruction (Lewis, 1993, as cited in Bouchaala & Ghaouar, pp. 1149-1150).

1.9 Vocabulary Problems in EFL Classes

Vocabulary is a major component of any language. It is an indispensable unit of human discourse. Vocabulary is a never-stop growing process, owing the fact that, year by year; new terminologies appear as old ones fade away. As a matter of fact, each year hundreds of words are added to dictionaries, for example Oxford Dictionary, the most popular and widespread dictionary all over the world has added over 650 new words in 2022, the same is for Merriam Webster dictionary which confesses that they added 370 new words in September 2022.

Teaching and learning vocabulary are a tedious and arduous task as both teachers and learners face countless dilemmas. These dilemmas need to be resolved in order to ensure the effectiveness of the teaching learning process.

1.9.1 Common Difficulties of Learning English Vocabulary

Learning a new language is a quite difficult process because it takes time, effort, and practice. According to Plimsleur, mastering vocabulary is the biggest problem and the hardest part for many second and foreign language learners. As Krashen (1989, p. 440) states: “ *A large vocabulary is, of course, essential for mastery of a language. Second language acquirers know this; they carry dictionaries with them, not grammar books*”. In other words, a large number of students are interested in developing their vocabulary stock, as it a crucial element for achieving language proficiency. The literature has covered a whole range of studies attached to vocabulary learning problems. That is, a large number of authors and researchers sought to analyse and explain the problems that students face while learning vocabulary. This research paper will provide a review that will focus only on recent studies conducted in the past six years, which will be organized in chronological order so as to provide a full understanding of the various hurdles that obstruct EFL students’ from learning English vocabulary.

Kaidi and Ketteb (2017) undertook an investigation on vocabulary learning strategies on sixty first-year EFL students. They doled out a questionnaire designed based on Schmitt's (1997) Taxonomy. Among the questions asked in the questionnaire, was “Where do you find difficulties when you meet new words?” And the answers were confined to three problems namely word meaning, word pronunciation, and word spelling (Kaidi & Ketteb, 2017, p.28). On the other hand, Ketouni and Musharah (2018) conducted a study that mainly dealt with vocabulary learning difficulties faced by first-year EFL learners. Through a questionnaire given to the learners, and an interview addressed to teachers, they collect miscellaneous information and they came to the same conclusions as kaidi and kettab. However as teachers were part of this investigation they provide supplemental and more accurate data, they argued that their students usually struggle with word length and complexity, idiomatic expressions, and the issue of forgetting new words (Ketouni & Musharah, 2018, p. 71).

In Afzal's article (2019) on vocabulary learning problems, he also investigated the major difficulties encountered by English majors when learning English vocabulary, he concluded that students of English encounter various vocabulary learning problems, including recognizing the meaning of word, their pronunciation, their appropriate use, spelling, and memorization. Additionally, Afzal proposed to every stated problem, a set of strategies and tools to be applied so as to lessen these problems. However, the suggested strategies were mainly traditional such as using dictionaries (Hassan, 2014), semantic mapping, visual imagery (Li, 2004; Oxford, 1990), vocabulary cards, and logs (Erling et al., 2016)(as cited in Afzal, 2016, pp. 86-89). In other words, the researcher did not suggest modern strategies like those related to technology. Therefore, this study will propose a sort of digital tool to facilitate and enhance students' vocabulary learning. Wulandari (2020, p. 35) carried out the same study but on seventh grade learners. He added another aspect to the list which is the lack of motivation in learning the English language which can also hinder vocabulary learning process. It should be pointed out that the selected learners were only those who achieve higher in English language subject. Lastly, because of the great importance vocabulary plays in language learning, a new module should be created concerning vocabulary learning (Ghodbane, 2021, p.1035).

On the whole, all the investigations assigned earlier have highlighted the various obstacles that affect students' vocabulary learning. Some of them went further and offered important strategies to overcome these problems.

Vocabulary learning encounters various kinds of difficulties, among which: pronunciation, spelling, meaning, and other related issues. Below is a simple sketching of the most noticeable problems of vocabulary learning.

A. Pronunciation problems

It is defined by the Cambridge Dictionary as “*the way in which a word or letter is said, or said correctly, or the way in which a language is spoken*”. Many English words are difficult and bemused to articulate to students, as they are not pronounced

the way they are written and vice versa. Also, in certain cases, a single word may have more than two forms of articulation. Stress, on the other hand is also an important aspect, because a small change in word stress can alter the whole meaning of the word. As an exemplification: The word right can have different meanings such as: correct the opposite of left, and entitlement.

Converse: if the stress is put on the first syllabus it means the opposite; however, if it is put on the second syllabus it means to have a conversation.

Tahir and Tafat (2021) state that pronunciation can inhibit the learning process of EFL students and the problem lies in the silent letters, in the sense that a slight error can alter the entire meaning. Thus, it is a crucial element for achieving effective communicative purposes. After all, studies revealed that words which are hard to pronounce are more likely to be more difficult to grasp (Kitouni & Mecharah, 2018, pp. 46-47).

B. Spelling problems

Spelling refers to “*forming words with the correct letters in the correct order, or the ability to do this*”; or “*the way a particular word is spelled*” (Cambridge Dictionary). Thornbury (2002, p.27) highlights in his book “How to Teach Vocabulary” that ill- matched sound spelling can lead to terrible pronunciation and spelling faults. Hence, it makes the process of vocabulary learning more complicated.

C. Memorizing and remembering problem

As Tahir and Tafat (2021, p. 11) said “*remembering all the learned vocabulary is the dream of each student*”. Hence, memorizing and recalling new set of jargon is a thought provoking issue for many EFL learners. Decay theory suggests that words that are not used regularly will easily vanish from memory.

D. Meaning problem

Oxford (1990, p.08) vocabulary is something that is fairly large and uncontrollable in any native, second, or foreign language, and this is due to the fact

that one single word can have multiple meanings. This creates big problems for learners and makes them feel perplexed (as cited in Tahir & Tafat, 2021, p. 11)

E. Length and complexity

According to Thornbury (2002, p. 27-28) lengthy lexical items are no longer difficult to learn since most of the short words are the ones that are more commonly used and encountered. Thus, they are more likely to be learned. On the other hand, long and complex words are more difficult for learners to pronounce, spell, and read. It sometimes distracts the learners and makes them lose their concentration, especially in reading comprehension (as cited in Ketouni & Mecharah, 2018, p. 46)

F. Idiomatic expressions problem

An idiom" *is a phrase that, when taken as a whole, has a meaning you wouldn't be able to deduce from the meanings of the individual words*" (O'Reilly, 2022). Idioms are usually difficult to understand and grasp by non native speakers, in this case EFL learners because of the figurative meaning they carry.

1.9.2 Common Challenges of Teaching English Vocabulary

Teaching vocabulary is a problematic issue in the field of foreign language education. Berne and Blachowicz (2008, as cited in Alqahtani, 2015, p.24), argue that studies revealed that vocabulary instruction is probably a dilemma for many language teachers, because the most of them doubt whether they are using the appropriate teaching practices besides, they sometimes get confused how to focus their teaching on vocabulary learning; in addition to the time restrictions to apply the various techniques to make the learning more interesting and enjoyable (Liando et al., 2019, 552). Moreover, educators can have issues in choosing which vocabulary items to teach since English vocabulary is rich and vast, and students have different abilities and levels of motivation (Suardi & Sakti, p.100).

In today's digital age, language learners have access to a variety of digital tools and resources that can support and enhance their language learning journey. These

tools can facilitate the acquisition and retention of new vocabulary, as well as provide opportunities for learners to engage with language in meaningful and authentic ways. In the following pages, the researcher will discuss some of these digital tools and their potential benefits for learners in the context of vocabulary learning.

1.10 Definition of ICTs

The astounding growth of Information and Communication Technology over the past few years has prompted societies and education to undergo many amendments. Technology has become an indispensable tool used in all areas of life, the most important of which is education. It has influenced the learning process of students because it provides them with ample chances to be in charge of their own learning, as well as they have direct access to a wide range of uncontrollable knowledge (Lam & Lawrence, 2002, as cited in Mollaei & Riasati, 2013, p.13).

ICT stands for Information and Communication Technology, and refers to “*activities or studies involving computers and other electronic technology*” (Collins Dictionary). Levy (1997, p. 1) introduced ICT as the look about for and analysis of information technology tools in language teaching and learning (as cited in yeganehpour & Jalilzadeh, 2022, p.443). ICT includes computers, means of communication, and attributes that assist in teaching learning and the various exercises used in education (Kent, 2004, as cited in Ammanni & Aparanjani, 2016, p. 01). Blurton (1999, p.1) gave a detailed explanation of Information and Communication Technology, describing it as the sum of various digital equipments and means used in data transmission, production, spreading, and management, for instance: computers, Internet, audio-visual media, and mobile phones (as cited in Kinaanath, 2013, p. 17).

It has been argued that ICT is intrinsically interactional, active, and capable of accommodating the requirements of learners by steering or guiding their learning. Through the use of ICT, learners are able to learn English effortlessly. Thus, teaching and learning with ICT is crucial in day-to-day classrooms. It has a positive impact on

education as it contributes to raising its quality. All in all, ICT is an all-important tool that can change education for the better, and elevate it to new heights.

1.11 ICTs in Language Teaching and Learning: an Overview

“A new age demands a new paradigm” Walter McKenzie.

The world is presently living in what is called the digital age or often dubbed as the information age . This concept refers to “ *a time when large amounts of information are widely available to many people, largely through computer technology*” (Collins Dictionary). Since the birth of the Internet, new revolutions have emerged in all sectors of life including the education sector. The latter noticed a paradigm shift as a result of the huge number of revolutions that took place in this area. Education has changed from traditional to modern in which computers, smart boards or ICTs in general have become the means of teaching and learning. Integrating modern technology in English language teaching enfolds the use of various procedures, toolkits, materials, appliances and regulations. Technology has become a particularly important educational instrument in teaching English because it contributes significantly to improving the content as well as the way it is conveyed (Dash, 2022, p.8). ICT tools have brought about many advantages to English language classes, the most important of which are motivating learners, increasing their self-esteem and self-confidence, and supporting cooperation and interaction between students. ICT tools managed to solve many of the inconvenient problems that the traditional classes used to have as an example time and place. These tools also contribute to reinforcing the learner's skills such as problem-solving, communication, collaboration, creativity, and other socio-cultural skills (Lazar, 2014, as cited in Martinez, 2019, p.15).

