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Learning English vocabulary through online applications by EFL students

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the perceptions, usage trends, and assessment of learning English vocabulary through online applications among 100 undergraduate students from a university in Vietnam. The data were collected by means of a questionnaire, journal entry, and interview. The findings show that most of the EFL students had a positive perception of learning English vocabulary through online applications. Particularly, they found the convenience of learning vocabulary via online platforms noteworthy, yet expressed relatively lower confidence in their vocabulary acquisition abilities. Additionally, the study unveiled varied usage patterns and vocabulary learning strategies that students employed while utilizing these online applications. Notably, the participants highlighted the use of flashcards, mnemonic devices, and engagement in contextual learning. Some participants created personalized vocabulary lists within online applications, frequently reviewing them. Furthermore, the students' evaluations indicated the efficacy of learning English vocabulary through online applications in expanding their vocabulary, committing new words to memory, and reinforcing their overall word acquisition. From the findings, the integration of online vocabulary learning applications into language education programs is recommended, focusing on addressing students' confidence concerns and adapting application features to provide personalized and effective vocabulary learning experiences.

1. INTRODUCTION

This study endeavors to delve into the intricate relationship between English vocabulary acquisition and digital platforms among undergraduate students at a university in Vietnam. In this age of rapid technological evolution, educational paradigms have been reshaped, leading to the proliferation of innovative tools and strategies for language learning. The utilization of online applications to enhance English vocabulary proficiency presents a compelling avenue, particularly among the digitally immersed youth of today. As established by Chun et al. (2016), the convergence of language and technology dates back to the earliest development of writing, marking a symbiotic evolution that continues to thrive. The present study seeks to unravel the multi-dimensional facets of learning English vocabulary through online applications, a contemporary phenomenon that melds the traditional pursuit of language mastery with the transformative potential of technology. It aims to contribute valuable insights into the effectiveness and implications of

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online vocabulary learning applications. By focusing on the attitudes, strategies, and outcomes of students utilizing digital platforms, this study endeavors to illuminate both the advantages and challenges of this burgeoning approach to language acquisition. As the boundaries between traditional and technology-enhanced education continue to blur, this research aims to shed light on the transformative potential of online applications in molding a more comprehensive, personalized, and effective English vocabulary acquisition process.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Learning English vocabulary

Mastering vocabulary is a key skill in learning a foreign language. A vocabulary list includes words and their meanings, enabling effective expression in that language. Vocabulary is described as a collection of words used by speakers of a language. Essentially, vocabulary is the set of words used for communication. Acquiring vocabulary is essential for successful communication in a second or foreign language (Çinar & Asım, 2019). Learning vocabulary is crucial as it underpins other language skills and effective communication. According to Nation (2001), vocabulary and language use are interconnected - each enhancing the other. This suggests that language usage can contribute to vocabulary growth. Thus, regular language use can lead to increased vocabulary. Developing English vocabulary is fundamental in language learning, involving not only word meanings but also proper usage for effective communication.

2.2. Online applications

Online applications have emerged as facilitators of English learning within classrooms (Baron, 2020). The language-learning app landscape boasts 1000 to over 2000 options. Chinnery (2006) underscores the versatility of online tools: learners can conveniently engage with manageable information chunks at their own pace and location, beyond traditional classrooms (p.13). Li et al. (2018) study highlighted positive vocabulary acquisition outcomes through mobile app use, fostering satisfying learning experiences both at school and home. These apps empower students to independently review vocabulary, tailor their learning pace, address personal needs, and create study plans (Nisbet & Austin, 2013).

Furthermore, online applications not only enhance classroom enjoyment but also inspire self-study, word retention, and motivation (Godwin Jones, 2011; Poláková & Klímová, 2019). They offer features like points, course overviews, streaks, and time tracking, fostering progress and engagement assessment. Downloading, updating, and removal of apps are user-friendly, quick, cost-free processes, granting universal access to students at any time. These platforms house extensive vocabulary, expanding word banks and enabling quick learning during small time windows throughout the day or week. Instances clarify word meanings, aiding swift information absorption. In essence, online applications serve as effective tools for accelerated learning.

