HOW TO IMPROVE STUDENTS VOCABULARY IN ENGLISH CLASSES ?

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Annotation: This study investigates effective ways to improve students' vocabulary learning in English classes, with a particular focus on gamification, technology integration, and self-regulated learning strategies. Vocabulary plays a crucial role in developing language skills; however, many learners face difficulties in remembering and using new words in real-life contexts. The research was conducted with 9th-grade students (15 participants) and involved questionnaires, classroom observations, and teacher interviews. The findings reveal that although students are familiar with various vocabulary learning strategies, they often lack consistent practice, especially in revision and pronunciation. Interactive activities such as "Spelling in Words" and "Word Chain Challenge" were found to increase students' motivation, engagement, and vocabulary retention. The study also highlights the importance of self-regulated learning in enhancing students' autonomy and long-term vocabulary acquisition. Overall, the research emphasizes the need for integrating interactive, technology-based, and student-centered approaches in vocabulary instruction to achieve better learning outcomes.

Keywords: vocabulary learning, gamification, self-regulated learning, technology integration, ESL learners, learner motivation

Аннотация: Данное исследование направлено на изучение эффективных способов улучшения усвоения лексики учащимися на уроках английского языка с акцентом на геймификацию, использование технологий и стратегии саморегулируемого обучения. Лексика играет ключевую роль в развитии языковых навыков, однако многие учащиеся испытывают трудности с запоминанием и использованием новых слов в реальных ситуациях. Исследование было проведено среди учащихся 9 класса (15 человек) с использованием анкетирования, наблюдения и интервью с учителями. Результаты показывают, что, несмотря на знание различных стратегий изучения лексики, учащимся не хватает регулярной практики, особенно в повторении и произношении. Интерактивные задания, такие как “Spelling in Words” и “Word Chain Challenge”, способствуют повышению мотивации, вовлеченности и лучшему запоминанию слов. Также подчеркивается важность саморегулируемого обучения для развития автономности учащихся и долгосрочного усвоения лексики. В целом, исследование подчеркивает необходимость интеграции интерактивных, технологических и ориентированных на учащегося методов обучения для достижения более высоких результатов.

Ключевые слова: изучение лексики, геймификация, саморегулируемое обучение, интеграция технологий, учащиеся ESL, мотивация учащихся

Introduction. Vocabulary is one of the most important parts of learning English. Without enough words, students cannot understand texts, express their ideas, or communicate effectively. Many learners find vocabulary difficult because they forget new words quickly or do not know how to use them in real situations. So, teachers should use effective methods to help students improve their vocabulary learning in English classes.

Background. Vocabulary is very important for developing reading and writing skills, all students, no matter their background, can benefit from high-quality

vocabulary instruction [1]. Effective vocabulary instruction strategies have been identified for facilitating literacy development in three meta-analyses by Stahl [2]. Research also highlights the crucial role of directly teaching vocabulary in enhancing writing performance. A meta-analysis by Graham et al. (2023) examining writing treatments for students in grades 6–12 found that embedding vocabulary instruction within broader interventions, such as text structure instruction (ES = 0.39) and summarization instruction (ES = 0.49), significantly improved writing outcomes. Likewise, a meta-analysis of elementary writing instruction revealed that integrating vocabulary strategies, such as word-learning activities within writing instruction, positively influenced students' written expression (Graham et al., 2012). These findings emphasize the importance of vocabulary instruction in strengthening writing skills across all grade levels.[3]

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[1] McKeown, 2019 McKeown, M. G. (2019). Effective vocabulary instruction fosters knowing words, using words, and understanding how words work. Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools, 50(4), 466–476. [Google Scholar] (https://scholar.google.com/scholar_lookup?title=Effective+vocabulary+instruction+fosters+knowing+words,+using+words,+and+understanding+how+words+work&author=McKeown,+M.+G.&publication_year=2019&journal=Language,+Speech,+and+Hearing+Services+in+Schools&volume=50&issue=(4)&pages=466%E2%80%93476&doi=10.1044/2019_LSHSS-VOIA-18-0126) [CrossRef] (https://doi.org/10.1044/2019_LSHSS-VOIA-18-0126)

[2] (Stahl & Fairbanks, 1986; Elleman et al., 2009; Cervetti et al., 2023).https://www.mdpi.com/2227-7102/15/3/262 B107-education-15-00262https://www.mdpi.com/2227-7102/15/3/262

[3](Stahl & Fairbanks, 1986; Elleman et al., 2009; Cervetti et al., 2023).https://www.mdpi.com/2227-7102/15/3/262

Aim. This study is designed to study effective approaches to teaching vocabulary through gamification and the use of technology. It seeks to explore a range of techniques and digital tools that can improve students' vocabulary learning while also increasing their motivation to learn new words. Furthermore, the research aims to examine the impact of game-based activities and technological platforms on students' vocabulary remembering, engagement, and active participation, areas that have not been sufficiently explored in some previous studies. The study is expected to contribute to the existing body of literature by offering understanding into gamification strategies, technology-assisted vocabulary teaching methods, the challenges teachers face when using digital tools, and students' perceptions of game-based learning. In addition, it will highlight the significance of adding technology into vocabulary instruction and provide practical suggestions along with sample activities.

