

# Enhancing vocabulary with mobile applications and interactive platforms

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## Abstract

The abundance of electronic resources (e-resources) in the digital era has changed the scene of vocabulary acquisition and language instruction. This article investigates the effectiveness of e-resources, specifically mobile applications and interactive platforms, in improving vocabulary abilities in intermediate learners. Also, in this article, the pedagogical consequences of using e-resources in vocabulary education are addressed, and recommendations for both educators and learners are made. These recommendations aim to enhance the teaching and learning experience by integrating effective e-resources into vocabulary instruction. By doing so, educators can better support learners in developing their vocabulary skills in a more engaging and accessible manner.

## Keywords:

E-learning, mobile applications, online platforms, Memrise, Anki, Babbel.

## Introduction

Vocabulary acquisition is a fundamental component of language learning, influencing reading comprehension, writing proficiency, and overall communication skills. Traditional methods of vocabulary instruction often fall short in engaging learners and promoting long-term retention. With the advent of technology, e-resources have emerged as powerful tools for vocabulary enhancement. This article aims to review the current literature on the efficacy of e-resources in improving vocabulary and to offer insights for their effective use in educational contexts. In particular, various types of e-resources, such as interactive platforms and mobile applications are explored and that have shown promise in fostering vocabulary growth. By analyzing research findings and practical applications, this article seeks to provide educators with strategies for integrating these tools into their teaching practices.

Learning vocabulary in the classroom can be challenging owing to time limits and higher responsibility for the student (Grace, 1998). The advantage of employing mobile phones and mobile applications to teach vocabulary is that it allows students to learn beyond the classroom. To put it differently, "instructional activities are not limited to a set place... but can be conducted anywhere and anytime [and] learners can engage, often asynchronously, with teachers, learning resources and other learners" (Bornman, 2012; p. 288).

Mobile applications, such as Anki, Quizlet, and Memrise, provide users with interactive and personalized ways to learn new words. These apps often employ spaced repetition algorithms to optimize retention, ensuring that learners revisit vocabulary at intervals that enhance memory consolidation. Research indicates that learners using vocabulary apps show significant improvement in recall and usage compared to traditional study methods (Karpicke, Blunt, 2011). The Memrise application is based on the spaced repetition memory method and use flashcards as memory aides. Spaced repetition is a learning approach that involves lengthening the duration between consecutive reviews of previously acquired content in order to take advantage of the psychological spacing effect. It was established in 2005, but it wasn't accessible for download until May 2013 on the App Store (iOS) and Google Play. Memrise offers more than 150 language courses in 25 languages. This app has more than 20 million registered users. Memrise supports the following languages: English, Korean, Spanish, Japanese, French, German, Russian, Chinese, Vietnamese, Portuguese, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Arabic, Dutch, Indonesian, Italian, Polish, and Turkish. Memrise's motto is "Unleash your learning superpower" (Karjo, 2018). Memrise is designed after the manual method of learning using physical flashcards: items to memorize are placed into the computer as question-and-answer pairs. Memrise's lessons are quite similar to Duolingo. Each lesson requires us to memorize ten words or phrases before going on to the next.

The next well-known platform is Anki, it is a popular digital flashcard tool that has a solid reputation for helping users learn new words. Its core is spaced repetition, a memory psychology technique that carefully evaluates when content should be revisited to improve retention. Anki users may create and share flashcard

decks containing word and phrase lists to help them learn languages. Creating mnemonic aids for each word in a language can be time-consuming and demand inventiveness beyond the average learner's abilities (Agnes, 2024). However, the platform's flexibility allows users to customize their decks with images, audio, and even video, enhancing the learning experience. With a supportive online community, learners can also access a wealth of pre-made decks tailored to various languages and proficiency levels.

Interactive platforms, such as Kahoot! and Quizizz, use game-based learning to engage learners in vocabulary practice. These platforms allow for competition and collaboration among peers, creating a dynamic learning environment. Studies have shown that gamification can increase motivation and participation, leading to improved vocabulary retention (Deterding et al., 2011). One of the most popular platforms among the learners is Babbel that focuses on real-world usage and practical application of vocabulary. It offers a variety of interactive exercises, including listening, repeating, speaking, and writing tasks, to help learners understand the meaning of words and their usage within natural language structures. Babbel integrates vocabulary instruction with grammar concepts, providing a holistic understanding of language components and their interplay within sentences. It also offers cultural insights and nuances, offering learners valuable context on social and cultural conventions.

Quizlet, an online flashcard platform and quiz generator, is another notable tool in the field. It allows users to create and share vocabulary flashcards, play interactive games, and take quizzes. Quizlet's user-friendly interface and customizable features foster active recall and repetition, promoting active engagement and participation in the learning process. The platform's incorporation of images, audio, and diagrams enhances vocabulary understanding and accommodates various learning styles. Both Babbel and Quizlet offer valuable tools for vocabulary acquisition in online education, allowing learners to enhance their vocabulary acquisition in virtual and online learning environments (Nikitina, 2024).

#### *Pedagogical Implications.*

The integration of e-resources into vocabulary instruction offers several pedagogical advantages. Firstly, e-resources provide opportunities for personalized learning, allowing learners to progress at their own pace and focus on areas of weakness. Secondly, the interactive nature of many e-resources fosters engagement and motivation, which are critical for effective learning. Lastly, the versatility of e-resources enables educators to incorporate diverse teaching strategies, catering to different learning preferences.

#### ***Recommendations for teachers and learners***

First of all, incorporate a variety of e-resources: To establish a rich vocabulary learning environment, educators should use a combination of online interactive games and mobile applications. Additionally, students can benefit from engaging in collaborative projects that utilize these e-resources, allowing them to practice vocabulary in context. This not only enhances their understanding but also fosters a sense of community and shared learning among peers. In the second place, promote frequent practice: Retention of vocabulary depends on regular practice. In order to reinforce learning, educators should encourage students to use e-resources on a frequent basis. This can be achieved through daily vocabulary exercises, interactive games, or even by incorporating e-resources into their homework assignments. By making vocabulary practice a consistent part of their routine, students are more likely to internalize new words and use them effectively in their communication. Also, measuring progress and giving feedback is advised: Teachers may measure students' progress and give timely feedback—both of which are critical for improvement—by using e-resources with tracking capabilities. Additionally, fostering collaboration among students can enhance their learning experience. By incorporating group activities through online platforms, educators can create a sense of community that motivates students to engage more deeply with the material and support one another's learning journeys. In order to create a community of practice that improves motivation and accountability, encourage students to share their resources and experiences.

#### **Conclusion**

E-resources represent a significant advancement in vocabulary acquisition strategies, offering engaging, flexible, and effective tools for learners. As technology continues to evolve, educators and learners must embrace these resources to enhance vocabulary development and improve language proficiency. When selecting online vocabulary teaching tools, it's essential to consider their flexibility, accessibility, and ability to adapt to different teaching scenarios and student profiles. Tools should offer progress tracking and assessment functionalities, allowing educators to monitor student performance and identify areas for

improvement. Accessibility is also crucial, with features like text-to-speech options, screen reader compatibility, and adjustable font sizes. This ensures an inclusive learning environment that caters to diverse needs. Regular evaluation and adaptation based on classroom feedback and evolving teaching practices can lead to continuous improvement in vocabulary instruction. Future research should focus on longitudinal studies to assess the long-term impact of e-resources on vocabulary retention and usage across diverse age and background.

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