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Katarzyna Kubaczka
Leader School in Września
Orcid: 0000-0001-5706-5970

Krzysztof Polok
University of Bielsko-Biała in Bielsko-Biała
Orcid: 0000-0002-0283-9665

EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHING ENGLISH BY QUIZLET TO ONLINE TAUGHT 8TH GRADE STUDENTS

EFEKTYWNOŚĆ NAUCZANIA JĘZYKA ANGIELSKIEGO PRZEZ QUIZLET DLA UCZNIÓW VIII KLASY NAUCZANYCH W FORMIE ONLINE

Summary

The present article aims to compare the traditional methods of teaching foreign language (FL) vocabulary with the modern ones. It starts with a theoretical framework of traditional teaching method only to follow with a presentation of some selected modern vocabulary teaching techniques. The

Streszczenie

Artykuł ma na celu porównanie tradycyjnych oraz nowoczesnych metod nauczania słownictwa języka obcego. Przedstawione badania, po omówieniu niektórych wybranych nowoczesnych technik nauczania słownictwa, mają na celu ustalenie skuteczności zastosowania wspomnianych technik w nauczaniu

subsequent research aims to discover the effectiveness of the application of these techniques when teaching the 8th class elementary school core curriculum vocabulary. The study findings analyses indicate that the application of Quizlet, when online classes remain one of the most commonly observed forms of FL vocabulary teaching, evidently helps in the all-over process of L_2 education. The learners taught in this way not only exhibit much higher level of FL vocabulary retention but also remain much more flexible users of creatively applied various forms of general communication. It is worth remembering that such forms of communication are later tested by obligatory elementary leaving foreign language examinations.
Key words: Quizlet, new technologies, vocabulary, teaching, learning

słownictwa z podstawy programowej klasy VIII szkoły podstawowej. Analizy wyników badań wskazują, że zastosowanie narzędzia Quizlet, w sytuacji gdy nauka online pozostaje obecnie jedną z najczęściej obserwowanych form nauczania słownictwa w języku obcym, ewidentnie pomaga w całościowym procesie edukacji L_2. Nauczani w ten sposób uczniowie nie tylko wykazują znacznie wyższy poziom retencji słownictwa L_2, ale także pozostają znacznie bardziej elastycznymi użytkownikami kreatywnie stosowanych różnych form komunikacji ogólnej. Warto pamiętać, że takie kreatywnie produkowane formy komunikacji są później sprawdzane przez obowiązkowe egzaminy z języka obcego na koniec szkoły podstawowej.
Słowa kluczowe: Quizlet, nowe technologie, słownictwo, nauczanie, uczenie się

1. Introduction

The process of teaching and acquiring vocabulary entails a few commonly known approaches, such as the Total Physical Response (Asher, 1969), Semantic Mapping (Heimlich & Pittelman, 1986), the Word List (Oxford & Crookall, 1990 in: Shen, 2003) and the Flashcards Method (Daulay, 2016). The TPR concepts are based on the way children learn their native language; when learning a first language, cognition comes before speaking, and a child physically reacts to directions before responding audibly. Thus, the TPR remains a dynamic strategy in which the teacher encourages pupils to employ mimes, gestures, and body movements.

Semantic Mapping is one of semi-contextualizing techniques (Dina & Ciornei, 2013). In vocabulary learning, semantic mapping requires making maps of words or phrases. As observed by Heimlich & Pittelman (1986), this method is based on diagram making that assists pupils to see the relationship between words. Stoller & Grabe (1993), two other researchers of this vocabulary teaching method, state that the application of this method allows new vocabulary to be incorporated in semantic networks what, in turn, lets the learners organize their individual vocabulary processes in a more coherent ways.

The Word List is a decontextualizing method that remains one of the most common methods of instilling new words in kids; it involves the learners themselves and does not provide any direct teacher's instructions.

