The Impact Of Quizlet Application In Improving Students' Word Retention At A Public University In Vietnam

[1]Nong Thi Hien Huong –
Thai Nguyen University of Agriculture and Forestry
[2]Nguyen Thi Tuyet –
Thái Nguyen University of Sciences

Abstract:
The paper aimed to investigate the effects of using Quizlet for improving students' word retention and explore the students' attitude towards this approach. A total of 35 students at a public university in Vietnam participated in this study. The data were collected by a vocabulary tests and questionnaire items to answer the two research questions. The findings showed that Quizlet application had positive effect on the students' word retentiveness. Data from the vocabulary tests scores demonstrated that Quizlet application helped the students develop and improve their vocabulary retention. Additionally, results of the questionnaire showed that most of the students expressed positive attitudes towards applying Quizlet application. The study also made some suggestions for lecturers and administrators to apply and use Quizlet application effectively in teaching English vocabulary.
Keywords: *teaching English, vocabulary retention, quizlet application*

I.   Introduction

English has been taught by almost all of levels of education terms, starts from primary school until university. There are four skills in mastering of a language: receptive skill, listening, reading, and productive skills-speaking and writing. Students need to develop their ability at these four skills for increasing the knowledge and skill of English language in life.

Among these four skills, vocabulary is one of the most important component in language. In other words, vocabulary is a fundamental instrument in communication which helps to produce and understand a language for EFL students (Read, 2000). Lack of vocabulary can affect other language skills. Activities involving speaking, reading and writing and listening all require vocabulary. If they have a sufficient vocabulary, language learners may effectively comprehend, produce, and use the language.

In fact, if students master vocabulary well, it will make them easier in learn English. According to Lander (2016), it is impossible for learners to master the English language without mastering vocabulary first. Similarly, Alqahtani (2015, p. 22) said that "vocabulary knowledge is often viewed as a critical tool for a second language learner because limited vocabulary in a second language learner impedes successful communication". By mastering vocabulary, they can deliver messages to others without any miscommunication. Furthermore, students' proficiency in the English language is also measured by how many words they have memorized. Thus, a direct study of vocabulary should be conducted in the process of language learning (Nation, 2001).

Quizlet is one of the many programs available for learning new words. Quizlet is an online program that enables vocabulary learning through a selection of engaging games and activities. The vocabulary study activities in Quizlet are more diversified than those in other vocabulary apps like Duolingo and Kahoot. Eight language learning tools are available in this application: flashcards, tests, matching, gravity, writing, spelling, learning, and live (Dizon, 2016).

. Quizlet enables students to engage, work together, and also build an environment conducive to learning new language. Dolan (2012) stated that utilizing Quizlet in language learning can build an attractive learning environment for foreign language learners, develop learners' knowledge and comprehension of vocabulary, and boost learner participation in the classroom. Sharing the same view, Vargas (2011) claimed that teachers can increase the use of technology in vocabulary learning by using Quizlet application. Quizlet can be used on smartphones and also on computers in which teachers can give students such a drilling exercise in every Quizlet application. In other words, Quizlet application is a fun activity to help students learn a concept or study vocabulary better.

There have been numbers of research investigating the effectiveness of Quizlet and its significance for vocabulary learning among primary or secondary students; however, there are no previous studies that

investigated the impact of using Quizlet in improving word retention among university students . In the teaching context at university, there existed some problems of learning vocabulary that the researchers came across. The first problem was that learning English words intensively was not provided in English curriculum. Thus, if the students did not learn or practice new words at home, they would easily forget the meaning of new words which they had learnt in class. The second reason was that the lecturers did not have enough time for providing extended word family of new words such as synonyms or antonyms to help the students have more new words. Therefore, the students found it difficult to remember the meaning of new words and their related words.

Based on the currently existing issues, the researchers have inspired to conduct the study with the title of "Improving students' vocabulary retention through using Quizlet application at a public university in Vietnam". This attempts to assist the students in gaining a large number of words as well as retain the words longer. The study aims to answer the two research questions:

1. What are the effects of Quizlet application in improving the students' word retention?
2. What are the students' attitudes towards the use of Quizlet application for word learning?

II. Literature review

Word retention

According to Nation (2006), word retention is defined as the ability to provide the meaning of a new word after a given period of time. There are two types of word retention: short-term retention and long-term retention..

There is a close relationship between human memory and its ability to retain and recall information (Vahdany & Majidi, 2015). The information, stored in the sensory memory, can be transferred from the short-term memory to the long-term memory if adequate attention is given, enough time is spent, and the information is rehearsed through a consolidation process (Mayer, 2014). In addition, relating new information to old ones signifies that a link is created between the two so that the new information can be incorporated into memory (Goodbridge, 2010).

