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USING DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES IN TEACHING VOCABULARY IN ENGLISH LESSONS

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Abstract: This thesis reviewed some of the significant issues pertinent to the use of technology in teaching of English language skills. These issues are as followed: definition of technology, the use of technology in the classroom, the studies on using technologies in improving English language learning skills, and recommendations for using technologies in teaching vocabulary. Also, it is defined the term technology and technology integration, explained the use of technology in language classroom, reviewed previous studies on using technologies in improving language learning skills, and stated certain recommendations for the better use of these technologies, which assist learners in improving their learning skills.

Keywords: digital technology, teaching vocabulary, technology integration, language learning, skills, use

It has been an educational policy for the Uzbek educational authorities to teach English as a foreign language from early ages of children. This research attempts to determine the role of digital technologies on enhancing English vocabulary and to compare technologies with pen and paper practices. For this purpose, digital technologies were used for enhancing vocabulary teaching English in a primary school in Uzbekistan with various games.

Technology has a leading role in every aspect of life and education takes its part utilizing technology for teaching learning process. Educational practices are constantly seeking innovation as a result of developments in information communication technologies and changes in educational practices naturally change teaching and learning approaches. Traditionally, students have access to information through books and games, however, technology especially internet, which is being used in many schools, enables learning anywhere and anytime, and information is always available for students and teachers. Together with the other subjects, foreign language teaching takes its part in using technology in classes. Different language teaching methods are applied to increase the effectiveness of teaching process and technology succeeds in replacing traditional teaching. With the spread and development of English around the world, English has long been had its place in the Uzbek educational system and enjoys his status by its position as a key subject in both primary and secondary schools' curriculum. Technology offers many options to make teaching interesting and at the same time make teaching more productive especially when in a country with little or no opportunity to encounter with a native speaker and practice the language learned. As students from early ages begin learning English, in order to attract their attention, using multimedia is a good way to satisfy both visual and auditory senses of students. In language teaching, technology such as internet,

mobile phones, computers or videos offers many opportunities. Using multimedia in English language teaching has many advantages. The aim of the foreign language teaching is to enable the students to acquire four language skills, speaking, listening, reading and writing. However, students need vocabulary to communicate using the target language. The lack of vocabularies has hindrances and obstacles for the students to speak fluently and accurately. Without vocabulary acquisition, it is impossible to construct meaningful sentences in communication (2). It is an undeniable fact that language skills require a lot of vocabulary and vocabulary helps you to express your opinion fully. Vocabulary allows the use of structures and functions that facilitate communication (1). As teaching English starts at the age of 7 in the Uzbek education system and young learners get distracted too soon, an effective way to teach vocabulary is the use of digital technologies as technologies are motivating and more appealing for students to learn a foreign language. There are some studies confirming the effects of digital technologies on vocabulary learning. However, most of them are conceptual studies and there is little empirical evidence of the impact of digital gaming in classrooms. Most digital game-based language learning research has been conducted outside the classroom but little research has been done on the integration of digital technologies into English classes (4). To fill this gap, this study explored the implementation of digital technologies in English classes in a primary school.

In this context, some digital apps are investigated as there are many apps and software for teachers to utilize old technologies in their classes. Many platforms and apps are designed to be used by both teachers and students online and offline at school or out of school. By means of these, teachers can upload and download multimedia contents and use them for educational purposes. Although there are other apps to play digital technologies in classes. All of Education apps are an easy-to-use and intuitive tool that promotes motivation and competitiveness. Therefore, this research is aimed at using digital technologies to teach vocabulary. In this study, it was aimed to find a solution for students' vocabulary problems. The purpose of this article is to explore the effects of digital technologies for overcoming students' vocabulary problems. Literature Review and Teaching Vocabulary is one component of language skills such as reading, speaking, listening and writing. Vocabulary knowledge enables language use, language use enables the increase of vocabulary knowledge, and knowledge of the word enables the increase of vocabulary knowledge and language use and so on. In English as Foreign Language (EFL) learning, vocabulary items play a vital role in the acquisition of the four language skills -listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Without vocabulary knowledge, neither language production nor language comprehension would be possible. Therefore, the increase of vocabulary is one of the prerequisites for language acquisition and the increase of vocabulary is only possible when teachers use effective vocabulary teaching and learning strategies. Teachers should help students learn the basic steps and how to access and acquire, recognize and remember, and activate and generate new word meanings to maximize vocabulary development. In English classes various communicative activities can be helpful in teaching vocabulary however the most effective way to

attract attention could be met via listening or visual representation.