Ibrahim (2010) concedes that ICT has brought about dramatic changes in education mainly in the approach to teaching which has shifted from a teacher-centred approach to a learner-centred one. That is to say, the uses of ICTs make learners more independent and autonomous about their own learning (Beauchamp & Kennewell, 2010). It has been reported that ICT can promote the four language skills which are

speaking, listening, reading, and writing. First, teachers can get their students to improve their listening through an exposure to different kinds of mixed media tools like digital stories, Mp3 recordings or podcasts (Verdugo & Belmonte, 2011). Second, applications like Oovoo and Skype permit learners to create a virtual class that is very different from their regular one. These kinds of tools encourage learners and put them in real situations that help them assimilate their language (Hashemi & Azizinezhad, 2011). Third, Internet provides a wide range of book clubs that students can join and benefit from. One of the advantages of these virtual clubs is that they strengthen students' critical thinking, enable them to connect with other readers, develop their literacy skills, and equip them with strategies for maximizing the benefits from ICTs (Castek et al., 2006). At last, blogging software and Twitter are important gadgets used to support written production. Students can use these tools to exchange ideas and opinions, thus, they will produce or practice writing more than ever before. Several studies have shown that learners who attend written expression lectures achieve lower results than those bloggers who use the aforementioned applications (Arslan & sahin-KIZIL, 2010; Lomicka & Lord, 2012; Miyazoe & Anderson, 2010, as cited in Drigas et al., 2014, pp.4-6). ICT has facilitated the work of the teacher; he is no longer a fountain of knowledge or a lecturer, but a facilitator, guider, and co-learner. For example, MS word and PPT are important programmes that can help the teacher plan his lessons, activities, and tests in a practical and effective way. Moreover, ICT enables the teacher to make suggestions about useful educational resources available on the Internet, such as books, magazines, and websites that may aid learners in developing their skills and knowledge. Interestingly, thanks to online journals, magazines, and libraries, educators can enlarge their knowledge in their teaching subjects (chatterjee, 2021).

In conclusion, new technological tools, methods, and techniques have emerged as a result of the massive spread of the Internet which has positively affected the teaching and learning of the English language.

1.12 Digital Learning

The concept digital learning was introduced for the first time by Jay Cross in 1999 (Yoon et al., 2012, as cited in Dash, 2022, p.8). It is defined by the Alliance for Excellent Education (2012), as whatever teaching method that uses technology in order to enhance the learning experience for learners. It encloses a wide range of implements and activities such as: *“using online and formative assessment, increasing focus and quality of teaching resources and time, online content and courses, applications of technology in the classroom and school building, adaptive software for students with special needs, learning platforms...etc”* (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2012).

Hence, when technology is used as a resource in teaching and learning within the classroom, it can be said that the classroom is no longer traditional but rather digital. Robin and Aziz (2022, p.2478) defined the term digital classroom as a lecture room in which learning and interaction between the learner and his educator, as well as classmates, depend entirely on the planned use of ICTs. Digital classrooms make use of digital gadgets, hardware or software like social media, interactive media, and cell phones to give instructions to learners (Haleem et al., 2022, p.276).

Digital learning is a learning method where modern electronic appliances are utilized so that students can learn in a variety of ways, whether it is traditional, remote or hybrid learning (Ipagbusiness School, 2021). Digital learning is a type of learning facilitated by technology that gives students some element of control over time, place, path, and/or pace (The Governor's Office of Student Achievements). In other terms, this type of learning yields students some extent of grip over when, where, and how they learn. That is, they can learn anytime and anywhere with their own styles and their own pace. In gross, e-learning is a phenomenal system that offers plenty of advantages to education.

1.13 Definition of Digital Tools

Digital tools are programmes, websites, or online resources that are used to make assignments easier and clearer (Robin & Aziz, 2022, p.2479). They represent any type of software or hardware used in teaching and learning (Hadianti & Rohmah, 2021, p.235). They are mainly educational applications, and platforms that make learning seamless via attaching learners with their educators and in some cases parents as well (study.com, 2022). Oikonomou and Patsala (2021) define digital tools as “ *Software, programs, applications, platforms, and (online or offline) resources that can be used with computers, mobile devices or other digital devices*” . Additionally, Alawdat (2021) states that digital tools are “ *teaching and learning platforms and software with embedded audios, videos, images, and texts that are used via computers or smart phones*”. Finally, digital tools can also involve mobile and non-mobile gadgets such as laptops, tablets and projectors, etc. (Lawrence, 2020).

1.14 Benefits of Digital Tools

The new media age considers the use of technology in classroom sessions to be a dire necessity as it helps educators to do their jobs by providing them with different digital tools that are capable of elevating their learners' learning outcomes (Hadianti & Rohmah, 2021, p.234). In this contemporary world, learners are closely conversant with the use of technology and are more inclined to it. Hence, this is a sufficient cause for using digital tools in education. Technology proven that it can provoke the curiosity of learners and increase their attentiveness which in turn leads to an exceptional understanding of information (Robin & Aziz, 2022, p.2479). It should be mentioned that if digital tools are in use, social inclusion and best academic attainments will be fulfilled, keeping in mind the learner’ s creativity and entrepreneurial mind-set that will also be developed (Minassian, 2016, as cited in Robin & Aziz, 2022, p.2479).

Digital technologies are boon to English language teachers and learners since they provide them with great assets. For example, digital platforms allow both students and teachers to get the recent updated news of their classes; they make lectures more attractive and intriguing. Thus, students will feel motivated to learn and engage in the

learning process. Digital tools lighten the burden on teachers as some applications help them enhance their students learning experiences, for instance, quizzes aid educators to assess their learners' comprehension of lectures. Through this digital tool teachers can easily identify their learners' weaknesses or the things that they find difficulties in during the lesson. Besides that, Digital tools have great benefits on vocabulary because they permit students to acquire new words through quizzes and online games that raise their motivation and give them impetus to learn more since they love what they are doing through these toolkits (Robin & Aziz, 2022, p.2480). Social media is another tool used by many teachers and learners as a place to present and interchange knowledge regardless of time and place (Haddad & Draxler, 2002; Büyükbaykal, 2015, as cited in Haleem et al., 2022, p.275). Finally and most importantly, information access, retraining, and storage are easily accessible and guaranteed when these appliances are used (Hsu, 2007; Lacka & Wong, 2021, as cited in Haleem et al., 2022, 276).

As a matter of fact, teaching and learning are no longer dependent on traditional methods of transmitting information such as reading books, writing on the board, and taking notes (Schnackenberg, 2013; Collis, 2002, as cited in Haleem et al., 2022, p.276). New technologies have emerged to replace them as they are closer to the interests and concerns of the learners. On the whole, digital tools play a vital role in the process of teaching and learning English as they have been able to bridge the gap that traditional classrooms could not fill.

1.15 Digital Tools in Vocabulary Teaching and Learning

Vocabulary is a substantial part of foreign language learning, thereby, it is important to look for innovative, amusing, and engrossing methods of presenting new set of lexical items. Technology tools can be the best option to achieve this goal (Le Thi 2020, p.2, as cited in Pollock & Starowicz, 2022, p.2). Technology is an integral part and a supportive tool in education. It offers a variety of electronic appliances that may foster English vocabulary teaching and learning. Instructors profit from these digital means to develop their EFL learners' linguistic abilities (Hermagustiana &

Rusmawaty, 2017, p.137). Technology is highly needed in EFL classrooms, and its tools provide the teacher with more novel teaching methods and techniques (Altun & Ahmad, 2021, p.231).

First, using a computer while teaching vocabulary can help teachers get rid of the burden of tiring repetition and practices. Through this device, teachers can use graphic pictures and real instances to present vocabulary items which will make vocabulary learning more captivating (Nagata, 2008, as cited in Yeganehpour & Jalilzadeh, 2022, p.444). Second, there are multiple programmes that learners can utilize to create effective collaboration, as a case in point social media. This digital mean enables learners to collaborate seamlessly. WhatsApp is one of the social networking sites that the majority of people have access to. This free software allows learners to organize virtual meetings for class discussion debates and for revision. These kinds of collaboration between learners develop their language skills, vocabulary and digital literacy skills. Other tools include Google Drive and Quizizz. Google Drive enables both teachers and learners to access files and records and at the same time transfer and share their documents, thus, everyone can have a look at them. Quizizz is a platform that can be used to teach English. It plays a part in motivating and heightening students' language abilities. This tool is characterized by the ability to specify the time to answer the questions (Robin & Aziz, 2022, p.2478).

Third, many teachers admit that mobile assisted language learning is extremely valuable to teach and learn vocabulary (Al-Johani, 2019). Using MALL is generally uncomplicated and practical both in and out of the classroom. Students' share and transfer knowledge by virtue of mobile phones which makes learning entertaining and beneficial (Pollock & Starowicz, 2022, p.3). Mobile learning is defined as the "*occurrence of learning: the process of learning mediated by a mobile device*" (Kearney et al., 2012, p.2). M-learning technologies involve cell phones, iPods and iPhones, PDA, and portable laptop computers (Melhuish & Falloon, 2010, as cited in Kinaanath, 2013, p.33).

Lingro is a vocabulary building tool. It is a dictionary capable of translating words into more than 10 languages including English. Learners only need to type the word they want to translate or explain, and multiple interpretations are available instantly. Lexipedia is a platform where the learners also need to just type the word and lexipedia shows all the related elements of that word which can be adjectives, adverbs or nouns (Tyson & Crew, 2020).

CAVL stands for Computer assisted Vocabulary Learning. It yields simple and fast means of approaching different materials e.g. digital flashcard, web pages, word lists and drills, and online thesaurus. CAVL features the ability to follow and examine users' learning environment, provide forthwith feedback, and make alterations according to students' fulfilments and current level (Nation, 2013, as cited in Alnajjar & Brick, 2017, p. 02).

1.16 Attitudes towards the Use of Digital Tools to Enhance Vocabulary Knowledge

An attitude is a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favour or disfavour (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993, p.1). That is, an attitude is an inclination toward a specific object, either with an approval or disapproval. Or simply as Bem (1972, p.14) describes it as “*likes and dislikes*” . They are positive, negative or neutral opinions that may differ in terms of intensity. It is important to note that in the field of education, the attitudes of teachers and learners have great influence on the accomplishment of academic goals, most importantly when it comes to applying modern technologies within the classroom settings (as cited in Gilakjani & Leong, 2012, p.631).

Recently there has been renewed interest in educational technology especially with the worldwide spread of the new disease, COVID-19, which triggers nearly all educational institutions to adopt new ways of teaching and learning. A considerable amount of literature has been published on L2 students' attitudes towards the use of digital tools to enhance their vocabulary. However, there has been relatively little work

published on EFL learners' perceptions towards using these tools in vocabulary learning to develop their lexical knowledge. Therefore, this study will focus on this aspect; in addition to that it will give insights into the impact of digital tools on students' vocabulary knowledge as most of research done in this field did not devote focus on vocabulary knowledge aspects. This research paper will cover the very few studies conducted to explore learners' attitudes, as they will be organized chronologically to give a clear order of the findings found over time.