2.3. Learning vocabulary via online applications

Learning vocabulary has been facilitated via various applications such as Quizlet, Memrise, Duolingo, Vocabulary.com, FluentU, and Anki which offer versatile vocabulary learning. For example, Quizlet provides customizable flashcards, engaging games, and collaborative study options. Memrise employs interactive games and spaced repetition for retention. Duolingo gamifies language learning and enhances vocabulary through context. Vocabulary.com offers word lists, quizzes, and personalized learning. FluentU immerses learners in context-rich videos with interactive tools. Anki employs spaced repetition to enhance retention in digital flashcards. In general, vocabulary learning through technology involves digital tools, platforms, and activities. It offers flexibility, convenience, and resources for learners to improve their language skills.

Using technology for language acquisition expedites the process, enhances accessibility, reduces discomfort, and promotes engagement in language review (Siang, Nurdin, & Robinson, 2019). Internet programs, recognized and user-friendly, facilitate learning with audio-visual aids, explanations, and adaptable features. Online apps offer personalization, localization, and mobility for efficient learning through algorithms and immediate feedback. Learners benefit from the convenience of anytime, anywhere access to these apps, engaging with interactive and multimedia resources for lasting understanding.

However, challenges accompany online vocabulary learning. Connectivity issues and technical glitches hinder learning, especially in remote areas. Contextualization can be lacking, making vocabulary application in real-life situations challenging. Pre-made apps may require scrutiny, and distractions on devices can impede concentration. Reliance on translation hampers language thinking, while feedback might not match teacher input. Accountability and motivation could wane without class structure. Additionally, financial constraints and app upgrades pose challenges, potentially diminishing learner attention upon reuse. Despite

the benefits, ongoing effectiveness and attention retention require careful consideration.

2.4. Related studies

Numerous scholars have undertaken research utilizing online applications across a diverse spectrum of English language competencies. Some of these investigations specifically focus on vocabulary acquisition, as these researchers posit that achieving proficiency in vocabulary stands as a critical milestone in bolstering students' self-assurance within the intended language.

Focusing on enhancing English vocabulary acquisition, Ajisoko (2020) conducted an investigation utilizing Duolingo. With 10 participants at Borneo University of Tarakan, the study employed a pre-experimental design with pre-test and post-test evaluations. Over 30 days, participants used Duolingo at a "regular" intensity of 20 xp per day. The study's tools included assessments and questionnaires to measure the app's impact. The results showed significant vocabulary improvement, highlighting Duolingo's value as a mobile tool for advancing English vocabulary skills in language education.

Similarly, Tiara, Rahman, and Handrianto (2021) investigated Duolingo's role in English vocabulary acquisition among students. They highlighted educators' challenges in tech integration and emphasized vocabulary's impact on reading, listening, speaking, and writing. The study reviewed prior research on Duolingo's role, praising its interactive, personalized, and gamified features. They stressed students' positive views on its user-friendliness and flexibility. Practical suggestions were given for educators, including module selection, guidance, feedback, and integration. In conclusion, Duolingo was recommended as a potent tool for enhancing English vocabulary, urging educators to embrace technology for improved language learning.

In a related study (Aprilani, 2021), students' perceptions of Quizlet for English vocabulary learning were explored. The investigation found that Quizlet served as an effective online flashcard tool for understanding English texts. High school students often struggled with vocabulary, finding it dull and anxiety-inducing. Through interviews with five participants, the study revealed Quizlet's ability to make vocabulary learning engaging and boost enthusiasm for English proficiency. The study recommended incorporating Quizlet into English teaching, highlighting technology's role in enhancing language education, engagement, and effectiveness.

