Unlocking Vocabulary Growth: The Role of Language Translator Devices in EFL Classrooms

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Abstract:

In an increasingly digitalized world, language translator devices (LTDs) have emerged as valuable tools in language learning, particularly for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. This study explores the effectiveness of LTDs in enhancing vocabulary acquisition among EFL learners, considering both cognitive and pedagogical perspectives. While traditional vocabulary learning methods rely on rote memorization and contextual exposure, LTDs offer instant translations, phonetic assistance, and contextual meanings, facilitating a more interactive and efficient learning experience. This paper examines how LTDs contribute to vocabulary retention, learner autonomy, and engagement, drawing on empirical studies and theoretical frameworks in second language acquisition. The integration of LTDs in EFL classrooms provides learners with real-time linguistic support and fosters independent learning, helping students easily navigate cross-linguistic differences. However, challenges such as overreliance on direct translation and potential contextual misinterpretations are also addressed. By analyzing case studies and experimental findings, this research highlights the advantages and limitations of LTDs in EFL vocabulary acquisition. The study concludes that while LTDs are powerful supplementary tools, their optimal use requires strategic integration into pedagogical practices to balance immediate accessibility with deeper cognitive processing. The findings provide valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and language learners, advocating for a blended approach that combines traditional vocabulary learning techniques with the benefits of technological advancements.

Keywords: EFL, vocabulary acquisition, language translator devices, second language learning, digital tools, pedagogy

Introduction

In today's technology-driven world, language learning has been transformed by the integration of digital tools, and language translator devices have emerged as powerful aids, particularly for learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). These devices, which include handheld translators, mobile applications, and AI-powered platforms, provide instant translations of words, phrases, and sentences, allowing learners to understand unfamiliar vocabulary in real time. By offering accurate translations along with contextual meanings and pronunciation assistance, translator devices help EFL learners bridge the gap between their native language and English, fostering a deeper understanding of vocabulary (Wu et al., 2021).

One of the most significant benefits of using translator devices is the immediate access to word meanings in various contexts, enabling learners to acquire vocabulary more effectively. Studies have shown that frequent exposure to translated words enhances retention and comprehension (Chiu, 2015). Many modern translator devices also offer audio pronunciation features, helping learners develop better phonetic awareness and improve their speaking skills. This auditory reinforcement aids in pronunciation and builds confidence in using new vocabulary (Lu & Yang, 2020).

Moreover, language translator devices encourage contextual learning, allowing learners to see how words are used in authentic conversations, articles, or multimedia content. Contextual exposure promotes deeper understanding and supports long-term vocabulary retention (Nation, 2013). Learners engage with new vocabulary beyond the classroom by integrating translation tools into daily life, enhancing their overall language proficiency.

Incorporating translator devices into EFL learning not only aids in vocabulary acquisition but also reduces anxiety associated with misunderstanding unfamiliar terms, enabling learners to engage more confidently with English (Kukulska-Hulme, 2012). This introduction explores the multifaceted ways in which language translator devices contribute to vocabulary development, empowering EFL learners to achieve greater linguistic competence.

Difficulties in Incorporating Literary Texts in EFL Education:

Literature provides many benefits in foreign language classes, helping students improve their language skills and understand different cultures. However, there are some challenges when using literary texts in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. One of the main problems is the complex language used in literary works. Many EFL teachers feel that literature is difficult to teach because the language in these texts is often too advanced and not suitable for the students' level (Lazar, 1994).

Another challenge is the length of the text. Longer texts can be hard for students to read and understand because they require more time and effort. On the other hand, shorter texts can also be difficult because they do not provide enough context to help students understand the meaning. Additionally, shorter texts do not repeat vocabulary as often, which makes it harder for students to remember new words. In contrast, longer texts give students more chances to see and remember new vocabulary (Duff & Maley, 1990).

Cultural differences are another challenge. While literature can help students learn about different cultures, it may not always provide enough information to fully understand the author's culture. Duff and Maley (ibid) pointed out that this problem is greater when students know little about the culture being presented in the text. Without background knowledge, it becomes harder for students to relate to the story and grasp its deeper meaning.

Even though these challenges exist, literature is still a valuable tool in EFL classes. Teachers can overcome these difficulties by choosing appropriate texts and providing extra support to help students understand both the language and the culture.

Advantages of Using Literary Texts in EFL Classrooms with Language Translator Devices:

Using literary texts in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms provides numerous benefits, and the integration of language translator devices further enhances these advantages. These devices make literary texts more accessible, allowing learners to engage with complex material while improving their language skills and cultural understanding.