Nowadays, there is an increasing interest towards using technology in different fields of human life, particularly in education. Digital technologies are used for entertainment and facilitating the process of learning. Digital Technologies: A game can be defined as a goal-oriented, rule-based, playful activity. For today's generation, digital technologies play a significant role. Digital technologies are technologies that are programmed with various technologies and enable users to enter a visual environment. Two types of technologies can be distinguished in this context: special purpose technologies developed with an educational purpose. The launch of digital gaming in education focuses on technologies that are designed to teach academic content and skills to students playing them. It can be classified digital technologies into 5 categories:

1. Drill and practice technologies;
2. Single combat technologies;
3. Stable contest technologies;
4. Evolutionary contest technologies;
5. Contextual technologies.

Using drill and practice technologies developed with educational purpose in classrooms impacts on the mode of learning as technologies motivate players to achieve goals, gratify the ego when winning, is fun through enjoyment and pleasure and spark the players' creativity to solve the game (3). The use of digital technologies as a learning tool and game-like formats could be more effective at capturing learners' attention than traditional media such as textbooks. Teaching vocabulary through the use of technologies is beneficial as technologies provide enjoyment and interest in learning. Student's especially young learners accept new foreign languages easily, if effective tools are devised to teach vocabulary. Vocabulary learning is considered as a difficult task because of memorizing unfamiliar words and spelling. In order to motivate and engage students more in the learning process, technologies could be an effective way. Technologies used in classrooms push us to move forward from conventional pen-and-paper instruction to more interactive and productive digital classroom activities. Technologies with animated graphics and impacts of audio provide a good motivation for vocabulary learning. Studies carried out with young learners of English as a foreign language show that using digital technologies during classes has a positive impact in the acquisition of vocabulary.

A study carried out resulted that kindergarten children who were taught vocabulary using digital technologies achieved more compared to the children learned through regular curriculum. There are some views which were pointed out that 4th grade English learners had better outcomes in learning vocabulary than the students having been taught by traditional methods. As well as, the use of technologies enables children to learn vocabulary better than using traditional methods. Also, it stressed the effect of using technologies in learning the vocabulary for children. Similarly, a study showed that students used computer technologies scored significantly better than the ones who used other means of practicing vocabulary. In a meta-analysis of 17 studies by Yudintseva (5)

results concluded that foreign language vocabulary is enhanced when learners engage in playing video technologies.

Technology enhanced activities have long been in progress in Uzbek education and interactive whiteboards, e books, interactive applications and internet use make a notable difference in teaching learning process. These developments create potentials for utilizing digital game activities for English classes. Based on the aspects summarized in the introduction and literature review, the research question to be addressed is 'How effective is the use of digital technologies to enhance vocabulary?' Methodology and Research design shows that the study followed a pre-test-post-test experimental control group design to know how far digital technologies to improve the students' vocabulary. Both the control and experimental group attended the English classes for 80 minutes per week. The former followed the regular curriculum while the latter was supported with digital game-based learning activities. The participants were chosen from school pupils of a public primary school. Two third-grade classes were randomly selected to participate in this study. Instruments A pre-test including 30 vocabulary items with a maximum score of 30 was administered to the groups of the study to discover the participants' level of knowledge of English vocabulary. The instrument prepared as the pre-test included. A post-test was carried out to measure the students' level of improvement in comparison with the results taken in the pre-test. This instrument included 30 questions that were graded out of 30 points. The data for this study were gathered for a period of 4 months in. An experimental design was used in order to carry out this research. The use of digital technologies and its effect on learning vocabulary in the English classroom were also tested. The groups of students for this study were selected according to the class they were enrolled. There were 2 groups, 1 received English classes that included activities with digital technologies and the other taking regular classes and both studied vocabulary related to numbers, family members, adjectives, feelings, toys and technologies. During the study, the teacher taught the regular curriculum using the textbook, audio recordings, worksheets, tracing, cut and paste activities in both classes. For the experimental group, teacher designed classes using digital technologies including listening, matching and memorizing, finding and coloring activities. Digital game integration was implemented only in the experimental class.

The results of the pre-test administered to both groups to identify previous knowledge about vocabulary show that the experimental group obtained an average of 5,05 points and the control group 7,52 points. Thus, we can observe that, before the intervention, there was no significant difference between these two groups in relation to their proficiency level in EFL vocabulary. These results make it evident that the use of digital technologies helped the students in the experimental group to increase their EFL vocabulary knowledge. This means that use of digital technologies was an effective tool to enhance vocabulary in these students. With respect to the control group, the increase in the post-test scores might be attributed to the regular teaching process that English teachers followed as part of the primary school curriculum.

Based on the results it can be concluded that the use of digital technologies in teaching English vocabulary learners was much more successful than the use of traditional methods. Digital tools are indispensable parts of most students' lives and using these tools in school could motivate children to enjoy classes more. Digital technologies have replaced traditional technologies in the technology age and schools should keep up with the requisite of the age. For language learning, there are many methods to motivate and entertain learners. However, technologies, especially digital ones, are up-to-date and more meaningful to those learners. Findings indicate that digital technologies usage in teaching vocabulary is effective for learners to improve their vocabulary knowledge.

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