

## **A Study of the Challenges faced by ESL learners in Vocabulary Enhancement through E-Learning Technologies in Pakistan**

\* Gull-e-Hamna Zafar, MPhil Scholar (Corresponding Author)

\*\* Dr. Shahida Naz, Assistant Professor

### **Abstract**



*E-learning technology is largely responsible for improving English language instruction. Due to the recognition of English as a second language, students in Pakistan are not exposed to using its terminology very often. Thus, e-learning tools can help in teaching and learning English. However, the main objective of this study is to investigate the challenges faced by Pakistani learners of English as a second language and vocabulary when using e-learning tools. Consequently, a questionnaire was used to collect the data, and a descriptive survey was conducted among English language instructors who had been selected from universities in Faisalabad to find out about their experiences with and opinions about the use of e-learning technology in the classroom. Mixed views were recorded on the usefulness of the courses attended. However, the findings revealed the challenges faced by the respondents in the use of e-learning in teaching English. The findings of the study will help to shed some light on the ways to maximize the use of e-learning technology in English language learning in Pakistan under the existing constraints. The purpose of this research was to ascertain whether or not e-learning technology can effectively aid English language learners in increasing the breadth of their vocabulary. The findings indicate that technology can help close the gap between vocabulary growth and improvement within Pakistani colleges and outside of them.*

**Keywords:** E-learning Technologies, Vocabulary Enhancement, ESL Learners

### **Introduction**

E-learning is the process of learning remotely using electronic devices such as laptops, desktops, tablets, and smartphones that need to be connected to the internet. Due to the rapid advances in E-learning technologies in the world, there is growing attention to combining technologies into the classrooms to prepare learners to meet the needs of a progressively technological-dependent culture. Improving one's vocabulary is crucial to learning a language and becoming a proficient communicator. In practically all language learning situations, this requires particular focus. Due to the growing interest in using technology to further vocabulary development, numerous studies have looked into the various aspects of language, including vocabulary that may be more successfully taught to second language learners through technological tools or devices. A particular area of difficulty for ESL learners is vocabulary acquisition and enhancement, such that many ESL learners have limited vocabulary knowledge.

Various studies suggest that the breadth of ESL learners' vocabulary knowledge, i.e., the number of words that learners know, relates closely to their language proficiency (Shank et al., 2018). As such, recent research has explored how vocabulary learning apps/tools can be used to expand learners' lexical knowledge (Saito et al., 2016). The presence of technology and its constant advances have been disclosed in society by shifting the way people cooperate with technology itself and through technology devices believe that technology allows students to study independently and cooperate with their peers (Hollands et al., 2020). Every educator must utterly think about, and update concepts, be courageous in innovation, let advanced technology assist college English vocabulary education, and familiarize e-learning technology with a large amount of information, closeness, and interactivity in college English teaching.

The use of technology in English as a second language (ESL) learning and teaching included films, radios, televisions, language laboratories, videos, and computers. As advancing technology has become accessible for ESL vocabulary learners and has been integrated into ESL learning,

\* Department of Applied Linguistics, Government College University Faisalabad

\*\* Department of Applied Linguistics, Government College University Faisalabad

researchers' interest in the relationship between technology and second language has grown stronger since the 1990s and 2000s (Cunningham et al., 2017). In conclusion, it could be argued that there exists a serious lack of research in the field of technology concerning second language learning and vocabulary enhancement (Karami, 2019).

In an ESL context, social media and other recent technologies can enrich group interaction, facilitate discussions, and improve cooperation between learners (Falco et al., 2018). For instance, ESL instructors can use instant messaging to provide students with a learning community, for example by creating groups, and to foster positive attitudes toward classroom activities. Instant messaging also allows teachers to provide learning material in small chunks and to introduce target information in a potentially less overwhelming manner. Furthermore, a sense of privacy when using apps/tools might encourage those students to participate who might otherwise be too shy to speak up in class. This suggests that, in contrast to the results, apps can be an efficient tool to expand learners' vocabulary knowledge (Kurniawan et al., 2019). Other recent research has explored how mobile applications, particularly instant messaging applications, can be used to facilitate learners' vocabulary acquisition (Khezrlou et al., 2017).

Mobile devices are ubiquitous in modern everyday life. For example, an average person spends around 3.2 hours per day on their cell phone, and 90% of this time using applications. A majority of cell phone users are young people between the ages of 18 and 29. This regular use of mobile devices among young users has led teachers, researchers, and educators to note the potential to use mobile applications in educational contexts, for example, to support the learning of English as a Second Language (ESL) and to develop learners' English language skills. Mobile devices are not only ubiquitous, but also portable, multimodal, and interactive and can thus be used to allow students to learn autonomously in a multimodal and interactive fashion (Klimova et al., 2018).