Al-Jarf (2022) explored multiple mobile vocabulary apps (MVAs) on platforms like Google Play and Apple App Stores, covering options such as English word study, advanced vocabulary, TOEFL and IELTS test prep, and graded vocabulary tests. These MVAs can supplement classroom vocabulary instruction in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings. The study emphasized MVAs' selection, incorporation, and teaching phases, highlighting instructors' pivotal role. Instructors can help students find suitable MVAs, offer pre-questions for guidance, and ensure effective app use. This research offers insights for integrating MVAs as supplementary tools in EFL vocabulary instruction, especially for freshmen students.

In Vietnam, Nguyen (2022) investigated mobile apps and websites for vocabulary instruction through interviews with six HUFI University instructors. The study aimed to enhance teaching lexical resources using apps like Kahoot, Quizlet, Quizizz, etc. The findings showed these apps streamlined learning, enhancing retention. Recommendations for app integration were provided. Overall, online vocabulary apps enhance language acquisition, motivating students and improving proficiency. These apps offer numerous benefits for vocabulary learning, extending education beyond classrooms in the tech era.

The studies mentioned above exhibit several common gaps in their methodologies and analyses. Firstly, many of these studies suffer from limited sample sizes, undermining the potential generalizability of their findings to a larger population. Secondly, research designs often lack comprehensive approaches, such as utilizing only pre-test/post-test methods or missing control groups, which might hinder a thorough assessment of the interventions' impact. Thirdly, a tendency to solely rely on quantitative data, such as test scores, while neglecting qualitative data, such as user experiences, may overlook valuable insights into the learning process. Additionally, these studies often exhibit a narrow focus on specific apps or technologies, without exploring the broader spectrum of potential tools for vocabulary learning. They may also disregard potential limitations of the technologies used, such as access issues, distractions, or privacy concerns. Moreover, the studies seldom consider how the integration of these technologies aligns with established pedagogical principles and teaching practices.

Hence, this research primarily aims to comprehensively grasp the perspectives of EFL students regarding the utilization of online English learning tools for vocabulary enhancement. It seeks to answer three research questions:

- What are EFL students' perceptions of learning English vocabulary through online applications?

- How do EFL students learn English vocabulary through online applications?
- How do EFL students evaluate their learning English vocabulary through the online applications?

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a mixed-method research design to investigate the effectiveness of internet apps in facilitating English vocabulary acquisition. The research was conducted at a university in Vietnam, involving 100 randomly selected undergraduate English major students with an intermediate proficiency level. Data collection was done with three instruments: questionnaire, interview, and journal. The questionnaire comprised of three main clusters with 30 items (10 items for each cluster) focusing on students' perceptions of online apps for vocabulary learning in a Likert-scale format to collect participants' perceptions of online apps for vocabulary learning. Interviews confirmed app usage, uncovering benefits and challenges. Journals enabled students to express their experiences, evaluations, and recommendations. Quantitative analysis of questionnaire data revealed app preferences, while qualitative analysis of interviews identified usage patterns and themes. Descriptive qualitative analysis captured students' perceptions of app-based learning, supplemented by the analysis of ten students' blog journals for both quantitative and qualitative insights. This comprehensive mixed-method approach aimed to enhance the study's reliability and validity by offering a multifaceted understanding of English vocabulary learning through online apps.

Data collected from the questionnaire was tabulated with the use of an SPSS software to obtain mean scores and standard deviation values. The interview transcripts and journal writings of the students were compiled, read and re-read for the emerged themes for content analysis. After that, the two sources of quantitative and qualitative data were cross-checked and combined to answer the research questions as mentioned earlier.

4. FINDINGS

4.1. Students' perceptions of online vocabulary applications

Within the questionnaire, statements numbered 1 to 10 encompass students' perceptions regarding online vocabulary applications. The mean score for this entire set of statements regarding student perceptions is calculated at 3.97. This score suggests that the majority of EFL students hold favorable perceptions regarding online vocabulary applications.