Several investigations have argued that learners have positive attitudes towards digital tools used to improve vocabulary learning. First, Derradji (2016) claimed in his investigation which was entitled "The Importance of YouTube Videos in Enhancing EFL Learners' Vocabulary" that second year EFL students' are fascinated and interested to use YouTube videos in order to improve their vocabulary. Another study was carried out in the same year by Cojocnean but on MALL tools. Contrary to expectations, this research did not reach the same results as the previous investigation. It was mentioned that most respondents revealed neutral attitudes towards the use of MALL tools in their vocabulary learning. One of the suggested reasons to these neutral stances were the lack of a culture associated with the use of digital tools and the dearth of teacher guidance (Cojocnean, 2016, p.31). Moreover, it has been demonstrated through a descriptive investigation that opted for a questionnaire as a research tool that first-year EFL students do have positive attitudes towards electronic dictionaries and they prefer to use them since dictionaries are the main source of acquiring new items (khelfaoui, 2017, 62). It ought to be remarked that the administered questionnaire provides only quantitative data and ignores qualitative one as the researchers used only close ended and multiple-choice questions which are proved to gather only quantitative data. Other studies, also report that EFL students' have positive perceptions on digital tools, namely quizzes games and Duolingo application (Patisung, 2020; Tahir & Tafat, 2021).

Ultimately, in a newly published investigation, students' opinions and attitudes towards digital tools mainly digital Flashcards were extremely positive. This study opted for a five-point Likert scale questionnaire distributed on 120 Thai primary school learner, which is very helpful since it closely represents the whole population and gives the researcher definite, close results. After the analysis of data, the researcher concluded that learners are satisfied with the use of digital flashcards since this technological mean impacted positively their vocabulary knowledge (Yowaboot & Sukying, 2022, p.72).

To conclude, in this day and age, Internet is a bountiful source of acquiring and learning vocabulary, and it seems like EFL students' are satisfied and fully aware of the significance of using digital tools to improve vocabulary and knowledge of this vocabulary.

1.17 The Impact of Digital Tools on Vocabulary Knowledge

Digital tools have become an integral part of modern English language education, providing students with great resources and materials to practice and improve their language skills as well as increase their vocabulary. There are many different types of digital tools that can be used to learn and develop English vocabulary; these tools are believed to have a profound impact on vocabulary knowledge. Accordingly, this research paper, will address the very few studies available in the literature that dealt with the impact of digital tools on students' vocabulary knowledge.

Nagy and Herman (1987) state that dictionaries are useful tools for expanding learners' lexical knowledge simply because they enable them to look up definitions, etymologies, synonyms, and antonyms of words. Thus, this will contribute to the development of students' stock of word meanings, pronunciation, spelling and use.

Ghaneshi and Anbaristani (2008) investigated another tool, ICT programmes. They arrived at the conclusion that these programmes are very beneficial because they can

have the learner memorize and maintain words for long periods of time. This view is also supported by Gholinia (2010) who states that application software plays an important role in making vocabulary learning more effective as it raises learners' stimuli as well as enhances long-term memory retrieval of lexical items. (As cited in Yeganehpour & Jalilzadeh, 2022, pp.444-447). Microsoft PowerPoint is another important tool that can motivate learners and encourage them to study, in addition to that, it allows teachers to use a variety of multimedia such as pictures, crossword puzzles, and audio teaching materials that help students strengthen and increase their knowledge of vocabulary (Ely et al., 2014). In another study, researchers Leong, Abidin and Saibon (2019, p.3) investigated the impact of digital storytelling on young pupils' vocabulary learning. The authors conducted classroom observations to gather information about their study. After analysing the data, the results showed that the pupils' knowledge of words increased as they listened, repeated, and spelled the words. This means that learners' pronunciation and spelling of words are reinforced and strengthened. Yowaboot and Sukying (2022, p.61) carried out an investigation on the effect of digital flashcards on grade six students' vocabulary knowledge. Through a quasi_experimental design, the researchers ascertain that Participants' knowledge of words increased as teachers used flashcards to present and teach vocabulary.

On the whole, it can be concluded that digital tools have a positive impact on students' vocabulary knowledge as they help them build strong understanding of words and their meanings, forms and use.

1.18 Conclusion

In conclusion, vocabulary is the engine of any language. With a strong vocabulary stock, learners can express their thoughts and ideas properly and comfortably. However, learning vocabulary is not only a matter of numbers, that is how many words a person knows, but also of having a great knowledge of these words to be able to communicate the language effectively. Digital tools are believed to have the potential to support and reinforce vocabulary knowledge, and this is what this

chapter has attempted to highlight based on works that have been done before. Digital tools like MALL, computers, mobile applications, and platforms are admirable and favoured tools by learners, which proved to have a positive effect on lexical knowledge.

Chapter Two

CHAPTER TWO: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

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2.1 Introduction

After conducting an exhaustive literature review on the problems first-year EFL students' encounter in learning English vocabulary, as well as their attitudes towards digital tools and their impact on vocabulary knowledge, the next stage is to design the practical side of the study to reach the research goals and objectives. In this chapter, the researcher provides a detailed description of the research methodology, procedure, and the results obtained.

2.2 The Description of the Study Settings

The study was carried out in an academic setting, the University of Tlemcen, Faculty of Letters and Languages, Department of English, Section of English, during the year 2022-2023.

2.3 The Description of the Sample Population

The population consists of more than 400 first-year EFL students; however, only 47 students participated in this investigation. The selected students fall into 18 males and 29 females aged between 17 and 23 years old. Their native language is Arabic and English for them is considered as a foreign language. On the other side, five teachers of English were also selected to be part of this study. They are in charge of teaching comprehension and written production, comprehension and oral expression, and reading comprehension modules. Most of the selected teachers hold a Ph.D. degree and possess high levels of experience and qualifications.

2.4 Research Design

Based on the research questions and objectives identified at the beginning of this dissertation, the researcher decides to use a mixed method research design, with a sequential mixed methods strategy. Mixed methods research is "*an approach to*

inquiry that combines or associates both qualitative and quantitative forms. It involves philosophical assumptions, the use of qualitative and quantitative approaches, and the mixing of both approaches in a study". On the other hand, "Sequential mixed methods procedures are those in which the researcher seeks to elaborate on or expand on the findings of one method with another method" (Creswell, 2009, pp. 23-31).

This type of design includes two phases, the first is quantitative and the second is qualitative. In the first stage, the researcher used the questionnaire to collect quantifiable data. After analysing the questionnaire, the researcher moves to the second stage to collect qualitative data through interviewing teachers and conducting focus group discussions. Finally, the researcher combines the results of the two phases to arrive at the final results. As for the research method, the investigator used a case study.

2.5 Type of Research

This investigation opts for descriptive research that seeks to gain an understanding of the challenges faced by first-year EFL students' in learning English vocabulary, explore their attitudes towards using digital tools and how these tools affect their lexical knowledge.

2.7 Research Approach

Regarding the type of research approach used in this study, it is a mixed method approach where the researcher uses different tools that allow him to collect both types of data, which makes the research more dynamic and valid.

2.6 Sampling Method

There are two main methods or strategies of sampling; probability samples and non-probability samples. In this present study the researcher opts for the probability sampling method, simple random sampling. Essentially, it indicates that each member of the population has an equal chance of being selected (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p.110).

2.8 Data Collection Methods and Techniques

In the present investigation, the researcher uses three research instruments, namely, students' questionnaire, teachers' interview and focus group discussion to gather data, in addition to conducting a case study as a part of the research methodology. Thus, this investigation employs triangulation.

2.8.1 Students' Questionnaire

The questionnaire is a widely used and useful instrument for collecting survey information, providing structured, often numerical data, being able to be administered without the presence of the researcher, and often being comparatively straightforward to analyse (Wilson & McLean 1994, as cited in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p. 317).

The questionnaire was administered to 47 first-year EFL students, in paper and pen formats. It covers different types of questions: close ended, open ended, Likert Scale, ranking scale, and multiple-choice questions. The questionnaire is composed of four sections; each section is dedicated to answer a specific research question. The first section is meant to gather data about students' background information, such as age and gender. The second section is designed to collect information about students' difficulties in learning English vocabulary and determine which ones are the most dominant. The third section is oriented towards collecting data about students' attitudes towards digital tools used in vocabulary learning, and the fourth section focuses on the impact of these tools on students' vocabulary knowledge and whether they are beneficial or detrimental (see appendix A).

2.8.2 Teachers' Interview

Interviews are commonly used research instruments that permit both interviewers and interviewees to have discussions and conversations about fact situations and topics where they give their own viewpoints on it (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p.349).

There are three main types of interview designs: Structured interview, semi-structured interview, and unstructured interview. In this particular investigation the researcher opts for a structured interview which is defined as a type of interview in which the interviewer asks pre-planned and structured questions.

The interview was done in person, with five EFL teachers. The aim behind using the interview is to get a deeper understanding of teachers' experiences with the impact of digital tools on vocabulary knowledge as well as the problems that students may encounter while learning English vocabulary. The interview highlights all of these important aspects, plus it tries to provide up-to-date solutions to vocabulary learning problems (see appendix B).

2.8.3 Focus Group Discussion

Focus group discussions are viewed as “*semi structured group discussions used to obtain in depth data from a group of people about a particular topic*” (Gupta, 2021). In this current study one focus group discussion was conducted with six first-year EFL students (see appendix C). The purpose behind using this instrument is to obtain profound insights into first-year EFL students' experiences with vocabulary learning problems, as well as to capture a range of perspectives on their feelings and experiences with digital tools used in vocabulary learning.

After doing a cursory examination of the data provided from the questionnaire, a focus group discussion was conducted. The researcher asked some students to participate in the focus group discussion, but encountered some difficulty as most of them did not accept. After several attempts, only six students ultimately agreed to take part in the discussion.

2.9 Data Analysis and Interpretations

The researcher used a descriptive data analysis procedure with tabular and graphical methods, in order to summarize, present, and measure the quantitative

information obtained, in a clean and structured manner. Qualitative data, on the other hand, was analysed using both descriptive and thematic analysis.

2.9.1 Students' Questionnaire Analysis and Interpretations

Section 01: students' personal information

❖ Gender

Table 2.1 Students' Gender

Options	Subjects	Percentage %
Males	18	38.30%
Females	29	61.70%
Total	47	100%

The above table represents the gender distribution of the sample, which falls into 18 males (38.30%) and 29 females (61.70%). That is, the sample population consists of substantially more females than males.