One of the main advantages is that translator devices help clarify difficult vocabulary and phrases found in literary works. Literary texts often include archaic language, idiomatic expressions, and culturally specific references that can be challenging for EFL learners. Translator devices provide instant translations and contextual meanings, helping students grasp unfamiliar terms and improving vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension (Wu et al., 2021).

Another significant benefit is that translator devices boost learner confidence and motivation. When students can quickly understand challenging sections of a text, they are less likely to feel discouraged. This increased confidence encourages them to engage more actively with the text and persist through difficult passages. Studies suggest that reducing frustration with comprehension can lead to a more positive learning experience, motivating students to explore more complex literary works (Lu & Yang, 2020).

Contextual understanding is also enhanced with the help of translator devices. Many modern translation tools provide not just literal translations but also contextual explanations, helping learners better interpret deeper meanings in literary texts. This exposure to authentic language in context promotes critical thinking and deeper engagement with the text (Chiu, 2015).

Additionally, translator devices bridge cultural gaps by explaining culturally embedded phrases and references that may be unfamiliar to EFL learners. This understanding enhances learners' appreciation of the text and broadens their cultural knowledge (Kukulska-Hulme, 2012).

When used effectively, language translator devices can transform literary texts into more manageable and enriching learning experiences, empowering EFL learners to develop both linguistic and cultural competence.

Unlocking the Secrets of Vocabulary Acquisition in Language Learning:

Vocabulary is the most important part of learning a foreign language. But just knowing the meaning of words is not enough. According to Nation (2011), students cannot use a language well if they do not know enough words. Even though learning new words seems easy, it can be difficult for many students.

There are many ways to learn new words, such as using flashcards with pictures, using dictionaries, and learning synonyms and antonyms. However, the real challenge is remembering these words for a long time. Language experts say that it is not just about learning words, but also about keeping them in memory.

Learning vocabulary happens in two stages. The first stage is memorizing new words, which most students can do easily. The second stage is remembering the words over time, which is harder because forgetting is natural (Ge, 2015). Reading is one of the best ways to learn and remember new words. Studies by Krashen (1989, 2008), Cho & Krashen (1994), and Mason & Krashen (2004) show that reading helps students learn vocabulary and also improves grammar and language skills.

Vocabulary retention means being able to remember words even after some time (Richards & Schmidt, 2002). To help students remember words better, it is important to use methods that give them more practice with these words. By focusing on both learning and remembering, students can build a stronger vocabulary in the foreign language.

Vocabulary retention is how the brain stores and remembers words. Švec (2018) explains that our brains can keep information for either a short time or a long time. According to Švec (2010), keeping words in memory for a long time depends on how well the material is organized and how relevant it is. Vocabulary retention also means that students can memorize and recall words, phrases, and expressions when needed (Al-Zahrani, 2011). Mohammed (2009) defines it as the ability to store words in memory and use them correctly in different situations after some time.Many researchers have studied different methods to improve vocabulary retention. A key study by Hulstijn and Laufer (2001) compared the effects of writing and reading activities. Their research showed that both writing and reading help students remember vocabulary better, especially when they are actively involved before, during, and after these activities. This active participation improves vocabulary retention over time.

Research shows that taking notes on new words can help students remember vocabulary better. Studies by Folse (2006) and Peters (2014) suggest that when students write down and review new words, they are more likely to remember them. Repetition is another important factor in vocabulary retention. Rodríguez and Sadoski (2000) studied how different methods, such as oral repetition, context, keywords, and a combination of context and keywords, affect vocabulary retention. Their findings showed that using repetition with both context and keywords is the best way to help students remember words for a longer time.

Altalhab (2018) also looked at different types of repetition strategies (oral, written, and a mix of both) and found that combining oral and written repetition is the most effective for keeping words in memory for a longer period. To remember foreign words in the long term, it is important to understand how memory works. Knowledge of how the brain processes and stores information can help improve vocabulary learning and retention over time.

Zhang (2004) identifies three types of memory based on how long information is stored:

Sensory memory – stores information for the shortest time.

Short-term memory – keeps information longer than sensory memory.

Long-term memory – stores information for the longest period and is essential for vocabulary retention in language learning.

Since short-term and sensory memory can only retain information for a short time, long-term memory is the most important for remembering vocabulary in foreign language learning.

Research suggests that storytelling using Translator Device is a useful method to improve vocabulary retention. However, many studies used additional activities along with storytelling to help with vocabulary retention. These activities included picture dictionaries, translation, and other vocabulary-related tasks.