Furthermore, memory has a crucial impact on eventual vocabulary learning and achievement (Alqahtani, 2015). Learning a new word means establishing a relationship between form and meaning. This relationship may take the form of first language (L1) equivalents; L2 synonyms or in-text definitions; sounds, visual images such as static pictures or dynamic videos/animations; feelings and emotions; a certain situation or context; or a combination of these (Dolan, 2002; Nation,2001;

Therefore, in order to transfer information accurately from working-memory to long-term memory, FL/L2 learners need to treat the information actively rather than passively, and interact with the information in meaningful ways (Wright, 2016). FL/L2 learners also need to look for both relationships and differences between the new information and other information that is already in long-term memory, and link them together (Lopez, 2018). In other words, teachers should use some strategies to help student learn and remember words from short-term to long-term. For example, teachers teach explicitly students how to use organization aids such as timelines, outlines, and flowcharts. Besides, teachers give students practice in highlighting, outlining and summarizing important words. Moreover, teachers give practice in paraphrasing, rehearse the word, and think of examples for students to remember. The more details teachers add to the concept or topic which is related to the word, the better students' chances of memorizing and learning new words.

Definition of Quizlet application

Quizlet is one of the language learning tools that can be accessed from the internet. It is designed as a place where everyone can share knowledge in any level, at any subject and gain confidence as a learner (Sanosi, 2018). On the other hand, Anjaniputra and Salsabila (2018) state that Quizlet as a free application or website to help students learn a concept or study vocabulary.

Quizlet application is known as the digital flashcard which can be used through both computers and smartphones (Wright, 2016). Moreover, Nation (2001) states that through flashcards, learners can easily get the connections between form and meaning of the words.

In short, Quizlet application is considered as the digital flashcard that provides the picture cards used through electronic devices such as smartphone, online or offline, to help learners memorize the form and meaning of the words together (Schmitt, 2007).

Using Quizlet appliation for students

It has been mentioned that one of the key factors determining students' vocabulary achievement is motivation. The Quizlet app for smartphones is a useful tool for encouraging pupils to learn vocabulary. Wright (2016) claim that mobile applications are suitable media to encourage pupils to enjoy learning new words. It has been shown that using vocabulary increases students' motivation to acquire it. Additionally, Quizlet has a reputation for being a helpful tool, which encourages students to study vocabulary using it (Dizon, 2016). It

indicates that they have a favorable opinion of the Quizlet application, and the fact that they want to use it in the future demonstrates how it influences their motivation in language learning.

The learning modes provided in Quizlet are also believed to make students enjoy and feel interested in learning vocabulary. For instance, students can view their ranking and score in the matching game and attempt again for a higher score (Lopez, 2018). Students do not readily grow bored when studying language as a result. On the other hand, they can take advantage of technology and the Quizlet application to enjoy learning the English language. This is due to the possibility of increased student involvement in the language learning process (Chien, 2013). As a result, when utilizing the Quizlet application, the students will be more attentive to the target words learnt. Students can independently study the vocabulary by using a smartphone and the Quizlet application. This is due to the Quizlet application's design being suitable for independent learners (Sanosi, 2018).

On the other hand, according to Cinar and Ari (2019), the level of education attained by the students will have an effect on their vocabulary development. They also indicate that if the students have higher education, the Quizlet Application can be used effectively. However, due of the need for internet access to use Quizlet, it would be deemed a high-cost activity for students (Dizon, 2016). Therefore, It is suggested to give students access to equipment like modems, Wi-Fi portables, etc. so they can utilize the application without restriction.

III. Methods

Participants

The participants of the study were 35 students. These students enrolled in a class at a public university in the six-week summer semester of the 2021 - 2022 school year. The students were at the first year whose English proficiency were pre-intermediate level as judged by a placement test at the start of their entry into the university. Their ages ranged between 18 and 19. Their level of English proficiency varied, and some of them lacked motivation to improve their vocabulary leaning, especially since word retention did not contribute towards their final achievement. Hence, they favored to devote their time and energy to study other English skills more than practicing memorizing vocabulary.

Instruments

This study used questionnaires and students pre-test and post-test scores as the main instruments. In the first stage, in order to answer the first research question, the pre-test and post-test modes of Quizlet application were applied to check the students' word retention before and after using Quizlet application in the language classroom. Each test which consisted of 10 questions, lasted 15 minutes and had four parts which were True/False questions, Matching questions, Multiple choice questions and Written questions.