Table 1. EFL students' perception of using online applications to learn English vocabulary

Statement	M	SD
1. Learning English vocabulary through online applications is more enjoyable than traditional methods of learning.	3.94	.750
2. Online applications help me to learn English vocabulary more quickly than other methods.	3.95	.716
3. Online applications make it easier for me to remember English vocabulary.	3.96	.764
4. I feel more motivated to learn English vocabulary when using online applications compared to other methods.	3.85	.770
5. I find online applications to be a convenient way to learn English vocabulary.	4.13	.787
6. The interface and design of online applications make it easy for me to learn English vocabulary.	4.06	.736
7. Using online applications is an effective way to improve my English vocabulary.	4.05	.744
8. I feel more confident in my ability to learn English vocabulary when using online applications.	3.79	.756
9. I would recommend using online applications to learn English vocabulary to other learners.	3.98	.696
10. Overall, I think that learning English vocabulary through online applications enhances my vocabulary knowledge and autonomy.	4.05	.730

As can be seen from table 1, students displayed a favorable inclination towards acquiring English vocabulary via online applications. The mean values for all inquiries surpassed 3 on a 7-point scale. The apex mean score was achieved by Question 5 (mean = 4.13), affirming the convenience of online applications for vocabulary acquisition. In contrast, Question 8 (mean = 3.79), touching upon heightened confidence in learning English vocabulary through online platforms, yielded the lowest mean score. Notably, the standard deviation, ranging from 0.69 to 0.79 across all questions, signified a moderate degree of response variability. Question 9 garnered the minimum score of 0.69, while Question 5 achieved the maximum score of 0.79. In summary, the data implies that students consider online applications as valuable tools for English vocabulary learning, although divergent perceptions across questions warrant further

analysis to unveil the underlying factors shaping such variability. Additional investigation is necessary to ascertain the drivers behind these distinct perspectives and comprehend the intricate dynamics influencing students' perceptions of learning English vocabulary through online applications.

4.2. How students use online vocabulary learning applications

Data gathered from the questionnaire on the theme of the utilization of online vocabulary learning applications reached a mean score of 3.89. The majority of the students agreed or strongly agreed that they set up a routine to learn English vocabulary via online applications (M:3.67 and SD: 0.698) use spaced repetition techniques through online applications to reinforce my retention of new vocabulary (M:3.91 and SD :0.683), and use online applications to practice pronunciation and learn the correct usage of new vocabulary (M:4.22 and SD: 0.705). However, some students strongly disagree or disagree with the statement that they engage in online discussions and write in English to expand their vocabulary and practice using new words (M: 3.75 and SD: 0.783). The responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics, and the results are presented in the table 2 below.

Table 2. EFL students' usage patterns of online vocabulary learning applications

Statements	M	SD
1. I set up a routine to learn English vocabulary via online applications.	3.76	.698
2. I use online flashcards to practice English vocabulary regularly.	3.70	.847
3. I create personalized vocabulary lists on online applications and review them frequently.	3.78	.773
4. I participate in online vocabulary games and quizzes to reinforce my learning.	3.97	.797
5. I set specific vocabulary learning goals and track my progress using online applications.	3.74	.787
6. I engage in online discussions and write in English to expand my vocabulary and practice using new words.	3.75	.783
7. I use spaced repetition techniques through online applications to reinforce my retention of new vocabulary.	3.91	.683
8. I use online dictionaries to look up unfamiliar words.	4.22	.746
9. I use online applications to practice pronunciation and learn the correct usage of new vocabulary to me.	4.22	.705
10. I take online vocabulary assessments to evaluate my learning and identify areas for improvement.	3.90	.772

In terms of the usage trends linked to online vocabulary learning applications, the data highlights that students enrolled at Hue University of Foreign Languages and International Studies predominantly employ online dictionaries for unfamiliar word lookups (item 8) and engage with online applications to practice pronunciation and master new vocabulary usage (item 9). According to table 3, among the items, Item 8 - "I use online dictionaries to look up unfamiliar words." exhibits the highest mean score of 4.22 and a standard deviation (SD) of 0.746. This signifies that a substantial majority of students either strongly agree or agree with the practice of utilizing online dictionaries for word clarification. The relatively narrow standard deviation implies reduced response variability, indicating a notable consensus among the students.