Another decontextualized technique, the Flashcards Method, is mostly expected to be applied when teaching lower and higher elementary school L_2 learners connect the verbal information with their pictorial designates. Although Daulay (2016) sees the primary function of flashcards in classroom drills or self-study, Oxford & Crookall (1990) are of the opinion that testing and self-testing aspects do not belong to the most important functions flashcards may perform in the process of FL vocabulary teaching and learning. In their opinion flashcards may evidently help in the process of teaching the skill of reading to (mostly older) L_2 learners. According to their findings, the skills of reading and listening can help L_2 learners acquire and maintain the vocabulary learned by them in appropriately designed context. When discussing this observation Oxford & Crookall (*ibid.*) mention Krashen's hypotheses (1982), who believes that when pupils read a lot for enjoyment, they inevitably expand their vocabulary. This is also when they mention the research by Ferris & Tagg (1996) who claim that /1/ the FL learners are more likely to learn oral (and orally-induced) skills quicker than other language abilities; and /2/ the skill of writing, which is based on the maintenance of the graphic forms of vocabulary, is largely dependent on the processes of connection of the graphic symbols with their oral counterparts; Furthermore, generally perceived oral skills (i.e. listening and speaking) remain within the most important issues that belong to the whole aspects of the process of communication construction, where the processes of vocabulary storing and retrieval are recognized as being of capital importance in the smooth organization of sensible statements. It is also worth noticing that many researchers (Jones, 1982; Saunders & Crookall, 1985; Crookall & Saunders, 1989; Khalek El-Koumy, 1999) underlie that communication methods such as small-group debates, simulation, teamwork, etc., encourage the application of many naturalistic educational processes, that motivate different speaking and writing practices.

2. Literature review

According to Lawton & Wanska (1977) a teaching strategy is a comprehensive plan for a lesson that includes a structure for expected student behavior in terms of instruction objectives, as well as an overview of intended tactics to carry out the strategy. A teacher may employ a variety of teaching methods/procedures, depending on the topic, grade level, or age of the students. What needs to be remembered is that all these educational endeavors have to be approved by the learners; not only do they have to notice their personal usability but also be able to understand their suitability to obtain the targets they desire to own. A more updated discussion of the issue can also be found in Pellicer-Sánchez et al.. (2020).

Learner-centered tools that allow pupils to work autonomously are emphasized in different CALL-related techniques CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) is the process of using a computer to improve a learner's or student's language skills. Most of the techniques observed there rely on different computer resources and/or the application

of ICT (Internet and Communication Technology) tools. According to Dina & Ciornei (2013) CALL can be labeled as a highly motivational activity, because it can provide access to a variety of fun games and communication activities. Not only does it proposes a variety of ways to participate in and stay engaged in the subject at hand to each student, but also personalizes their goals and strengthens their independence. Additionally, different CALL and/or ICT tools help implement the L_2 learning methodologies. Each student has the freedom to work and advance at his or her own pace. Moreover, learners who use CALL might also develop a non-sequential learning habit. According to Hartoyo (2008), students who have completed the learning process can still revise their knowledge as long as the attached resources are still available in the CALL program.

One of CALL-related tools is the Quizlet application. Quizlet is an online platform and application for creating digital flashcards. In this way, Quizlet users can make digital flashcards with the target words on one side and the definition or translation in the target language on the other. Furthermore, Quizlet allows its users to learn vocabulary at any time and from any location. It is compatible with Android, iOS, and desktop computers. Quizlet's adaptability and customizable features allow it to be used at any level of English proficiency. Quizlet provides a variety of learning tools to help users practice and master a certain piece of information. Learners may use a variety of learning tools and games to master vocabulary. Eight learning modes (Appendix 1) are offered on the website application, five of them are available on the mobile phone application. As a result, each student can discover a learning mode that suits his or her needs. According to Sanosi (2018), all of the study modes provide feedback and error correction, resulting in very effective autonomous learning. Furthermore, pupils have the option of choosing their study mode, which allows them to be more individual.