In the second stage, in order to answer the second research questions, the questionnaire, which was adapted from Christanti (2018), was used to gather the participants' feedback about using Quizlet to learn vocabulary. The questionnaire had 14 statements which focused on three components of attitudes that were Cognitive, Affective and Behavioral. The items related to the Cognitive component were designed to identify the students' cognitive awareness of the Quizlet application in learning vocabulary. Furthermore, the items which were about the Affective component searching for the effectiveness of using Quizlet application in learning vocabulary. Last but not least, the items of the Behavioral components were about the way students behaving after learning Quizlet application. These items were computed on 5-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly disagree (1) to Strongly agree (5).

Data collection and analysis

The vocabulary pre-test and post-test were administered before and right after the students finished learning the vocabulary of each lesson to check the students' word retention. Additionally, at the end of the course, students were asked to answer the questionnaire in order to get students' attitudes towards the use of Quizlet application for vocabulary learning.

Students" pre-test and post-test scores were keyed in SPSS and descriptive statistics were computed. The responses of the students to the question items were rated in percentage and then synthesized and presented in the form of charts and tables.

IV. Results

Results of Pre-test and Post test

In order to answer the first research question which tends to investigate the effectiveness of using Quizlet application to improve students' word retention , the scores of pre-test and post-test were collected from university database and then computed through SPSS for statistical descriptive analysis. Furthermore, students' test scores were interpreted by using Arikunto's score interpretation criteria (see Table 1)

Table 1. Interpretation of students' test score (Arikunto, 2012)

Final Score	Degree
8.1 - 10	Very Good
6.1 - 8.0	Good
4.1 - 6.0	Fair
2.1 – 4.0	Poor
0.0 - 2.0	Very Poor

It can be see that there seems to have slightly differentiation of students   word retention achievement in the pre-test and post test scores, as in Figure 1 below.
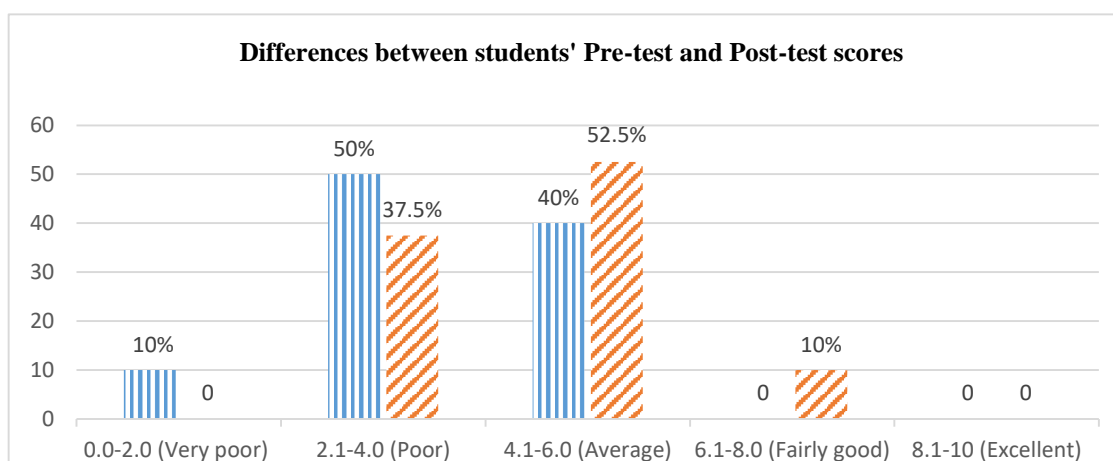

Figure 1: Results of pre-test and post test scores

Figure 1 shows that there was a significantly differentiation between students' pre-test and post-test scores, ranging from poor to fairly good the ability of word retention. More specifically, results of the pre-test indicated that before using Quizlet application in teaching vocabulary students' scores range from Band 0.0-2.0 (10%) to Band 4.1-6.0 (40%), corresponding to the ability of very poor to average word retention. In contrast, after the course students' post-test scores were slightly increased, ranging from Band 2.1-4.0 (37.5%) to Band 6.0-8.1 (10%) which were signified from poor to fairly good level of word retention ability. Furthermore, 40% of students who scored Band 4.1-6.0 in the pre-test significantly increased up to 52.5% in the post-test.

In short, it can be said that before using Quizlet application in teaching vocabulary, the students' word retentiveness were not really good enough; however after the six-week summer course, their scores were notably increased. Students have memorized better after using Quizlet application in their teaching and learning of English. In other words, using Quizlet application is really beneficial for improving students' word retention.

