Enhancing Vocabulary Acquisition in ESL Learners: The Role of Quizlet in Mobile-Assisted Language Learning

Nhan Sy Cuong
University Kainan University, Taiwan
Lilian Sun
University Kainan University, Taiwan

Abstract:
This study aimed at exploring Quizlet as a mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) tool in teaching vocabulary for elementary English as a Second Language (ESL) learners. Mixed methods were applied to explore vocabulary performance change and student experiences of using Quizlet. Fifty ESL elementary students were engaged in an eight-week intervention involving the use of Quizlet with their school-assigned tablet computers, for about 15 minutes a day, for vocabulary practice related to four vocabulary units of learning based on stories. Pre-tests and post-tests were used to assess students' vocabulary development, and formative assessments, student surveys, and semi-structured interviews were used as additional sources of information about students' learning experiences and attitudes. The pre-test and post-test mean vocabulary scores were 41.6 and 67.4, respectively, with a 25.8-point increase. Results of a paired-samples t-test indicated that the pretest and posttest scores were statistically significantly different, $t(49) = 14.72$, $p < .001$, with a large effect size (Cohen's $d = 1.34$). In addition, there was a rise in formative assessment scores for the four-story units. The survey responses showed that attitudes towards Quizlet generally were positive, especially regarding the game aspects, the instant feedback, and the belief that Quizlet was useful for remembering words. Through interviews, immediate feedback, contextualized vocabulary learning, and visible progress emerged as important factors in the students' experience. Overall, the data indicates that Quizlet has the potential to be a helpful resource for vocabulary instruction for elementary ESL students, but with no independent control group, it is impossible to draw conclusions regarding Quizlet as the sole source of improvement.