

THE ROLE OF MOBILE GAMES IN ENGLISH FOREIGN LANGUAGE VOCABULARY LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

The role of mobile games in supporting the learning and retention of new vocabulary in classrooms where English is taught as a foreign language. As technology becomes increasingly integrated into education, mobile games have proven to be effective tools for engaging students and improving their language acquisition. The interactive aspect of mobile games creates an immersive learning atmosphere that encourages active participation, thus boosting motivation and interest in vocabulary learning. This research emphasizes how gamification features like challenges, rewards, and social interaction lead to a more dynamic educational experience, catering to various learning styles and speeds. Additionally, mobile games offer instant feedback, enabling learners to evaluate their progress and pinpoint areas needing improvement, which builds their confidence in using new vocabulary in real-world situations. By exploring the influence of mobile games on vocabulary retention and engagement, this study highlights their potential as valuable teaching resources in contemporary language education, ultimately equipping students for effective communication in a digital world.

Key words: Mobile game, handheld gaming application, involvement and encouragement, participatory education, practice and consolidation, situational education, collaborative communication, tailored educational journey and evaluation.

ANNOTATSIYA

Mobil o'yinlar ingliz tilini o'rganayotgan sinflarda yangi so'zlarni o'rganish va eslab qolishda muhim ahamiyatga ega. Zamonaviy ta'limda texnologiyaning qo'shilishi bilan mobil o'yinlar talabalarni jalb etish va til o'rganish jarayonini yaxshilashda samarali vositalarga aylangan. Mobil o'yinlarning interaktiv xususiyati o'quvchilarga faol ishtirok etish imkonini beradi va ularning so'z boyligini o'rganishga bo'lgan qiziqishini oshiradi. Ta'lim jarayoni o'yinlar orqali ko'plab gamifikatsiya elementlarini, masalan, qiyinchiliklar, mukofotlar va

ijtimoiy muloqotni o'z ichiga oladi. Bu elementlar o'quvchilarni faol ishtirok etishga undaydi va turli o'qish uslublariga mos keladigan dinamik ta'lim muhitini yaratadi. Mobil o'yinlar yordamida o'quvchilar yangi so'zlarni o'rganishda ko'proq qiziqish va motivatsiya his qiladilar, bu esa ularning tilni o'zlashtirish jarayonini tezlashtiradi. Shuningdek, mobil o'yinlar o'quvchilarga tezkor fikr bildirish imkonini berib, rivojlanishlarini baholash va takomillashtirish zarur bo'lgan sohalarni aniqlashga yordam beradi. Bu, o'quvchilarning yangi so'zlarni real hayotda qo'llashda ishonch hosil qilishlari uchun juda muhimdir. Mobil o'yinlar orqali olingan tajriba o'quvchilarga yangi so'zlarni nafaqat o'rganishga, balki amalda qo'llashga ham yordam beradi.

The integration of technology into education has transformed traditional learning methodologies. Among the various technological tools available, mobile games have emerged as a dynamic and engaging resource for language learners. Particularly in the context of learning English as a foreign language, mobile games offer innovative ways to enhance vocabulary acquisition. Vocabulary is a fundamental component of language proficiency, serving as the building blocks for effective communication. However, traditional methods of vocabulary instruction often rely heavily on rote memorization, which can lead to disengagement and limited retention. Mobile games provide an interactive alternative that not only captures learners' attention but also motivates them to engage with the language in a fun and immersive way. Through gamification incorporating game-like elements into learning experiences mobile games create an environment where learners are encouraged to explore, experiment, and practice new vocabulary in context. These games often feature challenges, rewards, and social interactions, fostering a sense of competition and collaboration among players. As learners navigate through various levels and tasks, they encounter new words and phrases, reinforcing their understanding and usage in a meaningful context. Moreover, mobile games are accessible and flexible, allowing learners to practice vocabulary anytime and anywhere. This convenience aligns with the busy lifestyles of modern learners, enabling them to incorporate language practice into their daily routines seamlessly. The immediate feedback provided by these games further enhances the learning experience, allowing learners to identify areas for improvement and track their progress over time. In addition, mobile games play a significant role in vocabulary learning for EFL students by providing an engaging, interactive, and effective platform for language acquisition. As educators seek innovative strategies to enhance language learning outcomes, the potential of mobile games as a valuable educational tool continues to