Language translator devices are becoming more common in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classrooms. They help students understand new words quickly by giving direct translations. However, very little research has studied how well students remember vocabulary learned through these devices over time. Most studies focus on short-term learning but do not explore if students can recall and use these words after a long time.

Another gap is that translator devices often give answers too quickly, which means students do not get enough practice thinking about the words. Studies (Rodríguez & Sadoski, 2000; Altalhab, 2018) show that repeating and using words in context helps with better memory, but translator devices may not provide this kind of practice.

There is also not enough research comparing vocabulary learning with translator devices to traditional methods like using flashcards, note-taking, or storytelling. While translator devices are faster, it is unclear if they are better at helping students remember vocabulary over time.

Lastly, translator devices may miss cultural meanings and deeper context when translating words. This can make it harder for students to fully understand and remember vocabulary in different situations. More research is needed to see how translator devices handle these challenges and if they can be improved to support long-term vocabulary learning.

This research aims to explore how using stories through translator devices affects vocabulary retention in modern foreign language learning. Based on the identified research problem, this study focuses on answering the following questions:

1. How does using stories through translator devices help students remember vocabulary?

2. Is there a difference between using stories through translator devices and reading aloud when it comes to vocabulary retention?

The theoretical part of this monograph aims to define and explain key concepts related to the topic. The practical (empirical) part builds on this theoretical knowledge and examines the identified issues in detail.

Research Sample:

The research sample included 15 students from a private CBSE school in Thoothukudi, all in the 4th grade of primary school. Convenience sampling was used to select the participants, which included 5 girls and 10 boys.At the start, students took an entrance test to assess their language abilities, and they were then divided into groups based on their results. The groups chosen for the quasi-experiment had the same level of language proficiency.The control group had 8 students (4 girls and 4 boys), while the experimental group had 7 students (1 girl and 6 boys).

Research Methodology:

The main research method used was a quasi-experiment, supported by participant observation and testing. The quasi-experiment compared two groups: the experimental group and the control group.

The study examined how storytelling with a translator device (used in the experimental group) and loud reading with translation (used in the control group) affected vocabulary retention.

1.The control group learned through loud reading via Language Translator Device

2.The experimental group learned through storytelling.

Tests created by the researcher measured vocabulary retention to determine how long students remembered the words. Participant observation was used to observe students' reactions, focus, and interest in the story (see Appendices 3, 4, and 5 for details)

Course of Research:

The story used for the quasi-experiment was carefully chosen based on several conditions. In the end, "The Cat in the Hat" by Dr. Seuss was chosen because it met all the requirements. The story had interesting content, correct length, and rich illustrations to keep the students engaged.Its structure and difficulty level were analyzed using the Text Inspector application to ensure the text was suitable. "The Cat in the Hat" is an authentic text with 1,328 words, where most of the vocabulary (84.59%) falls within the A1 level, making it suitable for beginners. The remaining words are distributed across higher levels, including A2 (7.9%), B1 (2.93%), B2 (2.48%), C1 (0.64%), and C2 (0.13%). The text also contains a predominance of shorter words, which makes it easier for a control group encountering the story for the first time. This combination of simple vocabulary and shorter words enhances comprehension and engagement for young learners.

Word list	types	Tokens	Accumulated% types	Accumulated Token types
A1	153 (59.30%)	1328 (84.59%)	59.3%	84.6%
A2	46 (17.83%)	124 (7.90%)	77.1%	92.5%
B1	22 (8.53%)	46 (2.93%)	85.7%	95.4%
B2	18 (6.98%)	39 (2.48%)	92.6%	97.9%
C1	7 (2.71%)	10 (0.64%)	95.3%	98.5%
C2	2 (0.78%)	2 (0.13%)	96.1%	98.7%
Unlisted	10 (3.88%)	21 (1.34%)	100%	100%