Data from the student questionnaire

A quantitative analysis was carried out on the students' responses to the questionnaire to address the second research question. The questionnaire papers were distributed to 35 students at a public university, and all of them completed and returned. These participants completed the questionnaire to investigate their attitudes for using Quizlet in English class to enhance vocabulary's retention. To facilitate the analysis, the 5-level statement of perception in the questionnaire - 1-Strongly disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Neutral, 4-Agree, 5-Strongly agree - were regrouped into three main categories: Disagree, Neutral, and Agree. Table 2 shows the results of questionnaire regarding the students' attitudes towards using Quizlet in the language class to enhance word retention.

Table 2. Students' attitudes towards using Quizlet application

	Statements	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)
Cognitive component	Quizlet application was easy to use at class or at home.	90	5	5
	Using Quizlet improve my English words.	74	10.5	15.5
	Using Quizlet made it easier to learn English.	90	7.5	2.5
	Learning modes in Quizlet application was suitable and easy to learn.	85	12	3
	I was able to learn English words more quickly with Quizlet.	90	5	5
	When I learn English words through Quizlet I have a wide range of English words	75,5	15,5	10
	My vocabulary is better organized when I use Quizlet.	85.5	9,5	5

Affective component	I think Quizlet was useful in English class.	81.5	13.5	5
	I think I am skillful at studying English vocabulary with Quizlet.	87.5	2.5	10
	Learning how to study English words with Quizlet was effective for me.	86	4	10
	I was satisfied when use the learning modes when learning word through Quizlet.	88	10	2
	I enjoy the learning modes in Quizlet application	89	6	5
Behavioral component	I intend to study English words with Quizlet in the future.	85.5	9,5	5
	I prefer using Quizlet for word retention	80%	10%	10%

Table 2 shows that students generally had a positive attitudes towards using Quizlet application in the English language class. Most students preferred the Quizlet application because it could give them more effective to learn and thus improve their vocabulary retention and learning vocabulary skill through using Quilzet. Learning English vocabulary through using Quizlet helped the students have a purpose for learning vocabulary, therefore they had skills for building vocabulary' retention. As a result, their vocabulary's retention improved significantly after learning with Quizlet application. However, some students did not benefit from this. More specifically, 2.5% of students disagreed that using Quizlet made it easier to learn English, and 8.5% of them thought that the Quizlet website and/ or mobile application was not clear and understandable. Moreover, 74% of students considered that using Quizlet application would improve their English vocabulary. Only 5% of the students disagreed with statements which were asked about the affective component.

From the questionnaire's result above, it can be said that most of the students had positive attitudes when they used Quizlet in learning vocabulary and word retention. When they applied Quizlet application at class during learning vocabulary and reviewing vocabulary at home, the students felt that their vocabulary was improved increasingly. Particularly, the students have had a useful tool in learning new words to remember all of new words in very single of new lesson. This application has helped them learn English words more quickly and easily understandable. Therefore, it can be concluded that Quizlet was very useful and meaningful with students' word retentiveness.

V. Discussion and conclusion

This findings of the study reveal that there was a significantly differentiation between students' pre-test and post-test scores, ranging from poor to fairly good word retentiveness. More specifically, results of the pre-test indicated that before using Quizlet application in teaching vocabulary, students' scores range from Band 0.0-6.0, corresponding to the ability of very poor to average word retentiveness. However, after the course students' post-test scores were slightly increased, ranging from Band 2.1-8.1, signifying from poor to fairly good level of word retention ability. Thus, it can be claimed that there was a significant improvement of the outcomes of this group.

Regarding questionnaire results, most of the students had positive attitudes when they used Quizlet in learning vocabulary and word retention. When they applied Quizlet application at class during learning vocabulary and reviewing vocabulary at home, the students felt that their vocabulary was improved increasingly. In particular, the students have had a useful tool in learning new words to remember all of new words in very single of new lesson. This application has helped them learn English words more quickly and easily understandable. Both of these findings are in line with several researchers who conducted in the effectiveness of using Quizlet in improving students' vocabulary retention (Alqahtani, 2015; Anjaniputra & Salsabila, 2018; Chien, 2013; Christanti, 2018; Cinar & Ari, 2019; Özer & Koçoğlu, 2017)

Based on the research implementation and results, this study offers suggestions on how to make the most effectiveness of Quizlet as a learning tool for English word learning. As a result, it is advised that language instructors equip themselves with sufficient knowledge of the Quizlet application so they may plan a series of activities and modify them to suit the needs of their students. Additionally, language instructors must be able to create the activity sets utilizing the Quizlet feature and make them available to the students in order to benefit from this application. Finally, administrators need to maintain and support facilities and infrastructure such as computers and internet connectivity so that students can access this program effectively.

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