Quizlet is an interactive learning application that can be used to study practically any subject. As it comprises of seven learning modalities, there are many advantages of using the Quizlet application as a tool to learn the second language vocabulary. As a result, the first benefit is the variety of learning modes available. It means that each learner can find a method that works for him/her. Naturally, all the modes are available to students.

Quizlet has a large selection of quizzes to pick from. This variety may aid the students in reviewing in the most efficient manner feasible. Quizlet also aids pupils in the development of collaboration and teamwork abilities. Quizlet also has a live mode; Quizlet Live is a classroom game that may be used to assist students in reviewing material in groups. This game values accuracy to take precedence above speed Students are placed into teams at random and asked to match the first language words with their equivalents or definitions. The winning team needs to properly answer all of the questions.. If a team gets a question wrong, they have to start over from the beginning. Due to the fact that speed is not important, pupils work together. This ensures that the competitive mentality of students does not take precedence over the necessity to accurately answer questions. Quizlet also aids pupils in their test preparation. It is worth mentioning that Quizlet allows students to acquire new vocabulary in a variety of ways, thanks to the interesting and engaging study modes and other accessible features. Furthermore, the learners may

simply open the application and start studying given vocabulary. Needless to say, it is not necessary to prepare paper flashcards or fill out any worksheets, what is very time consuming. Apart from that, learners who do not have enough time to make their own study sets might borrow one that has already been prepared by another user. Furthermore, the Quizlet program may be accessed at any time and from any location; all that is required is a smartphone and Internet connection. As a result, Quizlet users have more options for studying. Students can learn vocabulary words using the Quizlet App without being connected to Wi-Fi, or using data until the study set is added to their account or class.

3. Methods

The investigation goal is to find more effective ways to teach L_2 English to the 8th grade learners. We also try to investigate whether the Quizlet app is effective in the case of vocabulary learning. Another aspect of the study aims at checking if the Quizlet app lowers the possibility of spelling mistakes during the process of vocabulary learning.

This study used a quantitative research design, utilizing a quasi-experiment method. We also used a nonequivalent groups design. We believe this research design is the most appropriate for obtaining accurate results. The research participants were randomly allocated to one of two study groups: experimental or control. Moreover, we also tried to reduce selection disparities by using groups of participants that were as similar as possible at the outset. The selected participants' proficiency in English was also found to be similar. Following the CEFR standard, all of them were assessed to have reached the A2 level. There were twenty students in each group (the experimental and the control group). Both groups consisted of ten boys and ten girls. Furthermore, the participants were all the same age (all of them were fourteen years old at the time of the research). We also chose learners who had not been diagnosed with any learning impairments (such as dyslexia) because this could affect the study results.

Our investigation was divided into some phases. The initial stage consisted of preparations for the research. Before we started the research we had studied the theoretical overview and background of the related topics. Following that, all 8th grade students who had volunteered to participate in the study were collected. To select the pupils with similar levels of language skill, we conducted the placement test. After locating the volunteers, they were divided into two groups: the experimental - Quizlet Group, which was supposed to study using the Quizlet app; and the control group – Standard Group, which studied the same topics without using the application. This step also included selection of the vocabulary items and preparation of the study sets.

The following step was to conduct the research. To ensure that the participants were unfamiliar with the vocabulary, we created a checking test. The participants were then instructed on how to study the assigned lexical items. The Quizlet Group was informed about the study modes available on the app. On the other hand, the Standard Group was instructed how to study by the traditional methods. All of the participants

received the same amount of time to prepare (two weeks). Subsequently, the groups took two tests. The first one (the pre-test) consisted of translation exercises from Polish to English, while the second was a pronunciation test. After some time had passed (spent on individual and group vocabulary teaching), the participants took a post-test to ensure that the results were accurate and dependable. The second part of the study (the second set of words) was similar to the first one. The procedures of the post-test were the same as during the first part of the investigation.