This study attempts to answer the following questions. What is the role of e-learning technologies in vocabulary enhancement of ESL learners of Pakistan in the post-pandemic period? What are the student's perceptions about learning with technologies in the post-pandemic period? How ESL learners are using e-learning technologies in the post-pandemic period? What are the challenges of online EFL learning in vocabulary enhancement and what will be the provided facilities to students during online learning in the post-pandemic period?

This study is significant because it explores the uses and difficulties of post-pandemic e-learning technologies in English language classrooms at the university level in Pakistan. Teachers, students, and researchers in the same field will benefit from the results of this study. An increasing body of research on the use of e-learning technology consistently emphasizes the positive impacts provided by the use of technology in the teaching of vocabulary in the English language. As a result, Pakistani teachers must ensure that the students utilize technology to their advantage when learning the English language. This is an ongoing attempt to improve vocabulary in English language learner's experiences with the internet and its technologies. It is beneficial for learners who utilize e-learning technology as their primary learning tool. Those who desire to pursue additional study in this area in the future might also benefit from this research. Additionally, this study will be useful in identifying the requirements, routines, and educational applications of technology in vocabulary development.

The objectives of the study are to investigate the role of e-learning technologies in vocabulary enhancement of ESL learners of Pakistan in the post-pandemic period. To explore the student perceptions about vocabulary learning with technologies in the post-pandemic period. To analyze how ESL learners are using e-learning technologies for vocabulary enhancement in the post-pandemic period and to investigate students' opinions and experiences with using technology to improve their vocabulary in the immediate aftermath of the pandemic.

This study is a survey based to investigate learner's perspectives on the role of E-learning technologies in English language teaching and learning. The following is the major goal of this study. (1)Examine the difficulties Pakistani learners have using computer technologies to learn English as a foreign language. Additionally, it is intended to identify the problems of these issues and suggest some solutions. (2)Examine the potential contribution of e-learning technologies to improving vocabulary in English language instruction and acquisition in Pakistan. (3)Examine the learners' perspectives on incorporating E-learning technologies into the vocabulary and English language education

## **Literature Review**

We live in a technologically advanced world. The increased use of technology has also altered the pedagogy of the teaching methodology. The phrase "E-Learning" or "Technology in Education" has become a catchphrase in every educational context. Since technology at the time suited the demands of students, its integration into education was essential (Tang et al., 2021).

In the modern day, it has become essential that technology be integrated into schooling. In that period, mobile phones stood out as the most transportable and economical technology possibilities. As a result, their use in education has been increasingly well-known throughout time (Sabiri et al., 2023). The researcher came up with a quantitative survey study to learn more about the installation and integration of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) for learning English vocabulary. Its main goals were to understand undergraduate ESL learners' perspectives on using MALL for vocabulary learning, establish MALL-based vocabulary acquisition strategies, and investigate MALL's contribution to improving learners' lexical competence. The study's findings indicated that undergraduate ESL students in Punjab held a positive view as regards the utilization of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL). They believed it to have had a significant impact on their lexical proficiency.

Both EFL instructors and students faced major difficulties when teaching and memorizing vocabulary. The pronunciation, grasp of meanings, usage, and spelling of new English terms were among the challenges faced by first-year EFL students (Al-Jarf, 2022). All college classes moved to online distance learning as an outcome of the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak in March 2020. This change highlighted problems with the learning process among Saudi college students, including a lack of interest, diminished participation, difficulties with oral presentations, homework completion, online class attendance, and diminished engagement, interaction, communication, and self-efficacy. Regrettably, the existing college curricula remained unchanged to tackle these concerns. The study recommended various online vocabulary activities and technological tools that vocabulary instructors could incorporate in response to the evolving distance learning context. These encompassed game-based smartphone applications such as Saving Alice and Kahoot, along with mobile-based learning platforms like Vocup, Quizlet, Quizizz, and Duolingo. additional approaches encompassed flashcards, cell audiobooks, collaborative cell e-book studying, podcasts, online dictionaries, glosses primarily based on concordance, pill-based drawing and photograph exploration, motion pictures, e-portfolios, using picture novels to educate idioms, multimedia annotations, social networking, challenge-based getting to know, and thoughts maps. Furthermore, the study delineated the roles of both educators and learners in this novel learning model, as well as the various instructional stages.

