


Exploring the Efficacy of U-Dictionary as a Digital Learning Media for Vocabulary Acquisition: A Study in an Islamic Education Context

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A B S T R A C T

Many research studies have demonstrated the positive effects of utilizing u-dictionary as a learning media since this application is feasible to use, incredibly efficient, and has a variety of functions. U-Dictionary is one of the digital learning tools that are most compatible to use in a classroom setting that is entirely devoted to the study of vocabulary. This study aims to explore the impacts of u-dictionary learning media in teaching vocabulary as well as the opinions of students regarding the effectiveness of u-dictionary learning media in learning vocabulary. Subjects in the study consisted of forty-four students from two classes at STITMA. This study used a mixed-methods approach. The experimental group learned the target language through the use of u dictionary learning media, while the control group learned the same vocabulary using the more traditional method of instruction. As for the qualitative data, we acquired the students' perceptions of u-dictionary through the use of a questionnaire, and brief interviews were employed as the method for collecting this information. The results showed that the u -dictionary positively affected students' vocabulary knowledge. It was found that the level of significance used was 0.05. The significance number was less than 0.05 (0.000. It can be concluded that the student's vocabulary acquisition improved after they had studied with u-dictionary. Furthermore, it was also found that students had a positive perception toward the u-dictionary learning media for vocabulary teaching.

Keywords: U-dictionary, Vocabulary Acquisition, Vocabulary Learning Media

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INTRODUCTION

Language plays a crucial part in social interaction. People cannot communicate with one another unless they speak a language. In Indonesia, English is a foreign language, implying that the English language serves a communication purpose and improves relationships. Learning English is critical in the age of globalization because it allows individuals in most nations to readily connect depending on developments in economics, commerce, education, and politics,(Parmawati, 2018). It's common sense that those with a large vocabulary in English would draw greater attention from classmates and colleagues. This is because speaking with a strong vocabulary indicates that we take ourselves seriously. It's important because speaking with a large vocabulary suggests that we take ourselves seriously. Furthermore, vocabulary is an essential aspect of language learning. Learning to read, speak, write, and listen requires a strong vocabulary. People who lack a significant vocabulary are unable to communicate and convey their emotions verbally.

The most important part of language learning is vocabulary mastering (SARI & Pandiangan, 2021). Vocabulary learning is an important aspect of English language learning. Learning a language requires practice. Many publications and articles are written in English. Also, (Maesaroh & Sari, 2021) stated that mastery of vocabulary is required when learning a language. Learning a language requires practice. Many publications and articles are written in English. (Dalimunthe & Haryadi, 2022) said that stated that vocabulary plays a vital part in learning and speaking English. So, vocabulary is the collection of words that a person has to comprehend reading and utilize in building sentences to communicate. In addition, understanding the vocabulary challenges not only the accuracy of words and meanings but also whether or not the word is accepted by everyone. It must also be fitted to the circumstances and situation of speech act.

The use of words is central to vocabulary, which includes the ability to write and speak them effectively. During classroom observations, the researcher noticed that students' difficulties with vocabulary acquisition hampered their comprehension of English explanations. Students typically learn new words from their textbooks or by consulting dictionaries during classroom exercises to grasp word meanings. Pronunciation, spelling, and word comprehension are difficult for English as Foreign Language (EFL) students due to significant differences, such as inflections, compared to their native language. As a result, educators must employ a variety of teaching techniques to actively engage students in the learning process (Sulisno & Abdullah, 2019).