As specified above, we decided to investigate effectiveness of the Quizlet application twice to make the result more reliable. During the initial research the mean score of the Quizlet Group turned to be 16.1 for the test and 14.75 for the post-test, whereas the Control Group mean score was 11.4 for the test and 10.35 for the post-test. As the maximum score was 20 points, it seems that the Quizlet app may be considered as an effective tool to learn English vocabulary. On the other hand, the traditional methods used by the Control Group seem to be less effective in the case of vocabulary learning. We decided to use the ANOVA test to see if the findings obtained by the participants were significant. The obtained results show that there was no statistically significant difference in the pre-test outcomes between the experimental and control groups. However, a significant difference (0,003 and 0,005) between the two groups in the test and post had to be noted.

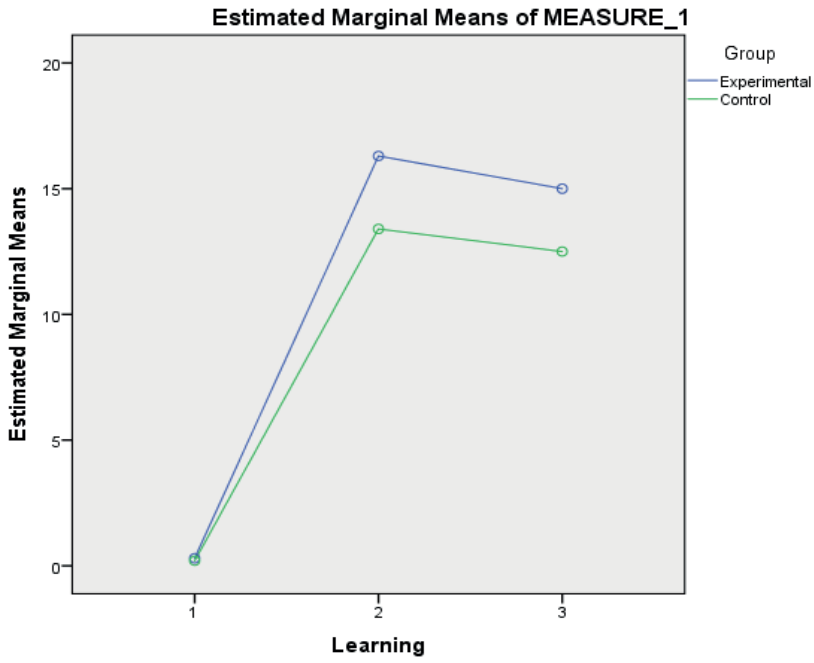
When the results obtained from all the tests are compared, it can be seen that by far the best test results were reached by the experimental group. It may also be observed how the mean scores increased for the pre-test and the test, and decreased for the post-test. The appropriate ANOVA calculations revealed that the Quizlet application is an effective tool in the case of vocabulary learning.

One more issue to be analyzed was the impact of the Quizlet app on the pupils' pronunciation. The analysis of the research results revealed the discrepancies in the means for the pronunciation tests in the two groups tested by us. The participants took the pronunciation test after they had studied the words with the help of the Quizlet app (the experimental group) or the traditional methods (the control group). The experimental group (Quizlet users) performed significantly better on the tests. The experimental group mean score was 17.25; at the same time, the control group mean score was 10.9 for the pronunciation test (the maximum score was 20 points). We decided to use the *t*-Test to evaluate if the participants' pronunciation test results were statistically significant. It was found that the *p*-value was 0.0012, what indicated that Quizlet users performed better on pronunciation tests . In addition, the application had an impact on how learners pronounce the words. The results for the control group were clearly lower.