❖ Age

Table 2.2 Students' Age

Age	Subjects	Percentage %
17	1	2.12%
18	22	46.82%
19	17	36.17%
20	4	8.51%
21	2	4.26%
23	1	2.12%
Total	47	100%

The researcher aims to determine the age of the informants in order to give a description of the characteristics of the selected sample. Based on the information represented in the table, one can infer that the ages of informants are very diverse with the majority of informants comprising (46.83%) of the sample, who are 18 years old, followed by a plurality of informants with (36.17%) who are 19 years old, then, a significant minority of informants represent (8.51%) who are 20 years old, and (4.26%) of informants are 21 years old. The remaining participants, both 17-year-old and 23-year-old account for the same percentage, which is (2.12%).

Section 02: students' difficulties in learning English vocabulary

Q1: How do you rate your knowledge about vocabulary?

Table 2.3 Distribution of Vocabulary Knowledge Ratings

Options	Subjects	Percentage %
Excellent	6	12.76%
Somewhat	39	82.98%
Poor	2	4.26%
Total	47	100%

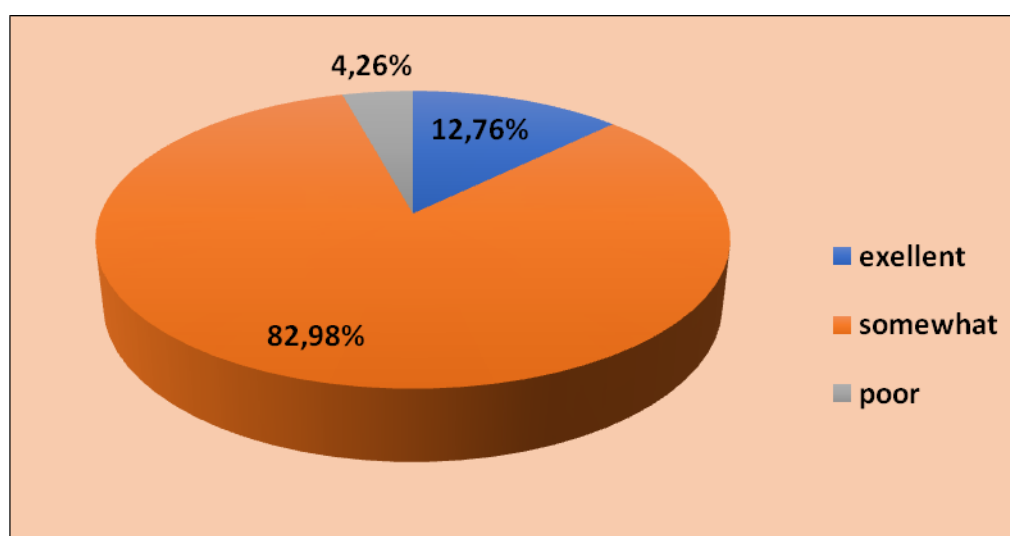


Figure 2.1 Distribution of Vocabulary Knowledge Ratings

The reason for asking this question is to describe the students' level of vocabulary knowledge. The results indicate that (82.98%) of the students rated their word knowledge as “ somewhat” , (12.76%) of the students evaluate it as excellent, and finally (4.26%) rated it as “ poor” . Hence, it is evident that the students share different levels of vocabulary knowledge, with the majority having adequate lexical proficiency and the minority having a bimodal distribution, including a little proportion having an excellent knowledge about words and a tiny proportion having a poor lexical knowledge. Hence, it is within the realm of possibility that students may be taught using inadequate methods that do not give enough attention to vocabulary learning, or may be experiencing some vocabulary learning difficulties which can affect their vocabulary development.

Q2: Do you find learning vocabulary a difficult task?

Table 2.4 Distribution of Attitudes towards Vocabulary Learning

Options	Subjects	Percentage
Yes	22	46.81%
No	25	53.19%
Total	47	100%

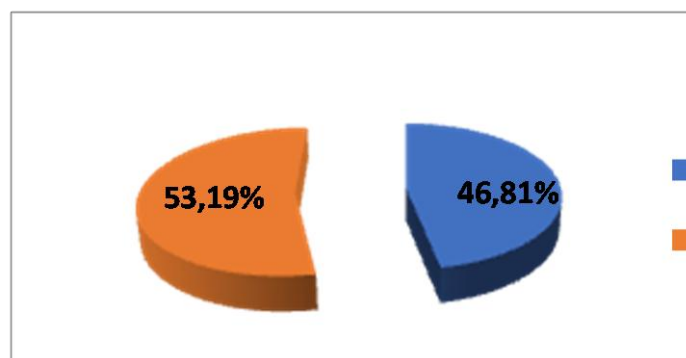


Figure 2.2 Distribution of Attitudes towards Vocabulary Learning

The purpose of asking this question is to know whether students find vocabulary learning a demanding or undemanding task. The answers of the respondents were roughly half and half, with (46.81%) selecting yes, and (53.19%) choosing no. This may indicate that students have different perspectives on vocabulary learning as some find it challenging, and this may be due to the presence of some difficulties, while others find it easy, which may mean that they use specific strategies that facilitate their vocabulary learning.

Q3: Do you think that a deficiency in vocabulary can have a negative impact on your language learning?

Table 2.5 Students' Opinions on the Impact of Lexemic Deficiency on Language Learning

Options	Subjects	Percentage %
Yes	41	87.23%
No	6	12.77%
Total	47	100%

This question was asked with the aim of knowing whether a lexemic deficiency can hinder students' language learning. Results revealed that (87.23%) of students believe that a vocabulary deficiency can have an adverse effect on their language learning process, while only (12.77%) claim that it cannot affect their language learning. That is to say, the vast majority of students agree with the fact that a lack of vocabulary has a negative impact on language learning. This may denote that participants are aware of the crucial role vocabulary plays in language proficiency.

Q4: What kinds of problems do you face in learning English vocabulary?

Table 2.6 Vocabulary Learning Problems

Options	Subjects	Percentage %
Meaning	14	29.78%
Meaning and recalling	7	14.89%
Recalling	4	8.51%
All of the above	4	8.51%
Meaning and spelling	3	6.38%
Pronunciation and spelling	3	6.38%
Pronunciation and recalling	3	6.38%
Pronunciation	2	4.26%
Pronunciation and meaning	2	4.26%
Recalling and spelling	2	4.26%
Spelling	1	2.13%
Meaning, recalling, and spelling	1	2.13%
Pronunciation, meaning, and recalling	1	2.13%
Total	47	100%

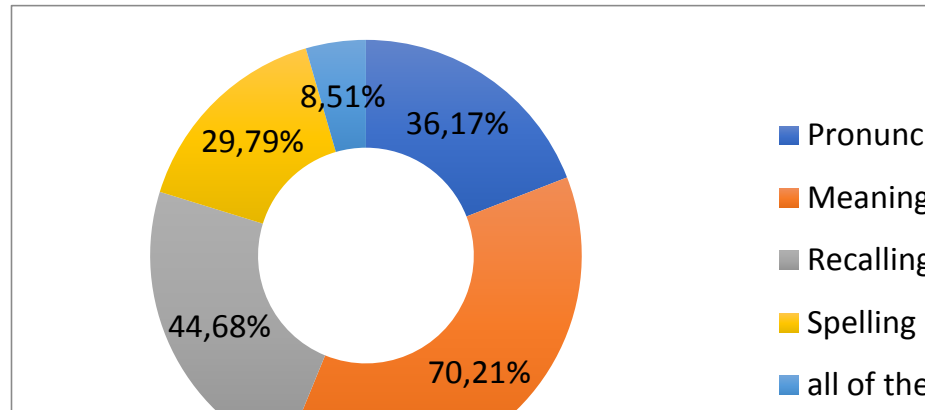


Figure 2.3 Common Vocabulary Learning Problems among EFL Learners

The purpose of asking this question is to identify the problems faced by first-year EFL students' in learning English vocabulary, as well as to determine the main problems they have in common. The data presented in the table shows that the majority of students identify two to three problems they are currently facing in learning English vocabulary. As depicted in the summary table, (29.78%) of participants experience hurdles in meaning, (14.89%) encounter challenges in meaning and recalling, (8.51%) reported having issues with recalling, while another (8.51%) stated having troubles with all the listed problems. An equal proportion of respondents (6.38% each) mentioned having difficulties with meaning and spelling, pronunciation and spelling, and recalling and pronunciation. Another equal percentage (4.26% each) shared having problems in pronunciation, recalling and spelling, and pronunciation and meaning. The rest of the surveyed students' revealed facing problems in a range of different categories, spelling; pronunciation, meaning and recalling; and meaning, spelling, and recalling with each category being mentioned by (2.13%) of the informants. From this, it can be inferred that learning vocabulary can be a daunting task and a lack of effort from both teachers and learners can lead to significant problems.

After providing all the answers given by the participants, the next step is to identify the most common problems shared by them. Therefore, it is evident from the graph that the majority of participants have problems with understanding the meaning

of words (70.21%), followed by the problem of recalling (44.68%), and at last the problem of pronunciation with (36.17%).

Learners were also asked to mention any other difficulties they might have in learning English vocabulary, but only a few participants noted other problems, which were mainly the problem of forgetting new words and the problem of using words in their proper context.