In recent years, it has been commonplace to use technology in the explicit instructional technique used to teach and learn language. As a means to examine the efficiency of explicit instructional strategies in vocabulary teaching and learning, both with and without the use of technology, this research undertook a retrospective analysis of previous empirical investigations (Sarip et al., 2021). The study indicated that learners were highly motivated and had lower levels of stress, which made learning new words more fun. This review served as a helpful tool for researchers in the field by highlighting the limitations of earlier studies and offering suggestions for new ones.

The research investigated the effects of vocabulary teaching employing enhanced audio input through WhatsApp on EFL learners' vocabulary learning and retention (Shah, 2023). 85 students participated in the study. An evaluation of the test rankings using independent pattern t-tests and evaluation of covariance (ANCOVA) indicated a statistically significant influence of WhatsApp audio enter enhancement at the vocabulary gaining knowledge of and retention of Iranian EFL learners.

The research aimed to look into how university students' use of social media affected their vocabulary development. Through social media sites, it was hoped to motivate EFL students to adopt efficient vocabulary acquisition techniques. The study also sought to investigate how social media affects the development of English language skills, particularly speaking abilities, among undergraduate EFL students at The Islamic University of Bahawalpur. It also sought to offer helpful recommendations for enhancing English language vocabulary acquisition through engaging shared media content. In the study, different social media technologies were considered, including wikis, social networks, podcasts, photographs, magazines, online forums, weblogs, social blogs, and videos. There are different ways in which these tools help with language acquisition. Despite the many ways social media can be utilized for learning, there hasn't been much research done explicitly on how social media affects learning foreign languages (Khaliq et al., 2021). The study's conclusions showed

that social media was a useful technique for boosting vocabulary in the English language. It not only aided in the growth of vocabulary abilities but also inspired students to use social media as a beneficial tool for expanding their vocabulary.

The incorporation of technological tools into language teaching, to enhance the effectiveness of the teaching and learning processes, was spurred by the increased ubiquity of technology usage across various parts of people's lives. Vocabulary development stood out among the fundamental and sub-skills in English as a skill that is highly valued for using a variety of technological tools and apps (Merzifonluoglu et al., 2022). As a result, the research was done to determine whether technology had a positive effect on the development of a second language (vocabulary, primarily through raising learners' awareness of the educational utility of technology. To achieve its goals, the research used a quasi-experimental approach. Assignments requiring creative writing and an accomplishment test were used to collect data. The research involved the participation of 48 students from preparatory classes. The outcomes revealed that although the experimental group exhibited superior performance, there was no statistically noteworthy contrast in the achievement test and creative writing assignment scores between the two groups. The study gave educators useful and pedagogical recommendations after deriving implications from these findings.

As mobile technology advanced quickly, there was a discernible increase in studies on how to incorporate it into the teaching of languages. Due to this growing interest, thorough review studies that tried to simply describe the body of knowledge and current thinking on the topic were required (Dağdeler, 2023). With this background, the main purpose of this research was to analyze the literature on mobile-assisted vocabulary acquisition and to examine it from two different perspectives. The study's major focus was to map the terrain of this field using bibliometric data. The researchers examined the Web of Science database for this purpose, where they found 687 publications and incorporated them into their analysis. A selection of 19 papers was then chosen from this collection of publications to identify the technological and pedagogical emphasis areas that were prevalent in the research literature and identify the dominating trend. The results of the bibliometric study revealed the most popular search terms, the nations with the greatest number of publications, and the most well-known authors and papers on the subject. Additionally, the survey showed that "achievement" and "perceptions" stood out as the most prevalent subjects among language learning foci. In empirical investigations, "gamification" has become a key feature of technological emphasis. While noting the exploratory nature of these results, they did offer insightful information that might direct future research in this field.

The current study was conducted as an interpretive and qualitative investigation into the evolution of teachers' ideas through time through their participation in scaffolded dialogues, incorporating sociocultural theory principles (Mohsenishad et al., 2020). Their awareness of technology-assisted language learning had to be increased. Twenty teachers in all, voluntarily participated, through a series of interviews conducted three times, as well as six months of scaffolder discourse sessions. to have a look at the connection between teachers' theoretical knowledge of generation and their real use of cell applications and computer software programs within the study room, random study room observations were additionally achieved. Additionally, conversation analysis was used to qualitatively examine the transcripts of the teachers' classroom interactions, which supported the conclusions reached from the observations. The research showed that instructors' attitudes toward technology changed gradually over time, from "limited awareness of technology" to "moderate awareness of technology," and finally to "heightened awareness of technology." The information acquired from classroom observations finds the consistency between teachers' beliefs and their use of modern tools. This led to increased student involvement and boosted their self-confidence while embarking on online projects. The examination of teacher-student interactions confirmed the inferences made from classroom observations, demonstrating that the participants' actual teaching methods reflected their improved knowledge of technology-enhanced instruction. The research conclusions focus on the worth of incorporating current theoretical and practical knowledge into technology-integrated training in teacher education programs. It promotes the inclusion of scaffolded dialogues as a way for educators to learn about modern pedagogies and contribute their firsthand knowledge, thus raising the caliber of technology-mediated classroom education.