In the second part of the research it was decided to investigate the effectiveness of the Quizlet application twice to make the result more reliable. This part was devoted to the analysis of the results obtained so far. The differences in mean scores for the pre-test, test, and post-test showed that the experimental group did better in the tests than the control group. It is worth noting that the pre-test scores were the lowest in the two groups. The experimental group received a mean score of 16.3, whereas the mean score of the control group was 12.8 only. We could observe a significant difference in mean scores

between the experimental and control groups. After using the Quizlet-based approach of teaching English vocabulary, the experimental group made the most significant progress. The general level of the control group was higher as well, although the participants' outcomes were significantly lower. Both groups' post-test results were marginally lower than their test results. It is acceptable in our opinion due to the fact that the post-test was conducted three weeks after the experimental method had been provided. As a result, it is considered that the claim that the Quizlet application improves the effectiveness of learning English vocabulary is validated again. It may be assumed that long-term retention of the words is obtained, because of the fact that the difference in the test and the post-test mean scores of the both groups is around one point.

Chart:1. Differences in mean scores



Source: Own elaboration

To see whether the results achieved by the participants were relevant, it was decided to use the ANOVA calculations one more time. It was found that there was no statistically significant difference in the pre-test outcomes between the experimental and control groups. However, although a significant difference (0,043) in the test outcomes was detected, the difference between the groups in the post-test is not significant. The difference between the means reached by the experimental and the control group in the pre-test was not significant due to the fact that this test was taken before providing the Quizlet application as a vocabulary learning/teaching method. Furthermore, no significant

differences for the post-test was found between the experimental group scores and the control group scores (0,070).

In Chart 6 (see above), the outcomes of all of the tests are compared. As shown in the Chart, the experimental group obtained much better test results. It's easy to see how the participants' scores increased and decreased over time. One more time the ANOVA calculations confirmed that the Quizlet application is an effective tool when vocabulary learning/teaching procedures are applied.

As for the investigation of the influence of the Quizlet app on the students' pronunciation, it was found that the gap in mean scores is large enough to claim that the application of the Quizlet app influenced students' pronunciation. In the case of the pronunciation test, the *t*-Test was used to see whether the results were relevant. The variations in the means for the pronunciation test show the differences between the experimental and control groups. There is a significant difference (*p*-value=0.0001) between the two groups what suggests that our hypothesis that Quizlet users score higher on pronunciation tests has been validated. Additionally, the results for the control group were found to be much lower.

4. Findings

The research described above allowed us to evidence the correctness of the two hypotheses set for the study. Firstly, the hypothesis concerning the claim that the Quizlet app increases the effectiveness of learning English vocabulary was confirmed by both parts of the research. We obtained better results when Quizlet-based activities to learn/teach the L_2 were applied. The Quizlet app outperformed traditional learning techniques when it comes to learning a second language. Only the post-test results in the second part of the investigation were not found to be relevant, due to the fact the significant value was higher than 0,05. However, due to the fact that the post-test results reached by the experimental and control group during the second part of the study were not statistically significant, one cannot say that the Quizlet app ensures long-term retention of words. This, it is not possible to say which learning method has an impact on long-term retention.

The second hypothesis, that Quizlet users achieve better outcomes on pronunciation tests, was also confirmed. The level of significant values for both parts of instigation was relevant. As a result, the Quizlet users were substantially better at pronouncing the provided vocabulary than the control group. The single most striking finding from the data analysis was that Quizlet users' pronunciation test scores were much higher than the results achieved by the control group.

The findings of our research are in line with the findings presented by other researchers (Sanosi, 2018, Barr, 2016) who also claimed that the Quizlet application is effective for learning vocabulary. On the other hand, Kálecký (2016) did not confirmed the hypothesis that the Quizlet app leads to better progress in learning the second language, when used effectively. Kálecký (2016) states that the best strategy for learning

English vocabulary should be the combination of the two methods - using traditional methods for recording vocabulary and applying Quizlet for revising it. Our study does not support the previous research by Kálecký (2016) in this area. In fact, contrary to this - popular enough - belief, we showed that the Quizlet program, when appropriately applied, was beneficial to English learners. This, we believe that using the Quizlet app as a teaching tool would also be beneficial in schools. Traditional ways of L_2 learning/teaching have been shown to be ineffective in this study.