Q5: Rank the following vocabulary learning problems from 1 to 5 according to their degree of difficulty

Table 2.7 Ranking Vocabulary Learning Problems by Difficulty

Options	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4	Rank 5
Pronunciation	7	3	16	17	4
Meaning	26	10	10	1	0
Recalling	11	25	6	4	1
Spelling	3	6	12	14	12
Using	0	3	3	12	29
Total	47	47	47	47	47

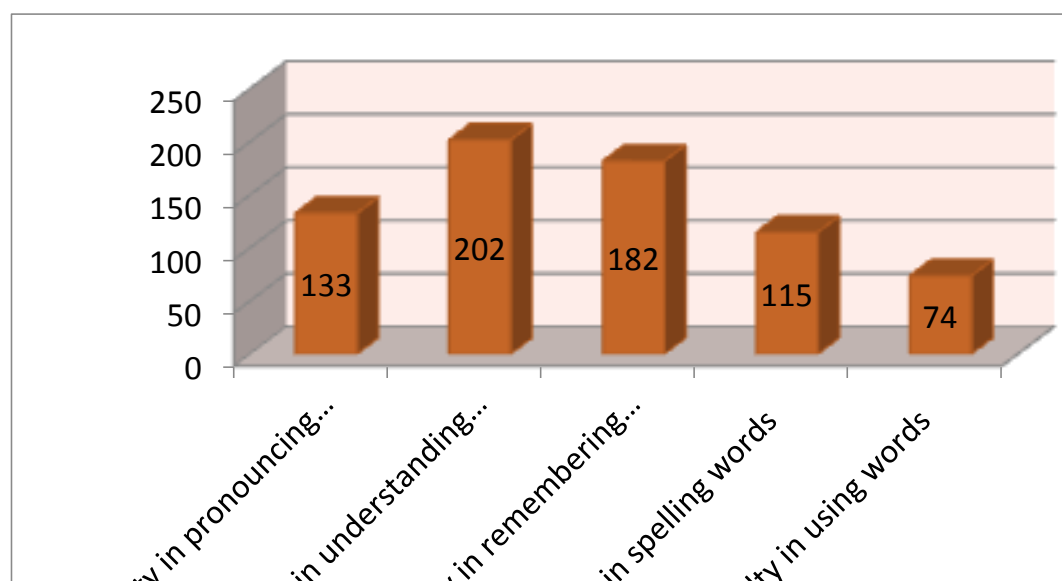


Figure 2.4 Ranking Vocabulary Learning Problems by Difficulty

In this question students were requested to rank a group of vocabulary learning problems according to their degree of difficulty. Results revealed that participants ranked meaning as the first biggest problem with a total score of (202), Recalling was identified as the second most highly ranked problem with a score of (182). Pronunciation came in the third place with a score of (133). Spelling was identified as the next problem, ranked fourth (115), while using words was ranked last (74).

Accordingly, it is indisputable that students are encountering major difficulties in understanding, recalling, and pronouncing words.

Section 03: students' attitudes towards the use of digital tools in vocabulary learning

Q6: How do you find learning vocabulary with digital tools?

Table 2.8 Students' Attitudes towards Learning Vocabulary with Digital Tools

Options	Subjects	Percentage %
Extremely interesting	26	55.32%
Moderately interesting	18	38.30%
Not at all interesting	3	6.38 %
Total	47	100%

The primary objective of this interrogative is to collate students' viewpoints and opinions on the use of digital tools in vocabulary learning. Data presented in the table revealed that (55.32%) of students find learning vocabulary with digital tools extremely interesting, (38.30%) of students find it moderately interesting, whereas only (6.38%) answer with not at all interesting. This means that a sizable number of students like the use of digital tools, and they possess a fervent interest in them, while a reasonable number of students have a moderate interest in these tools. On the basis of these observations, it can be postulated that digital tools are well-suited to students and their needs since they provide them with instant access to a profusion of information and resources for their vocabulary development.

Q7: Do you like lectures when the teacher uses digital tools (e.g. computer, data projector, videos, online games, etc)?

Table 2.9 Students Opinions' on the Use of Digital Tools inside the Classroom

Options	Subjects	Percentage%
Yes	41	87.23%
No	6	12.77%
Total	47	100%

The aim of asking this question is to see if the learners are pleased or displeased with the teacher's use of digital tools. By means of participants replies, (87.23%) respond with "yes", whilst merely (12.77%) answer with "no". Thus, it turns out that almost all the participants' do like lectures when the digital tools are present since this latter makes learning more interesting, exciting, and engaging.

Qs 8, 9, 10, 11:

- 8) I prefer to learn vocabulary with modern technological tools than traditional ones.
- 9) I am comfortable with the use of digital tools.
- 10) I can learn vocabulary more effectively with the use of digital tools.
- 11) Digital tools should be incorporated into the classroom.

These statements are likert items which focused on a common objective that is to measure the outlooks of students towards the use of digital tools in vocabulary learning. After analysing the data obtained from the likert items, here are the participants' responses for each statement.

Table 2.10 Students’ Attitudes towards the Use of Digital Tools in Vocabulary Learning

Statements	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Total
I prefer to learn vocabulary with modern technological tools than traditional ones.	40 (85.11%)	7(14.89%)	0(0%)	47(100%)
I am comfortable with the use of digital tools	38(80.86%)	8(17.01%)	1(2.13%)	47(100%)
I can learn vocabulary more effectively with the use of digital tools.	36(76,60%)	10(21.27%)	1(2.13%)	47(100%)
Digital tools should be incorporated into the classroom	30 (63.83%)	16(34.04%)	1(2.13%)	47(100%)

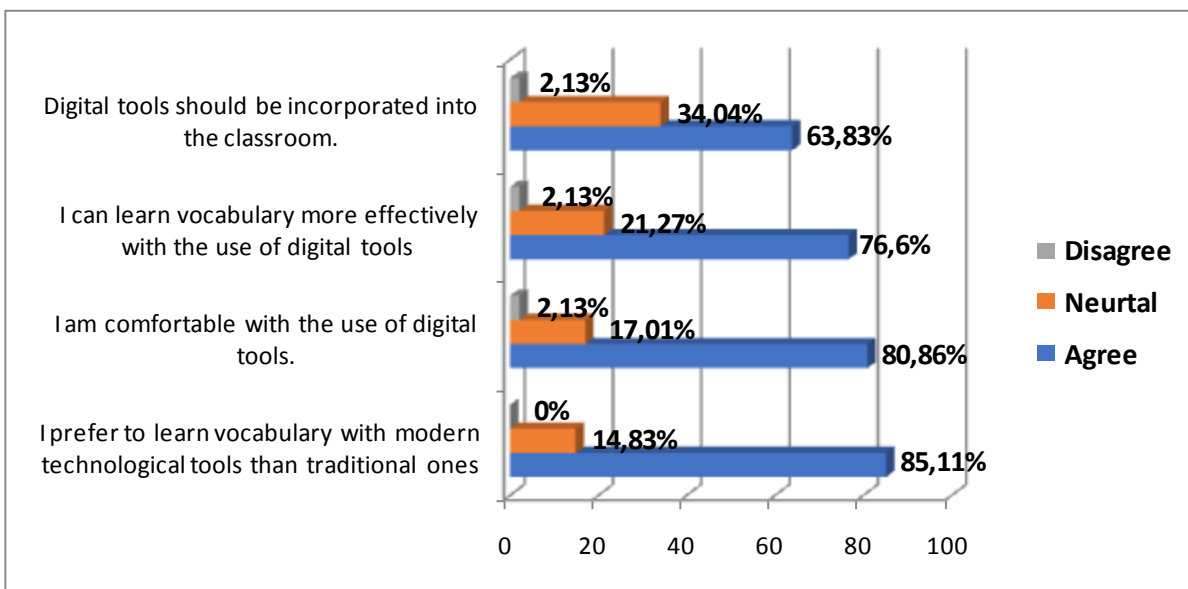


Figure 2.5 Students’ Attitudes towards the Use of Digital Tools in Vocabulary Learning

- I prefer to learn vocabulary with modern technological tools than traditional ones.

The information presented in the table and the bar graph , shows that (85.11%) of participants prefer to learn vocabulary with modern technological tools, while the remaining proportion (14.89%) did not express a clear stance, they neither agree or disagree with the statement. i.e. they remained neutral. Based on these results, it appears that the majority of students have a liking for digital tools.

- I am comfortable with the use of digital tools.

The information summarized in the table and bar graph above, indicates that (80.86%) of participants are comfortable with the use of digital tools, (17.01%) of the proportion choose to undecide, which means they remain neutral, and finally only one participant (less than 3%) disagree with the statement. Overall, the majority of students have no qualms about the use of digital tools; with only one exception and few being neutral.

- I can learn vocabulary more effectively with the use of digital tools.

The data in the above table and bar graph, demonstrates that (76.60%) of the sample population endorse with the statement, (21, 27%) remained neutral, and (2.13%) disagree with it. As a whole, a large proportion of participants believe that learning vocabulary with digital tools can be more beneficial and efficient, while the residual percentage showed more neutrality than disagreement.

- Digital tools should be incorporated into the classroom.

The statistics provided in the table and bar graph manifest that the agree responses account for (63.83%) of the total responses, neutral stances make up (34.04%), and dissenting answers represent only a very small percentage which is (2.13%). Hence it can be concluded that more than half of the students who participated in this investigation want digital tools to be incorporated into the

classroom, however, most of the remaining members of the group preferred to adopt a neutral stance.

In the light of this data, it can be inferred that students' attitudes towards digital tools are almost positive because these toolkits permit students to access information anytime and anywhere, besides, they offer interactive and fun learning.

Section 04: the impact of digital tools on vocabulary knowledge

Q12: What digital tools do you use to develop your vocabulary learning?

Table 2.11 Digital Tools Used by EFL Students for Vocabulary Development

Options	Subjects	Percentage %
Social media	11	23.40%
Electronic dictionaries + duolingo	8	17.02%
Social media + duolingo	6	12.77%
Electronic dictionaries	5	10.64%
Social media + electronic dictionaries + duo lingo	5	10.64%
Social media + electronic dictionaries	5	10.64%
Social media + ppt	2	4.25%
Electronic dictionaries + ppt	2	4.25%
MALL	2	4.26%
Digital flashcards	1	2.13%
Total	47	100%