Furthermore, technology revolutionizes language learning, enhancing motivation, engagement, and autonomy. However, the realities of teaching demonstrate that it is not simple. The most prevalent issue is the shortage of technology in educational environments, (Pratolo & Solikhati, 2020). It provides learners with a vast array of resources and possibilities, allowing them to explore various language contexts and grasp vocabulary effectively (Ambarwati & Mandasari, 2020). U Dictionary, a remarkable tool, serves as a powerful companion by granting instant access to word definitions, translations, and examples. Its integration into language learning not only amplifies vocabulary acquisition but also allows for dynamic and personalized language engagement, (Hang & Du, 2021). U Dictionary is a versatile language learning tool that provides a wide range of features to support vocabulary acquisition. It offers a comprehensive dictionary with extensive word definitions, synonyms, antonyms, and example sentences, allowing learners to explore and understand the usage of words in various contexts. Additionally, (Romdon Asy'ari & Dewanti, 2015) U Dictionary incorporates voice recognition technology, enabling learners to practice pronunciation and improve their oral skills. The app also provides personalized vocabulary learning recommendations and quizzes, tailoring the learning experience to individual needs. (Kadwa & Alshenqeeti, 2020), U-Dictionary is available on multiple platforms, such as mobile devices and computers, ensuring accessibility anytime and anywhere. This section provides an overview of the features and functionalities of the U Dictionary, highlighting its potential contributions to vocabulary teaching and learning (Bin-Tahir et al., 2019).

U-Dictionary is an important tool for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners since it offers students valuable information about all aspects of the language, (Hamouda, 2013). Using these methods effectively and successfully to acquire new words might help children gain autonomy. Learners have more confidence in their abilities to use a dictionary. According to (Şevik, 2014) While lecturing, researchers

Exploring the Efficacy of U-Dictionary as a Digital Learning Media for Vocabulary Acquisition: A Study in an Islamic Education Context discovered that the majority of the students lacked vocabulary competence. They also rarely utilize computerized dictionaries. It is simpler to utilize while translating new terms in reading. (Yulianti & Siahaan, 2018) (Yulianti & Siahaan, 2018) showed that u-dictionary had a positive or beneficial effect as a learning media in teaching speaking, particularly in terms of vocabulary expansion; students' vocabulary rose dramatically (Giannakas et al., 2019).

This issue arises regularly, particularly among Islamic Education students. Almost all of them struggle to comprehend the language. Teaching a foreign language can be challenging for teachers. Moreover, there will always be obstacles (Manda et al., 2022). Further, some students use online dictionaries to translate entire texts to make it easier for them to understand English. It means their reading comprehension is considerably easier and more effective in overcoming time restrictions. Students employ this sophisticated technology irresponsibly, without considering the potential harmful consequences. However, there must be negative effects of utilizing an online dictionary, such as the student cannot view an online dictionary if there is no internet connection, and it occasionally cannot translate the entire text accurately (Tai et al., 2022). Nevertheless, there must be negative consequences of employing an online dictionary, such as the student being unable to view an online dictionary if there is no internet connection, and it occasionally cannot translate the entire text accurately.

A lot of studies that have researched u-dictionary as a learning media and its role in improving vocabulary acquisition have identified numerous favorable impacts. (Genggong, 2023), (Mustika & Dashela, 2024), (SHAABAN et al., 2001) (Aslan, 2016) The study examines the benefits and drawbacks of using dictionaries for vocabulary education, as well as students' perceptions and frequency of use. In light of the accumulating facts, new approaches to using these dictionaries as more effective teaching materials are being explored. (Wulan Dari, 2022) conducted research on the considerable difference in student vocabulary mastery taught with and without the U-Dictionary application in the second grade of Junior High School 10 Tapung. Additionally, (Fahrul, 2021) thoroughly examines the seamless integration of technology in language education and provides a comprehensive overview, delving into the extensive range of features and functions that U-dictionary offers (Wahidah et al., 2021). Moreover, another research detailed and informative stage for the study by providing an in-depth understanding of the current landscape of vocabulary teaching methods (Adinda & Rahayu, 2023). To fill this gap, the present study aims to focus on not only the impact of this method on students' academic progress but also their perceptions of utilizing u-dictionary to improve their vocabulary acquisition, particularly in a small subject student in an Islamic education context.