Objectives

This research aims to explore the following issues and address the related research questions.

1. Why do students keep having difficulties when learning new English vocabulary ?
2. What strategies work best to remember new words afteer the lesson ?
3. How can students make newly learned words part of their active vocabulary ?

As part of this research, several students were interviewed to explore their

attitudes toward learning English vocabulary. During the lessons, their participation, interest, and capability to use new words were carefully observed. Based on these surveys, the main challenges students face in improving their vocabulary and their learning preferences were identified.

Based on evidence that self-regulation improve vocabulary learning outcomes (Deng & Trainin, 2020; Mizumoto, 2013), this study integrates self-regulated learning mechanisms into classroom activities and monitors their impact on students' vocabulary remembering and learning.

Participants. Participants: 8–9th grade students at School 27 in Xonobod district, Namangan region.

The participants of this study consisted of 9th-grade students, including approximately 8 girls and 7 boys. These learners were selected from a local school, and the research was conducted among 9th grade students based on specific selection criteria. One of the key advantages of using games in the learning process is that it allows students to acquire knowledge unconsciously, which makes the teaching process more effective and facilitates easier understanding of new material.



Vocabulary plays a important role in language teaching , as it forms the basic for developing the four essential language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Terefore, it is important focus on vocabulary teaching strategies that support better retention and understanding. The participants were chosen from local school students studying in the 9th grade. In total, more than 15 learners (8 girls and 7 boys) from two different classes took part in the study. Data collection was carried out through student questionnaires and teacher interviews. This

approach helped to clearly identify the difficulties students face when learning and using vocabulary, as well as to explore possible solutions to improve their vocabulary acquisition.

I interviewed teachers, and the first teacher mentioned the game “Spelling in Words.” This game is very useful for students as it helps them learn how to spell words correctly and remember them more easily. The second teacher highlighted a different activity called “Word Chain Challenge.” She explained that this game encourages students to think quickly and expand their vocabulary by connecting words based on the last letter of the previous word. According to her, it not only makes lessons more engaging but also improves students’ speaking confidence and word recall in a fun, interactive way.

Results. This study presents the results of a survey conducted among 15 students to explore their vocabulary learning habits and difficulties. The findings show that students use different methods to learn new words. The most common method is reading (40%), followed by flashcards (33.3%) and writing (26.7%). This indicates that students prefer visual and text-based learning strategies. In terms of using a vocabulary notebook, the majority of students (35.3%) reported that they sometimes use it, while 29.4% rarely use it. Only a small percentage always keep a vocabulary notebook, suggesting that regular note-taking is not widely practiced.

When asked about the most effective methods for remembering vocabulary, repetition was the most popular choice (60%). Listening was also selected by 40% of students, while games (26.7%), speaking (20%), and writing sentences (13.3%) were less common. This suggests that repeated exposure plays a significant role in vocabulary retention. However, the results also reveal that many students do not revise vocabulary frequently. About 40% of students reported that they rarely revise new words, while only 20% do so every day. This lack of revision may contribute to vocabulary retention problems. Regarding difficulties, pronunciation was identified as

the most challenging aspect (60%). Additionally, 40% of students reported difficulty using words in sentences, while spelling and meaning were problematic for 33.3% of students. The majority of students (60%) stated that they sometimes forget new words, while 26.7% reported that they often forget them. Only a small number of students said they do not forget vocabulary. Finally, students provided several reasons why vocabulary learning is difficult. The most common response (20%) was that vocabulary is sometimes easy and sometimes difficult. Other reasons included lack of interest (13.3%), difficulty due to foreign language nature (13.3%), and not knowing the translation (13.3%).

Additional factors such as pronunciation difficulties, lack of understanding, nervousness, and encountering unfamiliar words were each reported by smaller percentages (6.7%). Overall, the results indicate that while students are aware of useful learning strategies, they face challenges related to pronunciation, limited revision, and insufficient understanding of vocabulary.

The results of this research indicate that even though students are familiar with various strategies for learning vocabulary, they do not use them consistently in their studies. This finding is in line with earlier research (Graham et al., 2023), which emphasizes that regular practice plays a key role in developing vocabulary knowledge.

A major problem highlighted in this study is the insufficient revision of newly learned words. A significant number of students admitted that they rarely go back to review vocabulary, which results in forgetting. This supports the view that repeated exposure is necessary for better long-term retention. Furthermore, pronunciation appeared to be the most difficult area for many learners. This could be explained by the limited opportunities students have to hear and use spoken English, as well as a lack of real-life communication practice.

Additionally, activities like “Spelling in Words” and “Word Chain Challenge” were found to be helpful in boosting students’ interest and participation. These results

are consistent with previous research that underlines the positive impact of gamified learning on student motivation and engagement

Conclusion. In conclusion, this study highlights the importance of effective vocabulary instruction supported by self-regulated learning, gamification, and the use of technology. The findings suggest that while students use a different types of strategies, there is still a need to improve consistent practice, especially in revision and pronunciation. Teachers are encouraged to integrate interactive methods, such as games and digital tools, to increase student motivation and engagement. Additionally, promoting self-regulated learning strategies can help students become more independent and effective learners. By addressing the identified challenges and applying appropriate teaching methods, students' vocabulary acquisition and overall language proficiency can be significantly improved.

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