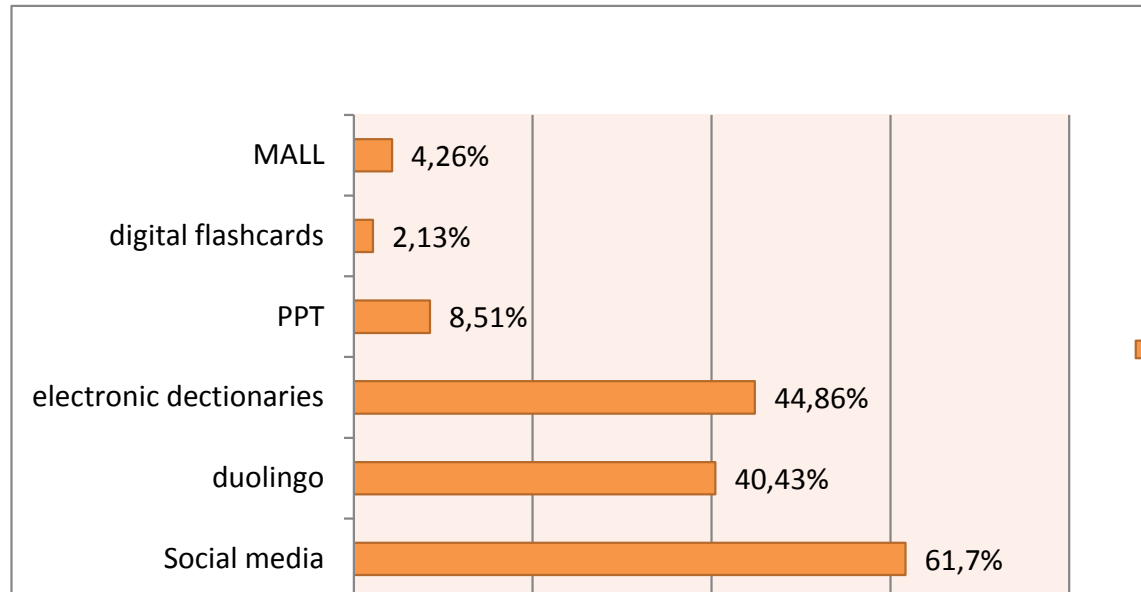


Figure 2.6 Digital Tools Used by EFL Students for Vocabulary Development

The intention behind asking this question is to identify some of the digital tools that students use to develop their vocabulary, in addition to recognizing the most frequently used digital tool among them. The results presented in the table show that students use a variety of digital tools to build and expand their vocabulary. The table indicates that the majority of students (more than 22%) depend on social media platforms to learn and develop vocabulary. The second category of students (17.02%) use both electronic dictionaries and the language learning platform "Duolingo", (12.77%) of the participants identify both social media and Duolingo as the means used to improve vocabulary. Another group of participants opt for electronic dictionaries, [Duolingo, social media, and electronic dictionaries], [social media and electronic dictionaries], to develop their vocabulary with each category having an equal percentage of users (10.64%). As for the remaining few, some of them use MALL, electronic dictionaries and ppt, social media and ppt, and flashcards. With regard to the most frequently used digital tool among learner, the diagram presents lucid data about this matter. The percentage of social media platforms exceeded (60%), which makes it ranked first, followed by electronic dictionaries with a percentage of (44.68%), then Duolingo with a percentage of (40.43%). Hence, it can be said that

learners tend to favor certain digital tools over others, such as social media and electronic dictionaries, as they find them more effective and suitable for their needs.

Additionally, students were asked to give other types of digital tools that they make use of so as to develop their vocabulary. Several students added to the list provided that they use video games, podcast, cake, talkback, and eBooks.

Q13: How effective are digital tools in expanding your vocabulary and your knowledge of this vocabulary?

Table 2.12 The Effectiveness of Digital tools in Enhancing Vocabulary and Knowledge of Vocabulary

Options	Subjects	Percentage%
Extremely effective	25	53.19%
Moderately effective	22	46, 81%
Not effective	0	0 %
Total	47	100%

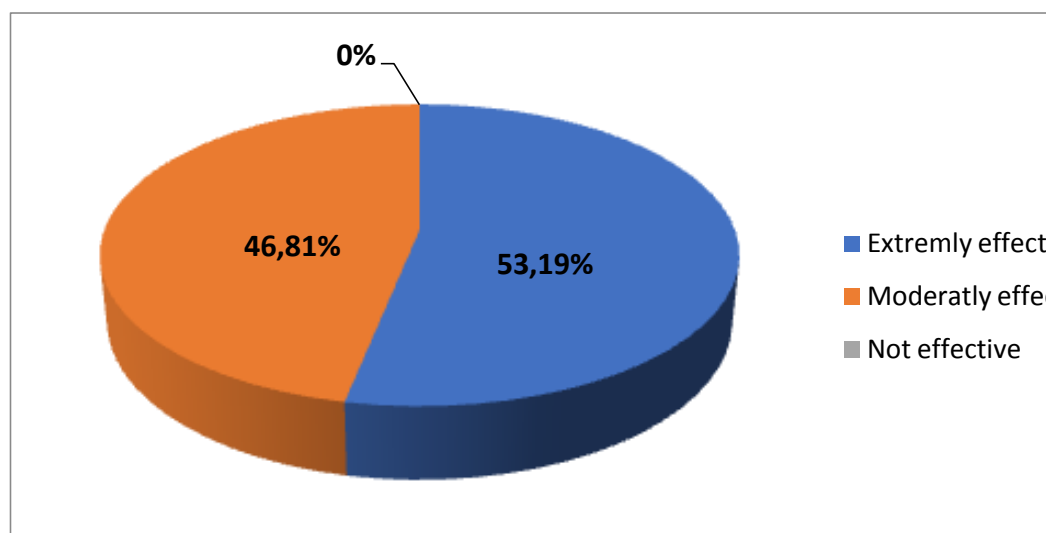


Figure 2.7 The Effectiveness of Digital tools in Enhancing Vocabulary and Knowledge of Vocabulary

The pie chart above depicts the degree to which digital tools are effective in expanding learners' vocabulary and their knowledge of this vocabulary. It is plain to see from the graph that some participants (53,19%) responded with "very effective", while some others answered with moderately effective(46,19%).However no one give answers with the third option which is " not effective". The statistics mentioned earlier, revealed a nearly equal distribution between [very effective] and [moderately effective]. This could mean that digital tools can have a discernible impact on students' vocabulary learning as these tools offer learners the opportunity to be exposed to authentic language where they can develop their vocabulary and knowledge of it.

Qs: 14, 15, 16, 17, 18:

14)The use of digital tools can enhance my pronunciation, spelling and writing.

15) Digital tools help me look up and understand the meaning of new words.

16) Digital means provide me with synonyms, antonyms, and examples which will deepen my knowledge of words.

17) Digital tools improve my knowledge of the grammatical functions, collocations, and constraints of use.

18) Digital tools have helped me build my vocabulary stock.

These statements share a parallel aim which is to determine whether digital tools have a positive or negative effect on students' vocabulary knowledge. Here are the replies received from the informants for every individual statement.

Table 2.13 The Impact of Digital Tools on Students' Vocabulary Knowledge

Options	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Total
The use of digital tools can enhance my pronunciation, spelling and writing	31(65.96%)	15(31.91%)	1(2.13%)	47(100%)

Digital tools help me look up and understand the meaning of new words	40(85.11%)	7(14.89%)	0(0%)	47(100%)
Digital means provide me with synonyms, antonyms, and examples which will deepen my knowledge of words.	35(74.47%)	9(19.15%)	3(6.38%)	47(100%)
Digital tools improve my knowledge of the grammatical functions, collocations, and constraints of use	38(80.85%)	6(12.77%)	3(6.38%)	47(100%)
Digital tools have helped me build my vocabulary stock	42(89.36%)	5(10.64%)	0(0%)	47(100%)

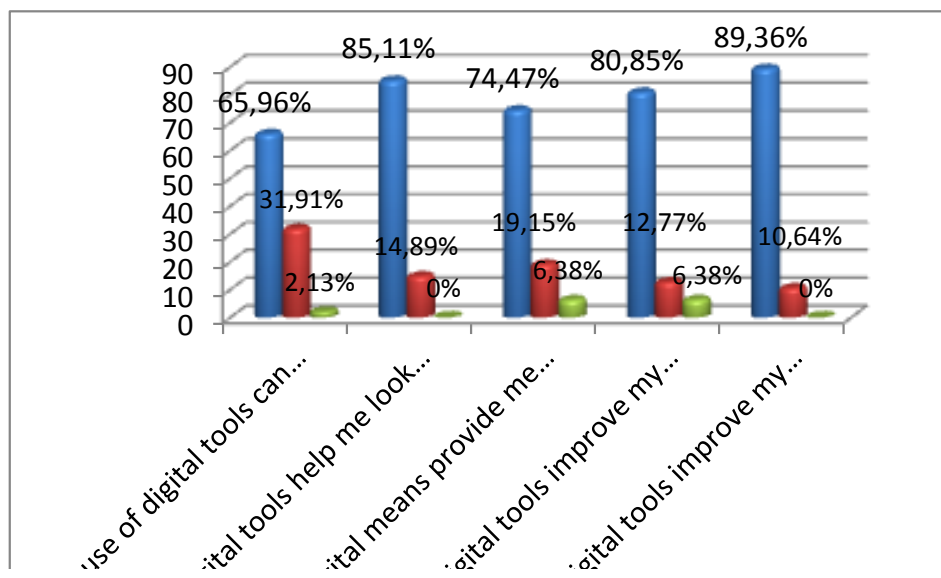


Figure 2.8 The Impact of Digital Tools on Students' Vocabulary Knowledge

- The use of digital tools can enhance my pronunciation, spelling and writing.

The statistics presented in the table and column graph convey a nuanced rendering of students' answers and reactions to the statement "the use of digital tools can enhance my pronunciation, spelling and writing". As indicated by the chart, most of the respondents (65.96%) agreed with the statement, while (31.91%) were neutral. The remaining few, which represented only (2.13%) of the population opposed the statement. It follows that most of students concur that digital tools can refine enunciation, writing, and spelling skills. However, it is important to note that a reasonable number of respondents did not provide a definite point of view, and instead remained neutral.

- Digital tools help me look up and understand the meaning of new words.

The statistics presented in the table and column graph demonstrate that (85.11%) of answers agree with the statement, while (14.89%) were neutral. Thus, it is possible to state that the overwhelming majority of participants claimed that digital tools can assist them in deciphering the meaning of new words. In comparison to most, only a small minority maintain a neutral stance.

- Digital means provide me with synonyms, antonyms, and examples which will deepen my knowledge of words.

Drawing on the information provided in the table, which is elaborated further in the bar chart, it is perceived that (74.47%) agreed with the statement, (19.15%) were neutral, and (6.38%) disagreed with the statement. Accordingly, the vast majority of respondents perceived digital tools as having a positive impact on vocabulary knowledge as it offers not only synonyms and antonyms of words but also examples.

- Digital tools improve my knowledge of the grammatical functions, collocations, and constraints of use.

From the illustrations provided on the previous page, the responses obtained to the given statement were as follows: (80.85%) agree with the statement, (12.77%) remained neutral and (6.38%) expressed disagreement, suggesting that the greater part of the participants observed that digital tools have the potential to develop their knowledge of the grammatical functions, word combinations, and constraints of use.

- Digital tools have helped me build my vocabulary stock.

In this statement participants were asked whether digital tools have helped them build their vocabulary stock, and their answers were limited to two options “Agree” or “neutral”. Thus, (89.36 %) of the participants took a positive stance, while (10.64%) held a neutral outlook. Therefore, most of participants were in agreement with the idea that digital tools are instrumental in developing their lexicon, whereas the minor category instead opted for a neutral opinion. It is apparent from the results that digital tools can fortify students' knowledge of vocabulary in all its aspects because these tools have the potential to provide students with a variety of resources that can build and enhance their vocabulary knowledge in a more effective and efficient way.

Q19: Can you talk about an experience where you or your teacher used a digital tool, and it had a positive/negative impact on your vocabulary knowledge?