Regarding this purpose, the present study raises the following research questions: (1) Is there a significant disparity in vocabulary knowledge between the control and experimental groups when compared with those who receive u-dictionary instruction? (2) How do students perceive u-dictionary's contribution to improving their vocabulary mastery? (3) What are the educational implications of making use of U-dictionary for teaching English vocabulary?

The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of using a dictionary in teaching vocabulary mastery. The study also aims to explore the students' perceptions of using dictionaries as a media for vocabulary development. By analyzing the effects and perceptions of using a dictionary, the research aims to contribute to the existing knowledge on effective language teaching methodologies and strategies.

METHOD

To assess the impact of teaching on student accomplishment, a homogeneous sample of 44 students from two classrooms studying intensive English vocabulary at STIT Madani Yogyakarta participated in the study. The quantitative results have been collected through post-tests between the control and experimental classes. The vocabulary component of the final exam served post-test. The study's instrument was a vocabulary test that the researchers employed. The test was selected from the vocabulary during treatment. The vocabulary items in the treatment were chosen from a list of words from the second-semester module at STIT Madani Yogyakarta.

The investigation's qualitative results were obtained through a questionnaire that asked individuals about their perceptions of using u-dictionary to improve vocabulary acquisition. The questionnaire was then analyzed using a Likert scale. Throughout data collection, the questionnaire data was converted into numbers and analyzed. The results were then described in descriptive statistics that included frequency and percentage tables.

The qualitative information collected in the research was acquired through semi-structured interviews with 8 students from the experimental group, which included a few free-flowing questions to determine their perspectives about U- the dictionary. Students' interviews were recorded and transcribed using STITMA. Regarding the efficiency of using semi-structured interviews, Barriball and While (1994) state that semi-structured interviews are well suited for exploring respondents' perceptions and opinions on complex and sometimes sensitive issues, as well as probing for more information and clarification of answers.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Result based on research question 1: "Is there a significant difference in vocabulary knowledge between the groups of learners who were taught using traditional learning media and those who were exposed to u-dictionary?"

The experimental group studied the target vocabulary items using u-dictionary learning media; whereas the control group learned the identical vocabulary items using traditional methods. The researcher created the u-dictionary to allow students to utilize the language both inside and outside of class. The first week was set out for in-class sessions to introduce participants to a series of structured exercises assisted by the use of the U-dictionary, such as identifying meaning, learning how to spell, and practicing pronunciation and usage (Safina & Rahardiyanto, 2019).

Students gain a better understanding of word meanings by learning how to use the dictionary interface to find definitions, synonyms, and related information. Students are taught to correctly spell the target words by using the dictionary's spelling feature. They are also exposed to target words that have been successfully pronounced utilizing the U-dictionary's audio pronunciation capability (Hapsari, 2022). The final part of vocabulary is teaching students how to look through the U-dictionary's usage notes and sample sentences. This section provides students with insights into the proper use and application of vocabulary words in diverse circumstances through the use of real-life examples. Students practiced the target vocabulary items of the units in their textbooks using various subjects offered by the school's syllabus. In contrast, during class sessions, the teacher emphasized communication activities such as pair and group work to foster a collaborative environment. After six weeks of teaching,

both sets of students were given a post-test. The study employed the U-Mann Whitney t-test to analyze test scores.

Mann-Whitney Test

Table 1. Means and sum of Ranks scores for two group

Ranks				
	Group	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Post_Test	Control	22	15.23	335.00
	Experiment	22	29.77	655.00
	Total	44		

Table 2. U-Mann Whitney Test Value of Learning Outcomes

Test Statistics	
Post Test	
Man Whitney U	82.000
Wilcoxon W	335.000
Z	-3.765
Asymp Sig (2-tailed)	.000

U-Mann Whitney test study result

In this research, we examined the performance of two distinct groups: the Control group and the Experiment group, each consisting of 22 participants. We assessed their performance through post-test scores, which were ranked within each group. The Control group had an average rank of 15.23, with a total sum of ranks equating to 335.00. In contrast, the Experiment group displayed a higher mean rank of 29.77, with a sum of ranks totaling 655.00.