The Yolu, an indigenous group from Australia's Arnhem Land, was in danger of Machado-Joseph disease, which eventually caused progressive speech loss. The Yolu community expressed

interest in creating AAC (alternative and augmentative communication) systems in their languages (Amery et al., 2022). With the idea of incorporating this list into AAC system prototypes, the main goal of this research was to build a culturally sensitive methodology for jointly developing a core vocabulary phrase list for Yolu adults who were living with the sickness. The give-up result was the assemblage of a list of 243 Yolo phrases and morphemes. Researchers from Yolu and Balanda (non-Aboriginal) groups participated in this and observed the use of a noticeably collaborative blended-methods participatory motion research method. With the help of institutional conversations, they worked in iterative cycles to transcribe and analyze language samples. Based on the Yolu community's understanding of the structure and usage of their language, the debates sought to decide which terms should be added, removed, or included. Yolu researchers developed the metaphor Gulaka-buma ("Harvesting yams") during the research process to represent and communicate the course and results of the study. Through this approach, three key themes that encompassed the linguistic and cultural factors influencing changes to the core vocabulary emerged. The study's findings made a strong case for the importance of language in Indigenous communities as a manifestation of culture and identity. They also emphasized how crucial it is to take cultural and linguistic considerations into account when choosing vocabulary for AAC systems.

When learning a foreign language, students have to make exceptional efforts or use particular strategies to successfully pick up the language. This resulted from the application of effective learning techniques (Ghalebi et al., 2020). This study looked at the relationship between vocabulary teaching strategies and vocabulary learning strategies implemented by students and teachers in secondary schools. To collect both quantitative and qualitative data, a mixed methods design has been used. Through surveys, interviews, and classroom observations, data was gathered. The qualitative results were utilized to corroborate the numerical conclusions after a separate analysis of the data had been conducted. The outcomes convey that teachers in the sample schools were not consistently implementing vocabulary teaching methodologies, which reduced their usefulness and efficacy. Additionally, it was shown that students had difficulty using strategies for memorizing new word meanings and applying them in later assignments. As a result, neither teachers nor students had given vocabulary teaching and learning strategies much thought. To help students use vocabulary learning tactics, it was advised that teachers receive refresher training in vocabulary teaching techniques. It was also recommended that teachers train pupils in these techniques to foster a sense of independent learning.

### **Research Design**

This study, which is primarily numerical in nature, employed a mixed-method approach to research. This exploratory study used a descriptive survey method to examine how e-learning technology is used in the learning of English vocabulary. For this study, Riphah International University, Agricultural University of Faisalabad, and Government College University of Faisalabad were chosen. There were not any preferences in the universities' selection of Pakistani English language students. The researcher distributed the questionnaire to all of the students using convenient sampling.

### **Data Collection**

A questionnaire was used to collect the data, and it included both closed-ended and open-ended questions using a 5-point Likert scale. The researcher personally distributed the questionnaires to the participants. The survey questionnaires were broken up into five pieces, and each section had a different goal in mind. Due to their many benefits, closed-ended questions were frequently employed in questionnaires. The purpose of Section 1 was to collect some personal information about the respondents, such as their gender, age, academic qualification, and prior learning experiences. The purpose of Section 2 was to collect information about the learner's experiences with any computer and e-learning courses they may have taken, and in particular, their experiences with computer technology as it related to vocabulary. Additionally, this section aimed to determine whether the courses they took apply to the teaching of ESL at the university level in Pakistan using a five-point Likert scale. The purpose of Section 3 was to gather data about the learner's access to university-level computer technology resources. It concentrated on the difficulties Pakistani students had when using the internet and e-learning technology to acquire vocabulary. The responses were also asked for suggestions and opinions on the employment of technological tools/apps in vocabulary enhancement at the university level in Pakistan following the pandemic.