The researcher's primary goal in asking this question is to collect and obtain detailed information about students' experiences with digital tools, and their impact on vocabulary knowledge. This question has a high rate of non-participation of students, which resulted in lack of information for analysis. Hence, the researcher will generate only a slight number of answers.

One student recounted that in the oral expression module, the teacher uses the computer to make them watch a short video, and this always helped her learn new words and understand their meanings, she said. Another student narrated a similar

experience with computers. This student said that when the teacher uses the computer, she sometimes shows them pictures and videos, and this make it easier for her to remember the information. One of the other students mentioned that podcasts and e-books have positively affected her English language learning as these toolkits helped her build a diverse range of lexical items. Another student adds that "chatgpt is a server I'm using now, and it helps me a lot with vocabulary and grammar" she said. The last student shared his experience with two digital tools which are games and mobile dictionaries. He said, " I rely on my dictionary to check the meaning of words, and I play games with foreign people. So, this is what makes me always learn new words and discover new expressions".

Overall, these participants seem to have positive experiences with digital tools and consider them to be of great benefit for enhancing their language dexterity, especially vocabulary.

Q20: If a module is created specifically for vocabulary learning where digital tools are the means of teaching and learning would you be ready? Explain please

This open ended question aims to find out students' readiness and level of interest in using digital tools to learn English vocabulary. It ought to be mentioned that a notable percentage of participants left this question unanswered, however, all those who respond to this question revealed affirmative reactions.

The following statements are a few of the answers they provide:

"Yes, it would be less boring and more exciting to learn"

"Yes, it can be more interesting"

"Yes, because in our life now everything is digital so we can adapt with the digital way of teaching rapidly without any difficulties"

"Yes we are a digital generation, and I think it is more effective"

"Yes, because I have been in the digital world since I was a kid"

In brief, these statements reflect the fact that several students are avidly interested and ready to learn vocabulary through modern ways of teaching and learning in an academic module.

2.9.2 Teachers' Interview Analysis and Interpretations

Question 01: What degree do you hold?

This question was asked in order to determine the academic qualifications and educational level of teachers. Answers were varied, three of the teachers hold a Doctorate degree (PhD), one holds a Master's degree, and the last one holds a Magister degree.

Question 02: How long have you been teaching English?

This question highlights the professional experience of teachers. The answers were quite distinct, with one teacher having relatively limited experience, one teacher indicating having approximately ten years of experience, and three teachers acknowledge having more than thirty years of experience. On the whole, the selected teachers shared different levels of expertise, with most having ample experience.

Question 03: How often do you teach vocabulary?

This question aims to find out whether teachers devote time to teaching vocabulary. The teachers' answers were "quite often" "every time", and "every now and then", ergo, the teachers seem to be teaching vocabulary regularly.

Question 04: what vocabulary teaching techniques do you use?

By asking this question, the researcher wants to know which vocabulary teaching techniques are most used by educators.

The first teacher claims that he uses a variety of techniques including explanations, definitions, synonymy, antonyms, and realia to present the meaning of words. The second teacher said "I just provide a clear definition to the words that my

students find difficult” . The third teacher said that she uses texts and videos to introduce a new set of lexical items. The fourth teacher reported that she uses oral explanations, synonyms, and antonyms. Finally the fifth teacher confines herself with the strategy of explanations and synonymy. Overall, based on the responses provided by teachers, it appears that they make use of plenitude of vocabulary teaching techniques mainly explanations, definitions, and synonyms which seem to be effective and capable of developing learners’ lexicon.

Question 05: in your opinion, what kinds of problems do first-year students’ face while learning English vocabulary?

The underlying objective of this question is to highlight the challenges that first-year EFL students’ face in learning English vocabulary.

The first teacher reported that students usually have a difficulty in using words. “They do not know how to put words into proper context,” he said. The second teacher responded with three types of problems: attrition, pronunciation, and spelling. The teacher mentions that most students forget newly learned words, sometimes they mispronounce or pronounce words like in French, and as far as spelling issues are concerned, she said that students misspell some words as an example “ than /then, here /hear , and relevant/relevant” . The fourth teacher said that learners may have problems with the meaning of words and it is usually difficult for them to guess their meaning. The fifth teacher highlights another problem, that of idioms. She stated that “There are certainly a lot of problems, but as I am a teacher of oral expression, I think that idiomatic expressions really irritate learners. Most of my first-year students' complain that they are difficult to understand and use”. In general, learning vocabulary is a difficult process, and this is what teachers have indicated as they mentioned a variety of vocabulary learning problems that can hinder students' learning.

Question 06: Do you use ICTs in your classroom?

The purpose of asking teachers this question is to find out whether teachers are using modern technologies or they are still using traditional ones. Three teachers answered “ No, I don’ t use ICTs in my class” which means that they are not comfortable using them and prefer traditional teaching methods; while, the rest said "yes definitely" which means that these teachers prefer using ICTs as they can facilitate the delivery of content and instruction.

Question 07: what kinds of digital tools do you use to support vocabulary learning?

The goal of this question is to identify some digital tools that can be used to support vocabulary learning. Since almost all teachers do not use ICTs, this question was skipped for them. As far as the remaining two teachers, they revealed that they use a combination of digital tools. The first teacher mentioned that she uses the data Show, computer, and PowerPoint. While the other claimed to use recordings, data projector, and interactive applications such as kahoot! to make quiz games. All in all, teachers use a variety of digital Tools inside the classroom and they seem to be aware of their importance in language learning.

Question 08: can you attest the effectiveness of using digital tools in increasing students' knowledge of vocabulary?

This question endeavours to present some teachers' experiences and viewpoints about the effectiveness of using digital tools in enhancing learners' vocabulary knowledge. The responses obtained from this question were terse and superficial.

One teacher admits that using digital tools can be very beneficial, but it is important to bear in mind that not all students may be fond of using these tools since each student has his own style and preference. This teacher narrated her experience with the Data Show saying that she uses this tool to present videos of native speakers which “ helps students learn vocabulary, retain it and use it appropriately” she opined. A different teacher states that digital tools are helpful in both learning vocabulary and

being knowledgeable about vocabulary. However, when talking about applications like Duolingo, she said “ It is true that many students have these tools in their cell phones or computers, but they never use them”. She noted that most students are more interested in learning vocabulary through YouTube videos, music, and movies than through vocabulary or language learning applications. She said: “ watching videos, movies, animes, and documentaries can expose students to different jargon and enlarge their vocabulary” .

In short, according to teachers’ experiences, one could argue that digital tools can have a positive impact on learners’ vocabulary knowledge.

Question 09: Could you suggest some kinds of digital tools that are useful in facilitating and enhancing English vocabulary learning?

The investigator poses this question with the intention of suggesting modern techniques that can be used to simplify and develop vocabulary learning. Each teacher suggested one or two digital tools. After compiling the answers, the researcher got the following list: Online Games, TV, Computers, Kahoot!, Clickers, and Voice Assistants like Google Assistant. This suggests that teachers may have a working knowledge on certain technological tools.

2.9.3 Focus Group Discussion Analysis and Interpretations

Question 01: what kinds of problems do you face in learning English vocabulary?

This question was asked for the second time to allow students talk about their experiences with these problems. Even though participants did not provide sufficient information, the researcher managed to glean some common themes from their answers, which are “Pronunciation problems” and “meaning problems”.

The majority of the participants discussed issues related to accents. They stated that they do not know exactly how to pronounce words especially in the British accent, thus, the most of them report that they prefer to use the American accent. In terms of meaning problems, one participant said that she had a big problem with civilization

module as it contains many difficult words whose meaning is hard to guess and remember. Another participant claimed that the terms used in linguistics are “confusing even after repeated explanations by the teacher”. Other cohort member adds that “ complicated words are difficult to understand and pronounce” . Overall, while students are facing a range of problems, there are two issues in particular that seem to be affecting them most significantly, possibly due to a lack of exposure to authentic spoken language or inappropriate teaching methods.

Question 02: how do you usually deal with these problems?

The goal of this question is to see if the students are using specific techniques to deal with the problems they encounter. Here students highlight three important techniques, which are mainly the use of Google, electronic dictionaries, and consulting a teacher or friend. Thus, it can be said that learners are turning to new technologies as a way to overcome their vocabulary learning problems.

Question 03: have you found the use of digital tools helpful in overcoming these problems?

This question was asked to explore the benefits of digital tools in overcoming vocabulary learning problems. In fact, All the participants provided a yes answer, and their responses were brief and to the point. Three respondents provided the following answers “yes it is extremely helpful and essential”, “it is the only way to learn this language easily and fastly” and “it is a very useful and quick way to know the meaning of words”. The other participants provide comparable responses. Hence, it appears that learners find digital tools to be highly effective for overcoming vocabulary related problems as they equip them with a variety of strategies to deal with them.

Question 04: Can you tell me more about your experience with digital tools and how they have helped you in improving your vocabulary and knowledge of this vocabulary?

Through this question, the researcher seeks to gain insights into learners' experiences using digital tools and how they affect their vocabulary building.

One of the participants recounted that “Through social media I got to know new people from different countries, most of them are English speakers, so I talk to them and I always learn new words from them. “ As for electronic dictionaries, the participant said that: “if I want to search for the meaning of a word, I use my electronic dictionary, and it helps me to get the meaning of words on the fly”. Other participant recounted that she frequently watches educational videos on Instagram where teachers make videos about English words, expressions, and idioms, how they are pronounced, written and used, she said: “ It is a very useful and excellent way to develop vocabulary”. Another participant said that he uses voice chat apps to talk to foreign people; he stated that it really helped him to ameliorate his accent and to improve his ability to pronounce words correctly. The remaining participants discussed similar experiences to those shared by the previous respondents.

To conclude, it could be argued that different digital tools have each contribute positively in enhancing students’ vocabulary learning and language proficiency as a whole.

Question 05: Why do you think social media is the most used tool by learners to learn English vocabulary?

This question aims to highlight the reasons why social media is the most used technological tool among students to learn English in general and vocabulary in particular. All the participants agreed on one reason which is “entertainment”.

One participant said “It is very easy to use, and we can also learn easily through entertainment and no one gets bored”. Other respondent states: “I think most of the students follow some foreign influencers whose mother tongue or second language is English, so they follow them for the sake of entertainment and at the same time they acquire their language unconsciously”. Another participant added, “ We have the ability to save videos so we can come back to them whenever we want”. Overall, it can be concluded that social media platforms provide learners with engaging, enjoyable, and fun ways of learning which they favor and take pleasure in.