To analyze the differences between these groups, we employed the Mann-Whitney U test, a statistical method used for comparing two independent groups when the data is not normally distributed. The resulting Mann-Whitney U test statistic was calculated as 82.000, indicating a significant discrepancy in performance between the Control and Experiment groups.

Furthermore, the asymptotic significance value (2-tailed) was found to be 0.000, implying a highly significant difference between the groups in terms of their post-test scores. This statistical significance suggests that the observed variation in performance between the two groups is unlikely to have occurred by random chance alone.

In summary, our analysis indicates a notable difference in performance between the Control and Experiment groups, with the Experiment group exhibiting significantly higher ranks on the post-test scores compared to the Control group. Based on the hypothesis, H_0 = Learning using u dictionary learning tool does not affect student learning outcomes. While H_a = learning with the u-dictionary tool does not affect student learning outcomes. The level of significance used is 0.05. Because the significance number is less than 0.05 (0.000) then H_0 is rejected. It can be concluded that u dictionary learning tool is significant in learning outcomes.

2. The Students' Perceptions Of The Use of U-Dictionary

Questionnaire

There are 22 Islamic education students in the second semester at STIT Madani Yogyakarta as the subject of the research. The questions consist of 6 questions of students' interest, 5 questions of easiness, and 6 questions of students' usefulness of using u-dictionary. The data was collected using a Likert scale to represent the many replies to each question. The results of the questionnaire are as follows:

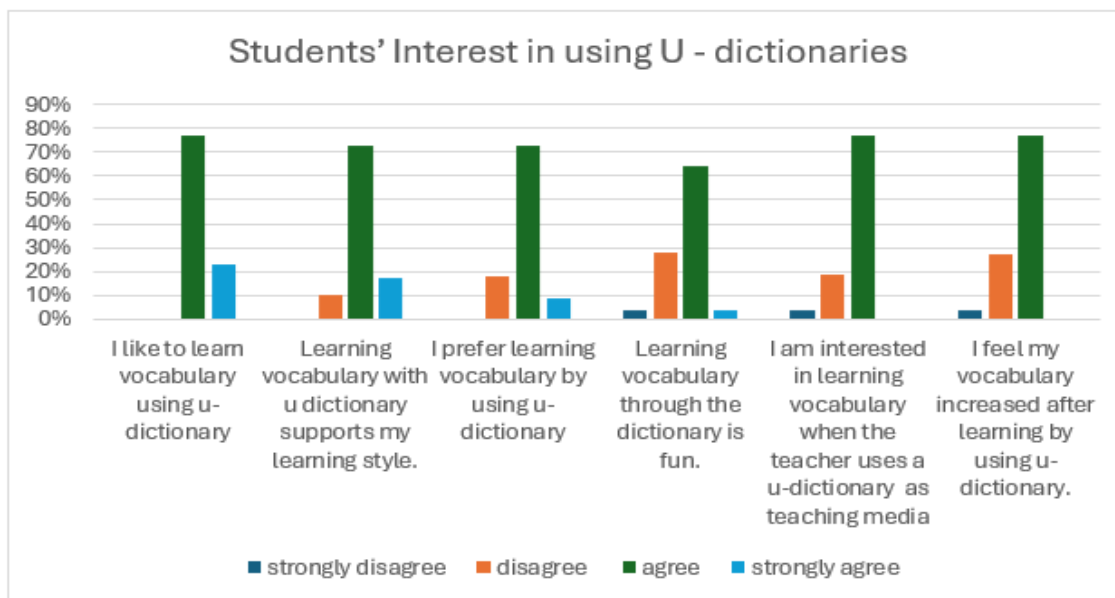


Fig 1: Students' Interest in using U - dictionaries to improve Vocabulary mastery

From the figures above, it was seen that students like to learn vocabulary by using u-dictionary in the classroom. By using learning vocabulary using u-dictionary will influence their learning style (90%) and most of them prefer to learn u-dictionary than others (82%). In addition, the students consider that learning Vocabulary y using u-dictionary is fun (68%) and they feel quite interested in learning vocabulary using u-dictionary (77%). They feel after learning vocabulary using u-dictionary, their vocabulary mastery increased (77%). However, almost half of the students had problems remembering the word using u-dictionary (54%).

