TECHNOLOGIES FOR TEACHING VOCABULARY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Abdivaitova Gulzora Yunus qizi
Uzbekistan state world language university, Department of English philology, student
+998 88 634 84 28
abduvaitovagulzora@gmail.com

Abstract. Vocabulary plays an essential role in learning a foreign language. Students need a sufficient range of words to express their thoughts, understand texts, communicate with others and develop their language skills. However, learning new vocabulary is not always an easy process, especially for secondary school students. Traditional methods, such as memorising word lists and writing translations, may not always keep learners interested. Nowadays, technology offers different opportunities to make vocabulary learning more interactive, enjoyable and effective. This article explores how digital tools, educational applications, online games and multimedia resources can support vocabulary teaching in secondary schools.

Keywords: vocabulary teaching, educational technology, secondary school, digital learning, English language teaching, vocabulary development.

Introduction

Learning vocabulary is one of the most important parts of learning English. Without knowing enough words, students may find it difficult to understand what they read, follow conversations or express their ideas clearly. Grammar is also important, but vocabulary gives learners the basic material they need to communicate. In secondary schools, students have different interests, learning styles and levels of English. Some students remember new words easily by seeing pictures, while others learn better by listening, reading or using words in conversations. Therefore, teachers need to use different techniques to make vocabulary lessons more effective. Technology has become an important part of modern education. Students are already familiar with smartphones, computers, videos and online platforms. Teachers can use these tools to create a more interesting learning environment. Instead of simply asking students to memorise twenty new words, they can introduce vocabulary

through pictures, short videos, interactive exercises and educational games. The main purpose of using technology in vocabulary teaching is not just to make lessons entertaining. It is to help students understand, remember and use new words in real-life situations.

There are some digital tools for Teaching Vocabulary. One effective way to teach vocabulary is through digital flashcards. Applications such as Quizlet allow teachers and students to create sets of words with definitions, pictures and examples. Students can review these words whenever they have free time, even outside the classroom. For example, when teaching the topic of Food and Healthy Lifestyle, a teacher can prepare digital flashcards containing words such as nutritious, ingredients, balanced diet and vegetables. Students can look at each word, read its meaning and practise using it in sentences. Another useful tool is Wordwall, which allows teachers to create matching activities, quizzes and other interactive tasks.

These activities are especially suitable for secondary school students because they combine learning with a little competition. Students can work individually or in teams, which also encourages classroom participation. Teachers can also use online dictionaries to help learners understand pronunciation, word meanings and examples of usage. Cambridge Dictionary is particularly useful because students can listen to the correct pronunciation of unfamiliar words and see how they are used in sentences. However, teachers should remember that digital tools are only helpful when they have a clear educational purpose. Students should not spend the entire lesson playing games without understanding what they are learning. Another effective approach to vocabulary teaching is using multimedia materials. Pictures, animations, short videos and audio recordings can make unfamiliar words easier to understand. For instance, when introducing vocabulary related to nature and the environment, a teacher can show a short video about pollution, climate change or wildlife. While watching, students can identify new words such as pollution, endangered, recycling and environment. This method connects vocabulary with real situations. Instead of learning a word through translation alone, students can understand its meaning through visual and audio information. Teachers can also use YouTube educational videos and other learning materials to introduce new topics. Reading Rockets, for example, provides

resources and information about vocabulary development and reading instruction.

Such materials can help teachers understand how vocabulary knowledge supports reading comprehension. An additional advantage of multimedia learning is that it can support students with different learning preferences. Some learners understand information better through images, while others benefit from listening and repeating words. Secondary school students often enjoy activities that involve challenges and competition. For this reason, educational games can be a useful part of vocabulary lessons. Platforms such as Kahoot! allow teachers to prepare quizzes where students answer questions using their devices. Teachers can create questions about synonyms, antonyms, word definitions and sentence completion. For example, after teaching ten new words, the teacher can organise a short vocabulary quiz. Students answer questions individually or in groups, and the results help the teacher identify which words need further practice. Another activity is a digital word-matching game. Students match words with their meanings or pictures within a limited time. This encourages them to recall vocabulary more quickly.

Nevertheless, games should be used as a teaching strategy rather than simply as entertainment. It is important to discuss the answers after each activity and give students opportunities to use the new words in their own sentences. Although technology provides many useful opportunities, the teacher remains an essential part of the learning process. Educational applications cannot completely replace classroom communication, individual feedback or the teacher’s understanding of students’ needs. Before choosing a digital resource, teachers should consider the age, language level and interests of their learners. An application that works well for university students may not be equally suitable for younger learners.

Teachers should also combine traditional and modern teaching methods. For example, students can first learn a new group of words through pictures or flashcards, then practise them in an online quiz and finally use them in a short speaking or writing activity. This combination helps students move beyond simply recognising words. They gradually learn how to use vocabulary independently. It is also important to consider students who do not have personal smartphones or reliable internet access. In such situations, teachers can

prepare printed activities or organise group work using the devices available in the classroom. Despite its advantages, technology-based learning also has some challenges. One of the most common problems is distraction. Students may become interested in social media, messages or unrelated websites instead of focusing on the lesson. Another challenge is unequal access to digital devices and internet connections. Not every student has the same opportunities to use technology at home.

Conclusion

Technology has created new opportunities for teaching vocabulary in secondary schools. Digital flashcards, online dictionaries, educational games, videos and interactive platforms can make vocabulary lessons more engaging and meaningful. However, successful vocabulary learning does not depend only on the number of applications used in the classroom. What really matters is how teachers integrate these resources into their lessons and encourage students to use new words in everyday communication. In my opinion, the most effective approach is to combine technology with traditional classroom activities. Students can learn vocabulary through digital tools, practise it with their classmates and gradually become more confident English speakers. Ultimately, technology should not replace the teacher or the learning process. It should support both and create more opportunities for students to develop their vocabulary.

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