

THE IMPACT OF SHORT-FORM EDUCATIONAL VIDEOS ON ENGLISH VOCABULARY RETENTION AMONG EFL LEARNERS

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Abstract: Today, the advancement of digital technologies is introducing new educational tools into the foreign language teaching process. Interest in using short-form videos for educational purposes is growing, particularly because they have become an integral part of young people's daily lives. This article analyzes the impact of short-form educational videos on how EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners acquire new words and retain them in memory over time. The simultaneous presentation of a word's pronunciation, spelling, meaning, and contextual usage in short videos enables learners to process new lexical units through multiple information channels. The article outlines the theoretical foundations of video-based vocabulary instruction, highlights its differences from traditional approaches, and examines its potential for vocabulary retention. Additionally, it offers methodological recommendations for effectively integrating short educational videos into EFL lessons.

Keywords: EFL, English language, vocabulary, vocabulary retention, short educational video, multimedia, digital education, audiovisual tool.

Introduction

Possessing an adequate vocabulary is a crucial prerequisite for developing language skills when learning English as a foreign language. Even if a learner has a solid grasp of grammatical rules, a limited vocabulary makes it difficult to express thoughts freely, comprehend texts, or actively participate in conversations. Therefore, in English lessons, it is essential not only to teach new words but also to focus on ensuring they are retained in memory over the long term.

In practice, it is common for students to memorize the translations of new words only to forget them or fail to use them in speech after some time. Consequently, the primary goal of vocabulary instruction should not be limited to merely recalling a word's meaning once. It is vital for the learner to recognize a new lexical unit, recall its meaning, and utilize it in appropriate contexts. In this regard, vocabulary retention – the ability to keep learned vocabulary items in memory over time – takes on particular importance.

The expansion of digital educational opportunities has enabled a fresh approach to this issue. Short-format educational videos offer the ability to explain specific concepts, words, or phrases through visual and audio means

within just a few seconds or minutes. This format conveys key information to the learner in a concise and context-rich manner, avoiding lengthy theoretical explanations. The aim of this article is to provide a theoretical and methodological analysis of the impact of short-format educational videos on the acquisition and retention of new English vocabulary among EFL learners.

Learning vocabulary is a complex process; simply knowing a word's translation in one's native language does not mean it has been fully mastered. A learner must also understand the word's form, meaning, pronunciation, grammatical characteristics, and contextual usage. Furthermore, to prevent a newly learned word from being forgotten over time, it is necessary to encounter it repeatedly and use it in various situations.

The concept of vocabulary retention relates precisely to this issue. It refers to a learner's ability to recognize a word previously mastered, recall its meaning, or use it in speech at a later time. Therefore, relying solely on post-lesson test results is insufficient for determining the level of vocabulary retention. A delayed test, administered after some time has passed, is also crucial for demonstrating the true effectiveness of a teaching method.

The potential of audiovisual materials in this regard deserves special attention. Through video, a learner can hear a word, see its spelling, and grasp its meaning via a visual context. Research on multimedia tools has shown that incorporating visual elements, such as videos or images, alongside text can improve vocabulary acquisition outcomes for EFL learners [5].

The key feature distinguishing short-format educational videos from standard video lessons is the conciseness of the information. Instead of explaining numerous new words in a single video, the focus can be placed on just a few target lexical items. For instance, a 40–60-second video might demonstrate the pronunciation of a single new word, provide a brief definition, show a corresponding image or action, and illustrate its use within a sentence.

In such a presentation, the learner sees and hears the word simultaneously. Furthermore, presenting the word within a specific context aid in understanding its meaning. In this respect, short videos differ from the traditional "word-translation" method.

Another significant advantage of video is the ability to re-watch it. Learners can revisit words they did not fully understand or remember. Research on video-based vocabulary learning highlights the particular importance of repeated viewing. For example, in a study involving videos with dual subtitles, EFL learners who watched the videos repeatedly demonstrated better results in acquiring and subsequently retaining new words compared to those who watched them only once.

The effectiveness of a short video is not determined solely by its duration. How the target word is presented within the video, including the context, subtitles, repetition, and follow-up tasks, is also of great importance.

Repeated exposure is a key factor in retaining a new word in memory. A

learner might see or hear a word once, but this does not always ensure its transfer to long-term memory. Therefore, the opportunity to repeatedly watch short educational videos is pedagogically significant [3].

In a video format, the visual image of a word and its pronunciation complement each other. For instance, rather than simply translating the word "exhausted" as "very tired," presenting it alongside an image of an exhausted person, the word's pronunciation, and a sentence like "I was exhausted after work" allows the learner to form broader associations.

The use of subtitles can also be important in this context. Research on captioned and subtitled videos indicates that audiovisual materials help strengthen the connection between a word's form and its meaning.

However, simply showing a video to the learner is not enough. The video must have a clear educational objective, the new vocabulary should match the learner's language proficiency level, and the material needs to be reinforced through follow-up exercises. In multimedia-based vocabulary learning, directing the learner's attention to the target lexical item is also a crucial factor influencing the outcome.

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The main research questions can be formulated as follows:

How do short-format educational videos affect EFL learners' acquisition of new English vocabulary?

Are words learned through short educational videos retained in memory longer than those learned using traditional methods?

How do learners perceive the use of short-format videos as a tool for vocabulary learning?

Results and Discussion

Existing research in this field indicates that audiovisual materials provide an effective opportunity for vocabulary learning. In particular, repeatedly encountering a new word via video can positively influence a learner's ability to recognize and recall its meaning. In an experiment involving videos with dual subtitles, repeated viewing improved both immediate vocabulary gains and retention compared to single viewing.

Other multimedia studies have also shown that participants using materials enriched with video and imagery achieved better vocabulary acquisition results than groups working solely with text- or audio-based materials.

Another advantage of the short format is that it does not require a significant time commitment from the learner. Teachers can utilize such videos for vocabulary warm-ups at the start of a lesson, to explain new topics, for consolidation at the end of a lesson, or as independent homework assignments [5].

However, a short video does not automatically become an effective educational tool. An abundance of unnecessary visual elements in the video can distract the learner's attention from the target vocabulary. Furthermore, if learners merely watch the video without actively using the new words, there is a risk that acquisition will remain superficial. Therefore, after watching the video, it is advisable to use exercises such as sentence construction, contextualizing words, fill-in-the-blank tasks, brief Q&A sessions, or recall activities.

In this regard, short educational videos should not be viewed as a complete replacement for traditional vocabulary teaching methods, but rather as a tool that enriches them and expands the learner's opportunities to work with new words.

Conclusion

Short-format educational videos are a promising tool for developing the English vocabulary of EFL learners. Their primary advantage lies in the ability to present new words through a combination of text, audio, imagery, and context, thereby helping learners form various associations with the words.

Existing research indicates that the use of video and multimedia, particularly purposeful, repeated viewing, can positively influence EFL learners' acquisition and subsequent retention of new vocabulary.

However, the effectiveness of short videos depends on more than just their duration. Factors such as word selection, the integration of visual and audio elements, the use of subtitles, repetition, and post-viewing tasks are also crucial. Therefore, EFL teachers should utilize short videos not merely as entertainment, but as instructional materials designed with specific pedagogical objectives in mind.

Future empirical studies could more precisely determine the impact of short-format educational videos on vocabulary retention by statistically

comparing the pre-test, post-test, and delayed post-test results of experimental and control groups.

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