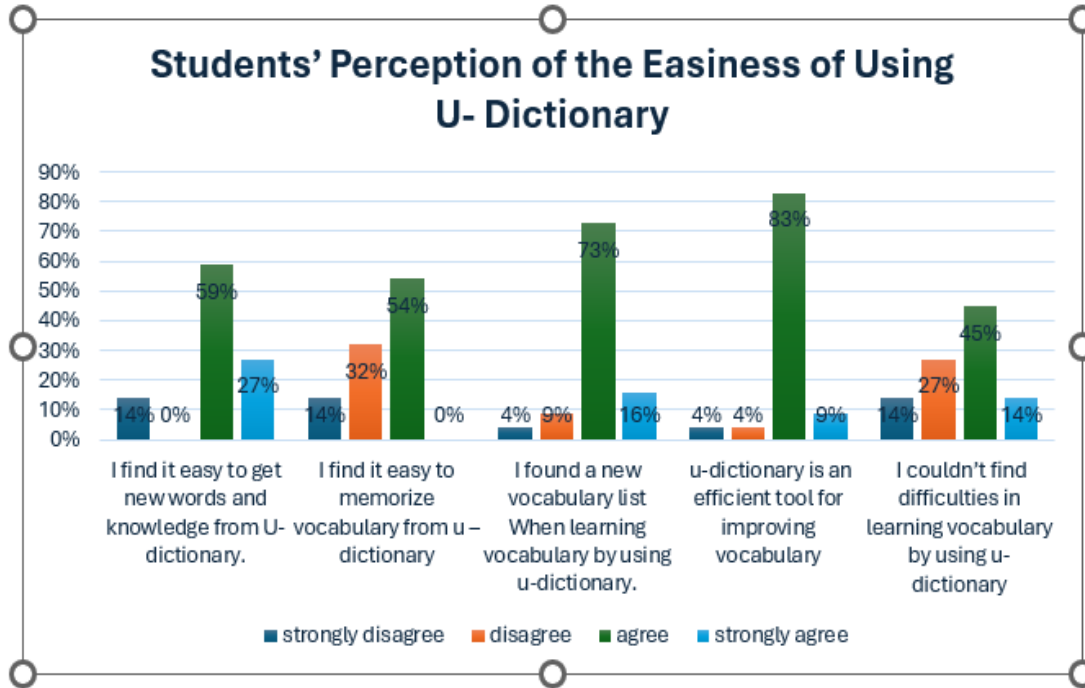


Fig 2: Students' Perception of the Easiness of Using U-Dictionary to Improve Vocabulary

The table above demonstrates that, although the majority of students (86%) claimed it was easy to get new terms from the dictionary, memorizing vocabulary with the dictionary proved difficult for them. While making use of the dictionary, 87% of participants learned a new vocabulary word. The dictionary could prove to be an effective tool for boosting students' vocabulary acquisition (92%), and 69% of students stated that using the dictionary while studying was relatively simple.