On the flip side, item 2: "I use online flashcards to practice English vocabulary regularly" records the lowest mean score of 3.70 with a SD of 0.847. This suggests a slightly lower agreement level compared to other statements. However, the relatively elevated standard deviation denotes increased response diversity. Some students consistently engage in practicing English vocabulary through online flashcards, while others are less frequent in this endeavor. It's noteworthy that mean scores across all items remain quite close, ranging from 3.70 to 4.22, denoting an overall agreement or strong agreement among students. The standard deviations are also moderate to high, reflecting some variance in responses among the student body.

Taken as a whole, the data underscores the utility of online vocabulary learning applications for augmenting English vocabulary knowledge and independence among students at Hue University of Foreign Languages and International Studies. The outcomes further suggest diverse patterns of online application use for vocabulary enhancement. These findings can offer insights to educators and developers of such applications, aiding them in better aligning their tools with students' preferences and requirements.

Apart from the questionnaire data, the investigation encompassed an evaluation of thirty journal entries. The analysis of these journal records unveiled several significant insights pertaining to how EFL students effectively acquire English vocabulary via online applications. The findings indicated that participants employed various vocabulary acquisition strategies, exhibited diverse application usage patterns, emphasized interaction and engagement, and reported positive learning outcomes. These findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the learning approaches employed by EFL students when utilizing online applications for

vocabulary acquisition. Educators and instructional designers can leverage these insights to optimize the design and implementation of online applications for vocabulary learning within the EFL system.

About vocabulary acquisition strategies, student 1 wrote, "I found that engaging in vocabulary exercises helped me actively practice and reinforce new words. Flashcards were especially useful for memorization, and I created personalized sets based on my specific learning needs. Mnemonic devices, such as visual associations and acronyms, helped me remember challenging vocabulary. Lastly, engaging in contextual learning through reading articles and watching videos helped me understand word usage in real-life situations." As for interaction and engagement, student 5 wrote, "I really enjoyed using the online vocabulary learning application. The quizzes and games made the process fun and interactive. It felt like I was playing a game rather than studying, and it helped me stay motivated to learn new words." About learning outcomes, student 3 wrote, "Using the online vocabulary app has been incredibly beneficial for me. I've noticed a significant improvement in my vocabulary knowledge. I can now recognize and understand words that were previously unfamiliar to me. It has also boosted my confidence in using English vocabulary in conversations and writing."

Furthermore, the interviews were also conducted as part of the study. The analysis of the interview data yielded several noteworthy findings regarding how EFL students learn English vocabulary through online applications. The findings highlighted the employment of various vocabulary acquisition strategies, diverse application usage patterns, the importance of interaction and engagement, and the positive learning outcomes achieved. These insights contribute to a deeper understanding of the learning approaches employed by EFL students when utilizing online applications for vocabulary acquisition. Educators and instructional designers can leverage these findings to optimize the design and implementation of online applications for vocabulary learning within the EFL system. More specifically, about vocabulary acquisition strategies, student 5 said, "I found that engaging in interactive exercises was the most effective strategy for me. The online application provided quizzes, fill-in-the-blank exercises, and word matching games. By actively participating in these interactive activities, I was able to reinforce my understanding of the words and improve my retention."

As for application usage patterns, student 1 stated, "I made it a habit to use the online vocabulary application every day. It became part of my daily study routine. I would spend about 30 minutes each morning going through the exercises and practicing with the interactive features. This consistent usage helped me stay on track and make steady progress in expanding my vocabulary."