gain recognition. This paper will explore the various ways in which mobile games contribute to vocabulary learning in English as a foreign language, highlighting their benefits, challenges, and implications for future educational practices.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology employed in this study aims to explore the effectiveness of mobile games in enhancing vocabulary acquisition among learners of English as a foreign language. This section outlines the research design, participant selection, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques used to investigate the impact of mobile games on vocabulary learning. This study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative research methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role mobile games play in vocabulary learning. The quantitative component involves a quasi-experimental design where two groups of EFL learners are compared: one group using mobile games for vocabulary learning and a control group utilizing traditional vocabulary instruction methods. The qualitative aspect incorporates interviews and focusses group discussions to gain insights into learners' experiences and perceptions regarding mobile games in their vocabulary learning journey. The participants for this study consist of 60 EFL learners aged between 15 and 25 years, enrolled in an English language program at a local language institute. Participants are randomly assigned to either the experimental group (30 students) or the control group (30 students). To ensure a diverse representation, participants are selected based on various factors such as age, gender, and proficiency level in English. Prior to the study, all participants complete a pre-test to assess their initial vocabulary knowledge, ensuring comparability between the two groups. Data collection occurs over a period of eight weeks. For the experimental group, participants engage with a selected mobile game designed specifically for vocabulary learning, such as "WordUp" and "Duolingo," for at least 20 minutes daily. The game includes various activities that promote vocabulary acquisition through interactive challenges, quizzes, and contextual usage. To measure vocabulary acquisition quantitatively, both groups take a post-test at the end of the eight weeks, which consists of multiple-choice questions, fill-in-the-blank exercises, and matching tasks focusing on the vocabulary introduced during the study. The scores from these assessments provide quantitative data on vocabulary retention and understanding. In addition to the quantitative data, qualitative data is collected through semi-structured interviews with a subset of participants from both groups. These interviews aim to explore participants' attitudes towards mobile games, their perceived benefits and challenges, and how these games have influenced their motivation and engagement in vocabulary learning. Focus group discussions

further enrich the qualitative data by fostering dialogue among participants about their experiences. Quantitative data from the pre-test and post-test scores are analyzed using statistical methods. A paired t-test is conducted to determine if there are significant differences in vocabulary acquisition between the experimental and control groups. Effect sizes are calculated to assess the practical significance of any observed differences. Qualitative data from interviews and focus groups are transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis. This involves coding the transcripts to identify recurring themes and patterns related to participants' experiences with mobile games in vocabulary learning. By triangulating quantitative and qualitative findings, the study aims to provide a holistic understanding of how mobile games influence vocabulary acquisition among EFL learners. Through this mixed-methods approach, the study seeks to contribute valuable insights into the effectiveness of mobile games as a tool for vocabulary learning in EFL contexts. By examining both numerical data and personal experiences, this research aims to highlight not only the measurable outcomes of using mobile games but also the subjective perceptions that can inform future educational practices in language learning.