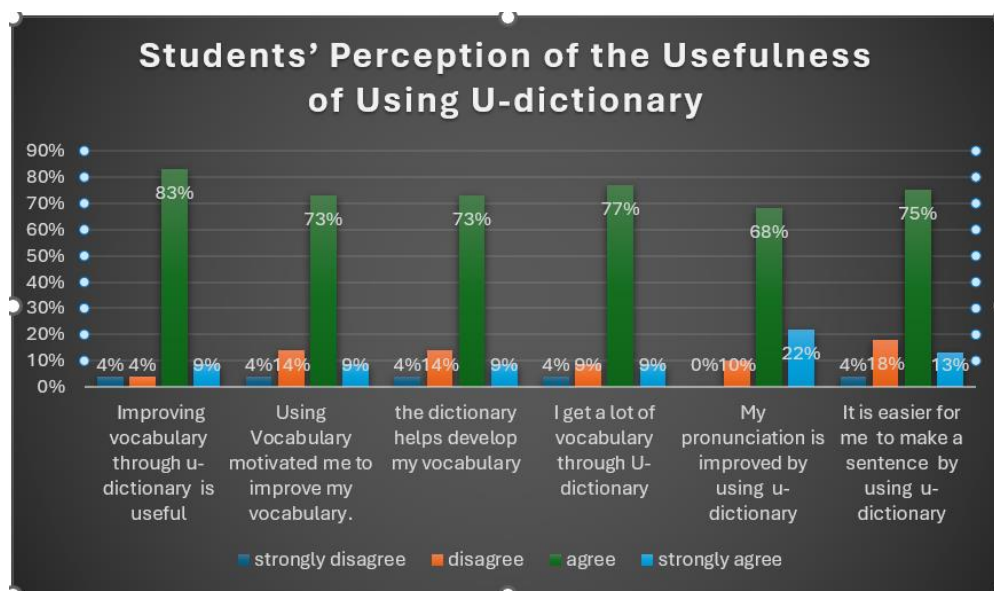


Fig 3: Students' Perception of the Usefulness of Using U-dictionary to Improve U-dictionary

It appears that the u-dictionary has an average effectiveness of 92% in strengthening vocabulary skills, with only 18% disagreeing. Naturally, the participants who approved of it, more than 82% of students confirmed that it motivated them. Additionally, 82% of respondents said that it was the most important tool for strengthening the acquisition of English vocabulary. Students reported that the u-

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 dictionary had assisted them in enlarging their vocabulary (86%), enhanced their pronunciation (90%), and found it beneficial in constructing sentences (88%).

Interview Findings Question

After the interviews were transcribed, the students' responses were categorized as advantages, disadvantages, and recommendations for u-dictionary education. Students value and like learning new vocabulary with u-dictionary, however, they were less fond of the online resources than they were of the teacher-prepared in-class activities, according to frequently voiced comments and explanations. They looked to understand the need to introduce technology into classroom instruction. Although some of them find it difficult to retain long-term memory, students' comments show that the goal of expanding vocabulary knowledge through mixed instruction methods was accomplished.

Most of the students agreed that U-Dictionary is readily available on various platforms such as smartphones, tablets, and computers, making it easily accessible to students in the classroom. This accessibility allows students to quickly access vocabulary resources during lessons or activities. In addition, U-Dictionary offers a wide range of features to enhance vocabulary learning, including pronunciation guides, usage examples, spelling assistance, and comprehensive definitions. These diverse learning platforms cater to different learning styles and preferences, enabling students to engage with vocabulary in various ways.

However, most of them thought that U-Dictionary is the presence of numerous advertisements that appear when opening the application. These advertisements may be distracting and disrupt the learning experience for students, especially in a classroom setting where focus is crucial. Furthermore, U-Dictionary requires an internet connection to access its features and updates. In classrooms with limited or no internet connectivity, students may face challenges in using the application effectively. This online dependency may hinder access to vocabulary resources when needed, particularly in offline environments.