4.3. Students' evaluation of learning vocabulary through online applications

Table 3. EFL students' evaluation of learning vocabulary through online applications

Statements	M	SD
1. I feel that I have improved my English vocabulary significantly through using online applications.	4.04	.567
2. I have noticed that I am using more complex vocabulary in my writing and speaking after using online applications.	3.79	.808
3. Online applications have helped me expand my vocabulary and learn new words that I can use in everyday conversations.	4.16	.631
4. I find that online applications are very useful in helping me memorize and retain new English vocabulary.	4.09	.514
5. Online applications provide a variety of exercises and activities to help me practice and reinforce my learning.	4.17	.587
6. Online applications have enabled me to learn English vocabulary at my own pace and convenience, which has been very helpful.	4.11	.584
7. I have found that online applications are effective in preventing repetition of vocabulary and ensuring that I am learning new words.	4.02	.603
8. I feel more confident in my ability to use English vocabulary in different contexts after using online applications.	3.78	.675
9. I feel that the online applications I use are tailored to my individual learning needs and preferences.	3.82	.609
10. Overall, I benefit a lot from using online applications for learning English vocabulary.	4.26	.597

To answer research question how EFL students evaluate their learning English vocabulary through the online applications, data were collected from questionnaire, journals and interviews. The mean score of the whole cluster is high (M= 4.02). This indicates that most students agree that online applications are an effective tool for students to learn English vocabulary.

From the data, we can see that the majority of students agree or strongly agree with the statements related to their use of online applications to learn English vocabulary. The mean score for each question ranges from 3.78 to 4.28. Question 10 has the highest percentage of students who strongly agree that online applications are useful in helping them memorize and retain new English vocabulary. Similarly, question 5 has the highest percentage of students who agree or strongly agree that online applications provide a variety of exercises and activities to help them practice and reinforce their learning with mean score of 4.17. On the other hand, question 8 has the lowest percentage of students who strongly agree that they feel more confident in my ability to use English vocabulary in different contexts after using online applications, with mean score only 3.78.

Overall, the data suggests that online applications are an effective tool for students to learn English vocabulary. Students find online applications helpful in expanding their vocabulary, memorizing new words, practicing and reinforcing their learning, and learning at their own pace and convenience. However, there is room for improvement in terms of helping students feel more confident in their ability to use English vocabulary in different contexts and ensuring that online applications are tailored to their individual learning needs and preferences.

In general, we can analyze the responses of students from Hue University of Foreign Languages and International Studies on their experience learning English vocabulary through online applications. Overall, the majority of students (74%) agree that they have improved their English vocabulary significantly through using online applications. Additionally, a majority of students (60%) have noticed that they are using more complex vocabulary in their writing and speaking after using online applications. Most students (89%) also agree that online applications have helped them expand their vocabulary and learn new words that they can use in everyday conversations. Moreover, 99% of students find that online applications are very useful in helping them memorize and retain new English vocabulary. Online applications also provide a variety of exercises and activities to help students practice and reinforce their learning, according to 95% of students. Additionally, 91% of students found that online applications have enabled them to learn English vocabulary at their own pace and convenience, which has been very helpful.

Furthermore, online applications are effective in preventing repetition of vocabulary and ensuring that students are learning new words, as reported by 74% of students. Most students (78%) feel more confident in their ability to use English vocabulary in different contexts after using online applications. The majority of students (80%) also feel that the online applications they use are tailored to their individual learning needs and preferences. Overall, 100% of students benefit a lot from using online applications for learning English vocabulary. In terms of the data, the average (mean) number of students who strongly disagree, disagree, have no idea, agree, and strongly agree are 0.2, 1.4, 8.2, 67.4, and 22.6 respectively. The standard deviation values for each response are 0.42, 1.71, 6.88, 7.86, and 4.60 respectively, indicating that there is some variation in how students responded to each question.

Besides data collected from the questionnaire, the analysis also involved examining journal entries. From the data collected from 30 journals of students in six weeks, based on the positive answers, support, and high evaluations of online vocabulary learning applications, it can be concluded that these online vocabulary learning applications are effective tools for learning English vocabulary. The features that students found most helpful included gamification, interactive activities, and personalized learning. Students reported improvements in their vocabulary retention and understanding, and they used a variety of strategies to ensure that they retained the vocabulary they learned. While some challenges were reported, students were able to overcome them by seeking help from their peers or instructors. Overall, the students evaluated their experience with online vocabulary learning applications positively and found them to be an effective and convenient way to learn English vocabulary. Below are some examples.