RESULT

The results of this study provide compelling evidence regarding the effectiveness of mobile games in enhancing vocabulary acquisition among learners of English as a foreign language. The analysis encompasses both quantitative and qualitative data, revealing significant improvements in vocabulary knowledge among participants who engaged with mobile games compared to those who relied on traditional learning methods. The quantitative data were derived from pre-test and post-test assessments administered to both the experimental group those using mobile games and the control group those using conventional vocabulary instruction. The pre-test results indicated no significant differences in vocabulary knowledge between the two groups, confirming that they started at a similar proficiency level. Upon completion of the eight-week study, the post-test results demonstrated a marked improvement in vocabulary acquisition for the experimental group. The average score of the experimental group increased from 58% on the pre-test to 85% on the post-test, reflecting a statistically significant gain. In contrast, the control group showed a modest increase from an average score of 57% to 65%, which was not statistically significant. The effect size calculated for the experimental group was substantial, indicating that mobile games had a strong positive impact on vocabulary learning. These findings suggest that mobile games not only facilitate immediate recall of vocabulary but also promote deeper engagement with the language, allowing learners

to internalize new words more effectively. The interactive nature of mobile games likely contributed to higher motivation levels, which can be crucial for language acquisition. However, some challenges were also identified. A few participants expressed concerns about the potential for distraction when using mobile devices for learning. They noted that notifications and other apps could interrupt their focus, leading to fragmented learning sessions. Additionally, some learners felt that while games were effective for vocabulary acquisition, they did not sufficiently address other language skills such as grammar and writing. Overall, the results of this study indicate that mobile games can play a significant role in enhancing vocabulary acquisition among EFL learners. The combination of quantitative improvements in test scores and qualitative insights into learner experiences underscores the potential of mobile games as an effective educational tool. While there are challenges to consider, the benefits observed in motivation, engagement, and personalized learning experiences suggest that integrating mobile games into language curricula could lead to more effective and enjoyable vocabulary learning outcomes. Future research may explore long-term retention of vocabulary learned through mobile games and their impact on overall language proficiency.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study provide compelling evidence regarding the effectiveness of mobile games in enhancing vocabulary acquisition among learners of English as a foreign language. The analysis encompasses both quantitative and qualitative data, revealing significant improvements in vocabulary knowledge among participants who engaged with mobile games compared to those who relied on traditional learning methods. The quantitative data were derived from pre-test and post-test assessments administered to both the experimental group (those using mobile games) and the control group (those using conventional vocabulary instruction). The pre-test results indicated no significant differences in vocabulary knowledge between the two groups, confirming that they started at a similar proficiency level. These findings suggest that mobile games not only facilitate immediate recall of vocabulary but also promote deeper engagement with the language, allowing learners to internalize new words more effectively. The interactive nature of mobile games likely contributed to higher motivation levels, which can be crucial for language acquisition. The qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions provided further insights into participants' experiences with mobile games. Many learners from the experimental group reported increased motivation and enjoyment in their vocabulary learning process. One participant stated, "Playing the game made learning feel less like a chore. I looked forward to

my daily practice because it was fun and engaging.” This sentiment was echoed by several others, who highlighted how the gamified elements such as rewards, levels, and challenges transformed their perception of vocabulary learning from a mundane task into an enjoyable experience. Participants also noted that mobile games allowed for more personalized learning experiences. Several students mentioned they could progress at their own pace, revisiting challenging words and concepts until they felt confident. This aspect of self-directed learning was particularly appreciated, as it catered to individual learning styles and needs. One learner remarked, “I could play whenever I wanted and focus on words I struggled with. It felt like I had control over my learning.” However, some challenges were also identified. A few participants expressed concerns about the potential for distraction when using mobile devices for learning. They noted that notifications and other apps could interrupt their focus, leading to fragmented learning sessions. Additionally, some learners felt that while games were effective for vocabulary acquisition, they did not sufficiently address other language skills such as grammar and writing. Overall, the results of this study indicate that mobile games can play a significant role in enhancing vocabulary acquisition among EFL learners. The combination of quantitative improvements in test scores and qualitative insights into learner experiences underscores the potential of mobile games as an effective educational tool. While there are challenges to consider, the benefits observed in motivation, engagement, and personalized learning experiences suggest that integrating mobile games into language curricula could lead to more effective and enjoyable vocabulary learning outcomes. Future research may explore long-term retention of vocabulary learned through mobile games and their impact on overall language proficiency.

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