5. Limitations

Despite the fact that the study met its goals, we are aware of the investigation shortcomings and limitations. When it comes to the study flaws, it should be noted that several components of the research were not taken into consideration, what may have influenced the study findings. Nonetheless, we believe that our findings could serve as a springboard for additional investigation.

The most significant limitation is the students' attitude toward learning. When looking at the research findings, it is possible to notice that certain students (both in the control and experimental groups) achieved extremely bad results. It can obviously be assumed that the mentioned students did not take this research seriously and did not learn vocabulary hard enough what could have an impact on the research findings. Despite the fact, the participants agreed to had voluntarily taken part in the investigation, during the research we still had to remind the learners about the importance of their participation. Nevertheless some pupils continued to neglect their work.

One more limitation could be the number of students taking aprt in the study. As previously indicated, the research embraced a group of only 40 students who participated in each of the stages of the study and completed all of the assessments.. In case a larger number of participants took part in the research its results would turn to be more reliable and convincing.

Another weakness of this study could be the way the participants had been found. There was no pilot test and no other instrument, such as an interview or a questionnaire, was used to support the findings. The experimental group was tracked on the Quizlet website. Also the amunt of time spent on learning/teaching the sets of words could be objected.

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Authors` contact information:
Katarzyna Kubaczka: kasiakubaczkaa@gmail.com
Krzysztof Polok: sworntran@interia.pl

Appendix 1

The learning modes

Learning mode	Description	Website	Mobile phone app
Learn	Student may learn the vocabulary through multiple choice questions, entering the correct translation. The questions become more difficult and challenging as the time progress. This mode provides a personalized learning sequence based on a student's level of knowledge. Therefore, a student is able to master everything he/she need to know.	Available	Available
Flashcard	The digital flashcards work like traditional flashcards. Students may listen to the pronunciation of the words. There is also the "automatic scrolling of the flashcards" function. Learners find this function useful because it is not necessary to look at the screen. Learners have to review every card in the set in order to finish the round.	Available	Available
Write	Students have to write the definitions or L1 equivalents for the words or pictures. If a student makes a mistake, further attend are needed. It is possible to see the correct answer if a student is not able to type it. If a learner miss a question, he/she may focus on it later. After the first round is completed, the writing mode starts the second round and asks questions that a learner answered incorrectly. In order to finish an entire round in writing mode and be able to check the results, it is necessary to answer all questions correctly twice.	Available	Available
Spell	This mode allows the learners to listen to L2 vocabulary and type what they hear. This mode works remarkable for learning a the second language or for practicing spelling in the students' native language. If a word is misspelled, it will be dictated letter by letter. It is possible to slow down the audio	Available	Not Available
Test	This mode is similar to learning function. However, it does not show results or mistakes immediately. At the end students get a percentage score. They are allowed to retake the test any number of times. In this way, they may evaluate their progress. Learners are tested by four types of questions: written, matching, multiple choice and true/false. The questions are based on the study set they have already studied. It is possible to choose the type and number of questions.	Available	Available

Learning mode	Description	Website	Mobile phone app
Match	It is a matching game. Learners match the first language words to the equivalents or definitions in L2. It is important to finish it as quickly as possible. For each incorrect answer, one penalty second is added. When a student complete this game, he/she is shown his/her score and rank among other classmates.	Available	Available
Gravity	It is another example of a game. Students have to type the answers quickly to prevent hitting the planet by the asteroid. As a learner advance through the levels, the speed at which asteroids fall increases. The game is currently only available on the website.	Available	Not Available
Live	Teachers may provide this mode and challenge their students by inviting them to this game. The players work in teams to match the L1 words and their L2 equivalents or definitions appropriately. Quizlet Live may be played in either team or individual mode. Four students are needed to start this collaborative activity. They enter by the unique session code. Due to the fact the answers are randomly given among the digital devices, collaboration is necessary to finish the activity. The first team to complete the game wins.	Available	Not Available

Source: Own elaboration after www.quizlet.com