Student 1 wrote, "I am so glad I discovered online vocabulary learning applications. They have been a game-changer for me in learning English vocabulary. The interactive quizzes and engaging games have made the process fun and enjoyable. I can conveniently access these applications anytime and anywhere, which fits perfectly into my busy schedule. They have truly enhanced my vocabulary skills and made learning English more accessible and effective."

Student 2 wrote, "Using online vocabulary learning applications has been a breath of fresh air for my language learning journey. The multimedia content they offer, such as videos, audio clips, and interactive exercises, has made the process more engaging and immersive. I no longer feel bored or overwhelmed with traditional vocabulary textbooks. These applications have transformed learning into an interactive and dynamic experience, helping me build a stronger English vocabulary foundation."

The study also conducted interviews. The analysis of the interview data yielded several significant

findings regarding how EFL students evaluate their learning of English vocabulary through online applications. The findings highlighted participants' assessments of the effectiveness of the applications, their personal progress, the evaluation of learning strategies, user experience assessments, and perceived benefits and limitations. These insights provide a deeper understanding of how EFL students evaluate their vocabulary learning process through online applications. Educators and instructional designers can utilize these findings to optimize the design. For example, participant 1 said, "The interactive exercises and quizzes in the online vocabulary application were incredibly effective in helping me acquire and retain new words. The application challenged me to actively engage with the material and reinforced my understanding through interactive activities. The progress tracking feature allowed me to monitor my growth, which motivated me to continue using the application. Overall, the interactive features played a crucial role in enhancing my vocabulary acquisition and retention."

Participant 2 said, "Using the online application has significantly improved my understanding and retention of English vocabulary. I can now grasp the meaning of words more deeply and apply them in various contexts. Over time, I've seen a noticeable improvement in my overall vocabulary knowledge and fluency. The interactive features, such as practice exercises and quizzes, have played a crucial role in solidifying my understanding and enhancing my progress." From the data, we can see that the majority of students agree or strongly agree with the statements related to their use of online applications to learn English vocabulary. The mean score for each question ranges from 3.78 to 4.28. Question 10 has the highest percentage of students who strongly agree that online applications are useful in helping them memorize and retain new English vocabulary. Similarly, question 5 has the highest percentage of students who agree or strongly agree that online applications provide a variety of exercises and activities to help them practice and reinforce their learning with mean score of 4.17. On the other hand, question 8 has the lowest percentage of students who strongly agree that they feel more confident in my ability to use English vocabulary in different contexts after using online applications, with mean score only 3.78.

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5. DISCUSSION

Regarding the first question, EFL students showed a positive outlook on learning English vocabulary through online apps. Mean scores exceeded 3 on a 5-point scale, indicating favorable attitudes. Notably, statement 5, about the convenience of app-based vocabulary learning, scored highest (M=4.13). However, statement 8, related to confidence in vocabulary learning using apps, scored the lowest mean value (M=3.79). These findings align with prior research exploring diverse online tools, for examples Ajisoko (2020) examining Duolingo, Tiara et al. (2021) studying Duolingo's impact on vocabulary, and Aprilani (2021) investigating Quizlet. Additionally, Chih-Ming Chen et al. (2019) explored an English app with self-regulated learning. Together, these studies affirm online apps' efficacy for vocabulary learning. This study's novelty lies in focusing solely on EFL students' perceptions of learning English vocabulary online. While previous research covered various tools, this study uniquely enriches our understanding of EFL students' engagement and perspectives on these tools.

For the second research question, the findings highlighted varied strategies EFL students use with online vocabulary learning apps. Many followed structured routines and used spaced repetition, aligning with existing vocabulary learning literature (Chih-Ming et al., 2019). Additionally, the students reported to practise pronunciation and proper vocabulary usage, which is consistent with previous studies (Ajisoko, 2020; Tiara et al., 2021). However, limited engagement in online discussions and writing activities indicated room for more interactive language practice. These insights shed light on EFL students' distinct approaches to vocabulary learning via apps, emphasizing routines, spaced repetition, pronunciation practice, and the need for increased interactive learning.