### **Data Analysis**

Under the researcher's guidance, respondents served as the study's sample, and the method used to analyze the data was descriptive statistics. The data was coded and processed using the Statistical Package for Social Studies methods (SPSS for Windows Version 13), one of the many computer software programs used to handle and analyze research data, particularly in social and educational research. The basis for the data analysis was the study's objectives. Frequencies and percentages used in statistical analysis will be used because the variables in this study were categorical. The results were aided by several data for each item.

### **Results and Discussion**

Results of section one: Based on the provided responses and associated statistics, it's evident that e-learning technologies play a significant role in enhancing vocabulary. A considerable portion, around 42% of the respondents, found e-learning technologies helpful for vocabulary improvement, showcasing their potential impact in this regard. Moreover, an overwhelming majority, comprising 92.7% of the respondents, favored e-learning technologies over traditional methods for vocabulary enhancement. This strong preference emphasizes a shift towards modern, tech-driven approaches in language learning. Respondents also expressed a belief in the effectiveness of e-learning technologies compared to traditional methods, with 80% agreeing with this sentiment. Additionally, a significant proportion, about 78.7%, intended to use e-learning apps and tools for vocabulary learning in the future, highlights a sustained interest in incorporating technology into their learning journey. The impact of the pandemic is evident, with 78.7% believing that e-learning technologies became more important for language learning during the pandemic and online classes. This showcases the adaptability and reliance on technology, especially during challenging times. Overall, there's a predominantly positive attitude towards using e-learning technologies for language learning, as indicated by 84% of the respondents. This signifies a growing acceptance and recognition of the value these technologies bring to the language learning landscape. The data underscores the importance and effectiveness of e-learning technologies in vocabulary enhancement, paving the way for a more tech-centric future in language education.

Results of section two: In this discussion about e-learning technologies for vocabulary enhancement in English language learning, a diverse range of experiences and perspectives emerged. Users reported various methods for discovering new vocabulary words, including reading articles, taking quizzes, and using online apps, movies, and academic sources. Challenges in using e-learning technologies during the pandemic were highlighted, such as distractions, internet connectivity issues, and a lack of motivation. Motivations for utilizing e-learning technologies post-pandemic include knowledge acquisition, skill improvement, and the convenience of online resources. Suggestions for newcomers to e-learning technologies emphasized diversifying learning sources, daily practice, stable internet access, and discerning usage. Teachers were seen as pivotal in incorporating e-learning tools into language learning, providing guidance, and creating a supportive learning environment. Some respondents had experience with personalized and adaptive e-learning platforms, while others did not. Assessing one's vocabulary proficiency with e-learning technologies varied, with methods such as listening, writing, quizzes, and interaction employed. A wide array of e-learning platforms and applications were mentioned, including Zoom, Google, Chatgpt, Duo-lingo, Oxford Dictionaries, Grammarly, British Council programs, YouTube, and various online apps.

### **Conclusion**

The research for this study compared how English language learners' vocabulary developed when using e-learning technology as an additional assistance. The earlier research discovered differences in vocabulary learning tactics, behavior, and engagement, and the utilization of visual and auditory cues to enhance vocabulary learning. According to the findings of this study, using technology and explicit education together rather than just using online apps and tools alone did not support vocabulary growth. English language learners require ongoing teaching in vocabulary since it serves as the foundation for word knowledge. Language and vocabulary development can be enhanced by designing a learning environment that emphasizes word knowledge and making use of things like technology. In addition to determining the students' perceptions of importance, this study intended to understand what and how ESL students utilize various search engines as it looked at their experiences using e-learning technology while studying English at a university in Pakistan. This study aimed to determine whether or not e-learning technology is effective methods for helping English language learners expand their vocabulary. It is concluded that Technology assists in bridging the gap between

vocabulary growth and improvement inside and outside of Pakistani colleges. In conclusion, e-learning technologies play a significant role in vocabulary enhancement, offering diverse learning opportunities. Users value the transformative potential of e-learning and emphasize the importance of motivated, guided, and discerning use for effective language learning.

### **Recommendations**

For ESL learners, the e-learning approach is more successful than the outdated traditional method. The relationship between e-learning and e-learning strategies and approaches has been verified by researchers. For modern and efficient study, it is advised that ESL vocabulary learners strengthen their web-based learning abilities. Higher-level education systems may ensure the use of e-learning technology to enhance learners' vocabulary and improve learning abilities to boost confidence and knowledge. It is recommended to improve learners' pronunciation, accent, and vocabulary. E-learning technologies may be integrated with vocabulary enhancement to make learners' performance better. The students may spend extra time on English vocabulary learning. It is also recommended that the learners develop a feeling for this advancement to engage them in the learning process, give them confidence to enhance vocabulary, and improve communication skills.

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