2.10 Discussion

The information obtained from all the research tools, including the questionnaire, the interview, and the focus group discussion disclose that the most of first-year EFL students' embrace affirmative stances towards digital tools used in vocabulary learning, while few others held neutral views, and dissenting opinions were scarce among the participants. It could be argued that those few participants who chose to remain neutral may have been less familiar with the topic or had difficulty understanding the questions asked in the questionnaire, which made it difficult for them to provide clear answers. It is evident from the analysis that most of participants find learning vocabulary with digital tools extremely interesting, and they have a preference for learning through them, and above all, they are familiar with them. Hence, it appears that the second hypothesis; most first-year EFL students hold positive attitudes about digital tools used in vocabulary learning; is supported by the results obtained in this investigation. Furthermore, compared to previous studies, almost all of them are consistent with the results of the current study, which include [Derradji, 2016; khelfaoui, 2017; Tahir & Tafat, 2021; Yowaboot & Sukying, 2022].

The researcher also delved into the topic of digital tools and vocabulary and questioned their effectiveness in vocabulary knowledge. The suggested hypothesis for this research question stipulates that digital tools have a positive impact on first-year EFL students' knowledge of vocabulary as they can enhance their understanding of word forms, meaning, and use. Results obtained from the questionnaire showed that digital tools have the potential to expand learners' vocabulary and their knowledge of this vocabulary as these tools can enhance their pronunciation, spelling, and writing, enlarge their knowledge of grammar rules such as collocations and constraints of use,

and enable them to better understand the meaning of new words and their multiple connotations and alternatives. This fact was reinforced by university teachers' responses to the interview, where they admit that digital tools are beneficial; however, they added that learners' styles and preferences should be taken into consideration, also the fact that learners tend to gravitate towards using specific tools rather than others. Moreover, findings derived from focus group discussion revealed that the participants had positive experiences with digital tools especially with social media platforms, which they all recognized as the fastest and easiest way to develop vocabulary and knowledge of it. Hence, it can be said that the results provide strong support for the hypothesis. Similar results were also reached by other researchers including [Nagy & Herman, 1987; Ghaneshi & Anbaristani; 2008, Leong, Abidin, & Saibon 2019; Yowaboot & Sukying 2022].

In addition to the primary focus of this study, the researcher also discusses the problems that first-year EFL students' face in learning English vocabulary. Results to this question demonstrate two things. First, learners face a variety of problems in learning vocabulary including meaning, recall, spelling, pronunciation problems, and combinations of these. Second, some difficulties are mentioned more frequently than others, namely the problem of understanding the meaning of words and the problem of evoking them. This latter maybe due to the fact that words that are not used regularly will easily vanish from memory. As far as meaning problems this might be caused by a lack of exposure to large range of lexical items. As for the teachers' answers, they also stated the previously mentioned problems and added others; namely, the problem of attrition, spelling, and idiomatic expressions. In regards to focus group discussion, some participants provide further insights about the problems they suffer from, they acknowledge that they have difficulty articulating the sounds of the British accent correctly, and a problem of understanding the jargon of specific modules which are civilization and linguistics. After all, the hypothesis formulated by the researcher and which says “ first-year EFL students' encounter several difficulties in learning English vocabulary, including difficulties in understanding the meaning of word, their

pronunciation and spelling” is confirmed. Besides, this results tie well with previous studies of Kaidi & Ketteb, 2017; Ketouni & Musharah, 2018; Afzal, 2019; Wulandari, 2020).

2.11 Conclusion

To conclude, in this chapter the researcher presents the research methodology and procedure used in the investigation together with the findings reached from the different research sources and methods which are primarily students’ questionnaire administered to 47 first year EFL students’ in the department of English, University of Tlemcen, teachers' interview conducted with five teachers, and a focus group discussion with six participants. The key conclusions that can be gleaned from the results presented earlier are: first year EFL students’ encounter various vocabulary learning problems including meaning, recalling, spelling, and pronunciation; besides that, these students have positive attitudes towards digital tools used in vocabulary learning. Another important point is that these tools have positively affected students’ vocabulary knowledge. All in all, this section cantered on the practical applications of the topic.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

General Conclusion

The pervasiveness of technology and the Internet nowadays created a metamorphosis in language teaching and learning methods, as digital tools are more widely integrated and used in educational practices. Digital tools offer learners a plethora of avenues to improve and enhance their language abilities including vocabulary. This latter, occupies a unique position in each language, since without it nothing can be conveyed. It is important to stress that learners' attitudes towards digital tools used in vocabulary learning must be taken into account when applying them, in order to reach the best possible learning outcomes. In this vein, the researcher conducted a research into this topic and illuminated many aspects of it. Consequently, the research was divided into two chapters; the first one tackled the theoretical framework of the research, which highlighted the notion of vocabulary teaching and learning, and the use of digital tools in this field, in addition to the previous studies relevant to the current research. As for the second chapter, it was devoted to the practical side of the topic, in which the researcher presents the research methodology used and the findings that were reached through the use of various research instruments. In consideration of the results obtained in this study, it was found that understanding the meaning of words, articulating words, spelling words, and evoking them are major problems faced by students when learning vocabulary. Second, most of learners have an inclination towards digital tools and they find it effective for enhancing both vocabulary and vocabulary knowledge. In light of these findings, the entire hypotheses formulated by the researcher are validated. These findings contribute to a growing body of evidence indicating that digital tools provide teachers with more reliable resources and methods to be incorporated and used. This research represents a small-scale investigation into learners' attitudes towards the use of digital tools to enhance their vocabulary knowledge. In fact, gaining enough insights and experiences from learners represented a quite challenge due to the fact that these first-year students

are not yet familiar with research practices conducted at university. The findings of this investigation provide a basis for future research into learners' gender differences in the use of digital tools, where further exploration is necessary to identify possible differences in the use of these tools and to find out what factors contribute to these differences.

Each research may have its own limitations and restrictions. In this investigation, the researcher faced some difficulties, which are listed underneath:

First, the available time for data collection was very limited. As a result the researcher conducted only one focus group discussion with only six students. Second, the respondents were somewhat uncooperative, especially when distributing the questionnaire and selecting participants to be part of the focus group discussion. Third, it was difficult to interview the teachers because they were so busy that the researcher wasted a protracted period of time. However, despite all these limitations, the researcher was able to achieve her goal.

In conclusion, it is reasonable to state that since the learners are already familiar with and interested in digital tools, why not take advantage of this knowledge and create a learning environment that suits their interests.

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Appendices

Appendix (A): Students' Questionnaire

Students' Questionnaire

Dear students,

I am a Master 02 student, and this questionnaire is part of my research project. It is designed to collect data about your attitudes towards digital tools used in vocabulary learning, as well as the challenges you face while learning English vocabulary. So, you are kindly asked to answer the following questions as fairly as possible. Your participation is really appreciated and extremely helpful in shaping my research project. For your information, all answers you provide will be kept strictly confidential.

Thank you for taking the time to complete my questionnaire

Instructions:

Put a tick (✓) in the most appropriate box, and provide your own comment when necessary.

Section 01: students' personal information

Gender: Male Female

Age:

Section 02: students' difficulties in learning English vocabulary

1) How do you rate your knowledge about vocabulary?

Excellent somewhat poor

2) Do you find learning vocabulary a difficult task?

Yes No

3) Do you think that a deficiency (lack) in vocabulary can have a negative impact on your language learning?

Yes No

4) What kinds of problems do you face in learning English vocabulary?

(You may tick as many as you like)

- Pronunciation problems
- Meaning problems
- recalling (remembering) problems
- spelling problems
- All of the above

Other, please specify.....

5) Rank the following vocabulary learning problems from 1 to 5 according to their degree of difficulty.

- a) Difficulty in pronouncing new words
- b) Difficulty in understanding the meaning of unknown words
- c) Difficulty in remembering words
- d) Difficulty in spelling words
- e) Difficulty in using words

Section 3: students' attitudes towards the use of digital tools in vocabulary learning

6) How do you find learning vocabulary with digital tools?

Extremely interesting moderately interesting Not at all interesting

7) Do you like lectures when the teacher uses digital tools (e.g. computer, data projector, videos, online games, etc)?

Yes No

8) I prefer to learn vocabulary with modern technological tools than traditional ones.

Agree Neutral disagree

9) I am comfortable with the use of digital tools.

Agree Neutral disagree

10) I can learn vocabulary more effectively with the use of digital tools

Agree Neutral disagree

11) Digital tools should be incorporated into the classroom.

Agree Neutral disagree

Section 4: the impact of digital tools on vocabulary knowledge

12) What digital tools do you use to develop your vocabulary learning?

(You may tick as many as you like)

Social media Electronic dictionaries Digital flashcards

MALL Duolingo PowerPoint

Other, please specify.....

13) How effective are digital tools in expanding your vocabulary and your knowledge of this vocabulary?

Very effective moderately effective not effective

14) The use of digital tools can enhance my pronunciation, spelling and writing.

Agree Neutral disagree

15) Digital tools help me look up and understand the meaning of new words.

Agree Neutral disagree

16) Digital means provide me with synonyms, antonyms, and examples which will deepen my knowledge of words.

Agree Neutral disagree

17) Digital tools improve my knowledge of the grammatical functions, collocations, and constraints of use.

Agree Neutral disagree

18) Digital tools have helped me build my vocabulary stock.

Agree Neutral disagree

19) Can you talk about an experience where you OR your teacher used a digital tool, and it had a positive/negative impact on your vocabulary knowledge?

.....

20) If a module is created specifically for vocabulary learning where digital tools are the means of teaching and learning would you be ready? Explain please

.....
.....
Thank you again

Appendix (B): Teachers' Interview

Dear teachers,

Thank you for accepting to participate in this interview.

The purpose of this interview is to gain insights into the challenges first year EFL students' face in learning English vocabulary as well as the effectiveness of using digital tools to enhance their vocabulary knowledge. Your experiences and perspectives will help me to achieve this goal.

Thank you

1. What degree do you hold?
2. How long have you been teaching English?
3. How often do you teach vocabulary?
4. What vocabulary teaching techniques do you use?
5. In your opinion, what kinds of problems do first-year students' face while learning English vocabulary?
6. Do you use ICTs in your class?
7. Which digital tools do you use to support vocabulary learning?
8. Can you attest the effectiveness of using digital tools in increasing students' knowledge of vocabulary?
9. Could you suggest some kinds of digital tools that are useful in facilitating and enhancing English vocabulary learning?

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Appendix (C): Focus Group Discussion

Question 01: what kinds of problems do you face in learning English vocabulary?

Question 02: how do you usually deal with these problems?

Question 03: have you found the use of digital tools helpful in overcoming these problems?

Question 04: Can you tell me more about your experience with digital tools and how they have helped you in improving your vocabulary and knowledge of this vocabulary?

Question 05: Why do you think social media is the most used tool by learners to learn English vocabulary?