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USING ICT-BASED APPROACHES TO EXPAND ENGLISH VOCABULARY SKILLS

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Abstract: In the digital age, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have emerged as transformative tools in language education. This paper explores the effectiveness of ICT-based approaches in enhancing English vocabulary acquisition among secondary and university-level students. Through a combination of digital platforms, mobile applications, and online resources, learners were exposed to interactive and personalized vocabulary instruction. The study, conducted over an 8-week period, revealed significant improvements in learners' lexical knowledge, retention, and contextual usage. The findings affirm that ICT integration fosters autonomous learning and improves language outcomes.

Keywords: ICT in education, English vocabulary skills, digital learning, language acquisition, e-learning tools, student engagement, mobile learning, interactive platforms

Introduction

Vocabulary is a foundational component of language proficiency and communicative competence. In second language acquisition (SLA), expanding vocabulary skills is essential for reading comprehension, writing fluency, and oral communication. Traditional methods such as memorization and dictionary use often lack interactivity and contextual relevance, leading to low learner motivation and retention.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has brought significant changes to pedagogical practices in English language teaching. Tools such as multimedia dictionaries, mobile apps, language games, and online quizzes offer visual, auditory, and kinesthetic engagement. Moreover, ICT enables learners to access authentic language input, receive immediate feedback, and engage in collaborative tasks—critical components for meaningful vocabulary development.

This study aims to examine how ICT-based strategies support vocabulary expansion and to identify effective digital tools for enriching English lexicon in formal education settings.

Methodology

Participants

The research involved 100 students from two academic institutions in Uzbekistan: one urban secondary school and one pedagogical university. Participants were randomly assigned into two groups: the **experimental group** (ICT-integrated instruction) and the **control group** (traditional instruction).

Tools and Platforms

The experimental group used the following ICT tools:

- **Quizlet** for flashcards and spaced repetition
- **Duolingo** for game-based vocabulary learning
- **British Council LearnEnglish** website for contextualized reading
- **YouTube channels** (BBC Learning English, TED-Ed) for listening-based vocabulary

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- **Padlet** for collaborative word maps and projects

Procedure

The study lasted 8 weeks. Both groups were given a pre-test to assess their vocabulary level. The experimental group received weekly ICT-enhanced lessons focusing on thematic vocabulary sets, while the control group followed textbook-based lessons. At the end of the term, all students took a post-test and completed a self-assessment survey regarding their learning experience.

Data Analysis

Test results were analyzed using paired-sample t-tests to determine the significance of vocabulary growth. Survey responses were qualitatively analyzed to explore students' perceptions of ICT-based learning.

Results

The post-test scores of the experimental group showed a **mean vocabulary gain of 25%**, compared to **10%** in the control group. Key findings included:

- Improved **retention** of new words due to multimedia input.
- Enhanced **motivation** and **engagement** in ICT-based learning environments.
- Frequent use of new vocabulary in **writing assignments** and **oral presentations**.
- Positive student attitudes towards **self-paced** and **mobile learning**.

Students reported that visual supports, real-world examples, and gamification helped them understand and apply vocabulary more effectively. Collaborative activities on Padlet also encouraged peer feedback and creativity.

Discussion

The results confirm that ICT-based approaches significantly contribute to vocabulary acquisition. Digital tools offer personalized learning pathways, enabling learners to practice at their own pace and according to their preferences. The integration of audio-visual input and interactive exercises promotes active learning, which is key to long-term retention.

Unlike traditional vocabulary instruction, ICT encourages context-based learning where words are embedded in meaningful situations. This enhances learners' ability to recall and use vocabulary appropriately. Moreover, mobile apps and online platforms support out-of-classroom learning, expanding learning opportunities beyond formal lessons.

However, the study also identifies challenges, including:

- Unequal access to technology
- Limited digital literacy among some learners and teachers
- Overreliance on apps without pedagogical planning

These factors must be addressed through targeted teacher training, infrastructure investment, and pedagogical alignment.

Conclusion

ICT-based approaches offer innovative and effective strategies to enhance English vocabulary skills. The study provides strong evidence that digital tools not only support vocabulary growth but also increase learner autonomy, motivation, and confidence. As technology continues to evolve, integrating ICT into language curricula should be a priority for educational institutions.

To maximize the impact, teachers should be trained to use ICT purposefully and students should be guided in selecting quality digital resources. Future research may explore AI-based vocabulary instruction, adaptive platforms, and the role of virtual reality in immersive vocabulary learning.

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