3. The pedagogical implications of using U-Dictionary to teach vocabulary in English

- a. The necessity of teacher training in the efficient use of digital learning materials such as U-Dictionary. It implies that, while online courses can be useful, they cannot guarantee effective learning. The educational value of digital media is determined by the depth of knowledge and proficiency of the teachers who use them.
- b. The lecturers should engage students to further develop their abilities for learning and to continue further education outside of the limitations of the traditional classroom. teachers' top priority should be to help learners become more autonomous.
- c. How important motivation is to the learning process and recommends that activities in the classroom should be designed to help students become more conscious of what they are learning. Motivating students is a top priority for educators because it helps foster a positive learning environment.
- d. Responses from several students to interview questions indicate a general dissatisfaction with the researcher's digital tools. It is discovered that Memrise, Quizlet, and Duolingo are more appealing and fun. Students suggest and use listening and watching in the classroom

Discussion

U-Dictionary is a learning tool designed to help students acquire more vocabulary. Every student in every grade can download U-Dictionary, one of the English online dictionaries. One of the Android phone applications, the Play Store, is where you may find it. Because the U-Dictionary includes both the spelling and definition of terms, it is simple to use to expand one's vocabulary or enhance one's ability to pronounce words in English. Not only can anyone translate words and short sentences with U-Dictionary, but they may also practice their language skills in any language (Dakhi & Fitria, 2019). U-Dictionary is a useful teaching tool that helps students expand their vocabulary. Everyone may easily access brief tests and mini-games to practice any language they wish right from the main tab. The pupils' vocabulary has grown dramatically as a result of employing U-Dictionary as a learning tool, especially when teaching vocabulary expansion. The research gave the students access to a broad vocabulary that included at least 100 new terms in each of the following categories: noun, adjective, verb, and adverb (Zarfsaz & Yeganehpour, 2021).

The use of "U-Dictionary" by students as a means of expanding their vocabulary is discussed in this section, with an emphasis on the students' fascination, ease of use, and convenience. The study's conclusions demonstrated that using u-dictionary could increase their vocabulary. The findings of the research showed that using u-dictionary could increase their vocabulary (Ambarwati & Mandasari, 2020). The responses revealed Students perceive U-Dictionary to be a highly pleasant and influential learning tool, and they prefer using it to acquire vocabulary in class over other methods. Even though respondents felt their vocabulary mastery has increased, word recall remains a problem while using U-Dictionary.

While the learners pick up new vocabulary with ease, retention is a challenge. It found that The students hardly remember each word on long-term retention by using u-dictionary. It is caused by the inability of students to consistently practice new words has a substantial impact on memory recall. The brain connections connected to these words gradually deteriorate when pupils don't actively incorporate them into their everyday language use or interact with them in different settings. Moreover, merely using a dictionary to seek up terms passively leads to inefficient memory involvement (Şevik, 2014). The depth of knowledge and the development of strong memory associations are limited when learning occurs without active engagement, such as when words are not actively used in communication or associated with real-life situations.

In addition, another finding of u-dictionary offers valuable features for vocabulary learning in the classroom, including accessibility and multiple learning platforms, it is important to consider and address the disadvantages such as advertisements and online dependency to ensure an optimal learning experience for students

Nonetheless, the dictionary is considered quite useful and essential for learning new words and helping with not only vocabulary expansion but also bettering pronunciation and sentence structure. U-Dictionary is a useful resource for thorough vocabulary growth in English, despite problems with memory retention.

CONCLUSIONS

The study's findings found numerous benefits of u-dictionary learning media in enhancing students' vocabulary acquisition. It was proved that u-dictionary was an effective learning median on vocabulary mastery. Almost all students were satisfied with the use of the u-dictionary learning media for teaching vocabulary and preferred it to traditional learning media; but, because of finding difficulties in remembering new words they did not want to spend time studying new vocabulary items outside of the classroom. Because the students in this study have high motivation to use digital learning media; their pronunciation skills are achieved, easiest finding the meaning of the words and even their skill for making the sentences improved too. U-Dictionary vocabulary learning media could be beneficial in helping EFL learners increase their vocabulary knowledge. To find the optimal choice of digital learning media for each group of students, a needs analysis should be performed. When properly implemented, a dictionary can help the vocabulary acquisition process by increasing the amount of learning compared to in-class learning.

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