For the third research question, the findings revealed EFL students' strong positive evaluation of learning English vocabulary through online applications. The students reported significant vocabulary improvement post-application usage. Additionally, students noted expanded vocabulary and increased word usage in everyday conversations, aligning with the resource's enriching potential (Aprilani, 2021). Flexibility, varied

exercises, and vocabulary retention support emerged as noteworthy benefits, while tailored personalization catered to individual preferences.

In general, this study enhanced understanding of EFL students' perceptions and practices concerning learning vocabulary via online applications. The findings reinforced the efficacy and benefits of online applications, while also highlighting areas for improvement and customization. This study is hoped to contribute to the growing body of literature on online language learning tools, providing valuable guidance to educators and developers seeking to optimize the learning experience of English vocabulary via online applications for EFL students.

6. CONCLUSION

This study investigated EFL students' perceptions and their usage of online English learning apps for vocabulary acquisition. It aimed to identify learning needs, problems, and recommend suitable apps. The findings emphasize the importance of these tools for effective vocabulary learning, providing insights for educators and developers. By understanding student preferences, educators can personalize approaches in designing activities for vocabulary learning online. The study's outcomes have implications for language education stakeholders. Educators can integrate apps for enhanced engagement and vocabulary strategies. It also highlights self-directed learning potential, enabling personalized experiences and peer interaction. Overall, this study enhances language education practices for educators and learners. This study however was limited in size of the sample and was based on the reflections of the repondents on their self-studying English vocabulary via the online applications. To some extent, the responses may bear some subjective perspectives of the users which might be changed if investigated at another time or at a different context.

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Học từ vựng tiếng Anh qua các ứng dụng trực tuyến của sinh viên

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TÓM TẮT

Nghiên cứu này nhằm tìm hiểu nhận thức, xu hướng sử dụng và đánh giá việc học từ vựng tiếng Anh thông qua các ứng dụng trực tuyến của 100 sinh viên đại học tại một trường đại học ở Việt Nam. Dữ liệu được thu thập thông qua bảng hỏi, nhật ký học tập và phỏng vấn. Kết quả cho thấy phần lớn sinh viên EFL có nhận thức tích cực về việc học từ vựng tiếng Anh qua các ứng dụng trực tuyến. Đặc biệt, họ đánh giá cao sự tiện lợi khi học từ vựng qua các nền tảng trực tuyến, tuy nhiên lại thể hiện mức độ tự tin tương đối thấp trong khả năng tiếp thu từ vựng của bản thân. Ngoài ra, nghiên cứu còn phát hiện các mô hình sử dụng và chiến lược học từ vựng đa dạng mà sinh viên áp dụng khi sử dụng các ứng dụng trực tuyến này. Đáng chú ý, các người tham gia nhấn mạnh việc sử dụng thẻ từ, các kỹ thuật ghi nhớ và học trong ngữ cảnh. Một số sinh viên còn tạo danh sách từ vựng cá nhân trong các ứng dụng và thường xuyên ôn tập chúng. Ngoài ra, đánh giá của sinh viên cho thấy việc học từ vựng tiếng Anh thông qua các ứng dụng trực tuyến có hiệu quả trong việc mở rộng vốn từ, ghi nhớ từ mới và củng cố khả năng tiếp thu từ vựng nói chung. Từ những phát hiện này, nghiên cứu khuyến nghị tích hợp các ứng dụng học từ vựng trực tuyến vào chương trình giảng dạy ngoại ngữ, tập trung vào việc nâng cao tự tin của sinh viên khi tự học với các ứng dụng trực tuyến và điều chỉnh các tính năng của ứng dụng nhằm mang lại trải nghiệm học từ vựng cá nhân hóa và hiệu quả hơn.