(figure 1: lexical compositions of the story)
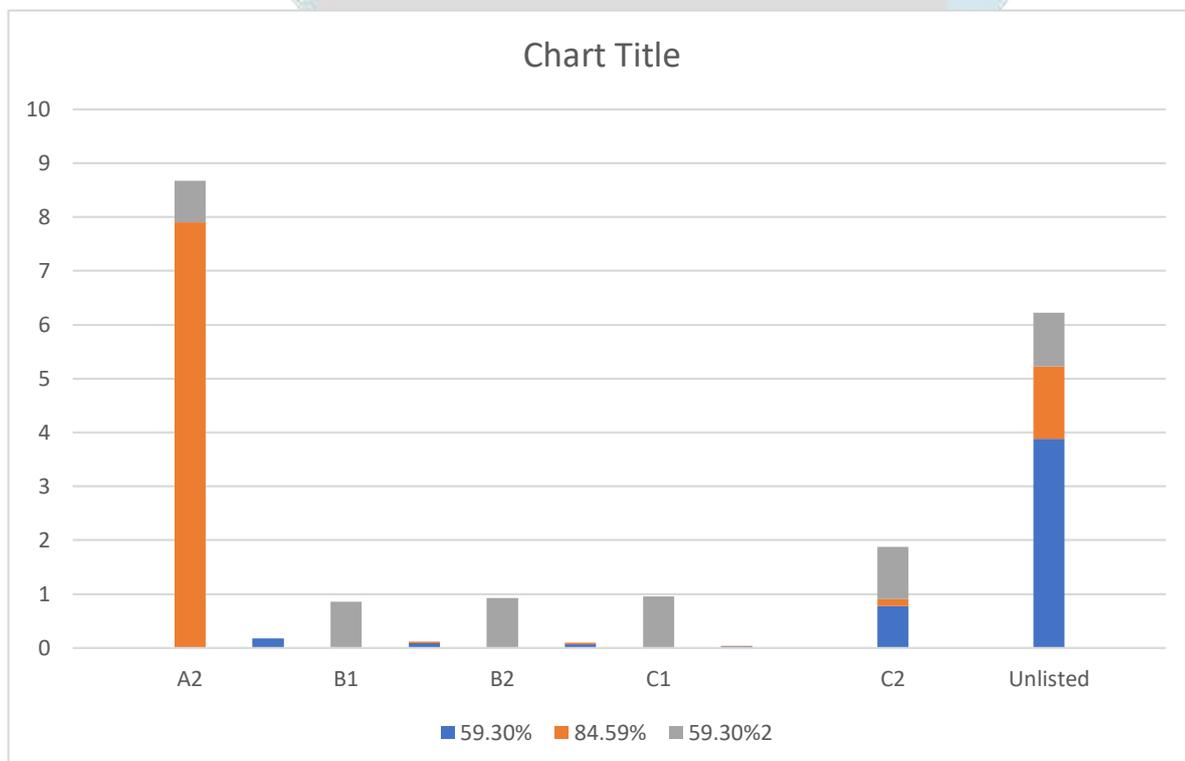
(figure 2: lexical compositions of the story)

After carefully analyzing the chosen story, a list of 18 simple and useful words and phrases was selected. These words are commonly used and easy to understand in real-life situations. The selected vocabulary includes: *wet, mat, have no fear, fall, dish, rake, fan, pot, sink, bent, hook, bow, bite, gown, what a shame, mess, strings,* and *tame animals*. Once the story and vocabulary were chosen, the instructional activities were planned together with the students.

The planning session was done with the students to keep them engaged and ensure the activities matched their learning goals. After planning, the activities were tested in the classroom to check their effectiveness and find areas for improvement. Finally, a detailed schedule was created to guide the sequence of lessons. This schedule will help in delivering the planned activities and introducing the target vocabulary through the selected story.

CONTROL GROUP				EXPERIMENTAL GROUP			
Student	TEST1	TEST2	TEST3	Student	TEST1	TEST2	TEST3
K1	56.5%	34.8%	86%	E1	72%	26%	-
K2	65.2%	30.4%	-	E2	100%	21.7%	90%
K3	65.2%	43.5%	-	E3	78.3%	-	-
K4	82.6%	34.8%	81%	E4	91.3%	26%	72%
K5	91.3%	-	-	E5	-	21.7%	-
K6	56.5%	39.1%	81%	E6	78.3%	30.4%	86%
K7	82.6%	32.6%	81%	E7	74%	21.7%	72%
K8	82.6%	34.8%	-	E8			

FIGURE 3: The success of students in vocabulary testing

In this study, the choice of statistical tests was based on checking whether the data followed a normal distribution. To assess this, visual inspection using histograms was used (Tomšík 2017, p. 185). Graphs 9 and 10 showed that the data in both the experimental and control groups did not follow a normal distribution. To confirm this, normality tests were conducted separately for each group across the three tests. Since the data did not meet the conditions for normal distribution, non-parametric tests were chosen for further analysis. Additionally, because the sample size was small, parametric tests were avoided. The main goal of the statistical analysis was to check if there was a significant difference between the two groups. Based on the type of variables, number of variables, and number of groups studied (Tomšík 2017), the **Mann-Whitney U test** was selected. This non-parametric test helps determine whether the difference in medians or means between two groups is statistically significant or just by chance (Tomšík 2017).
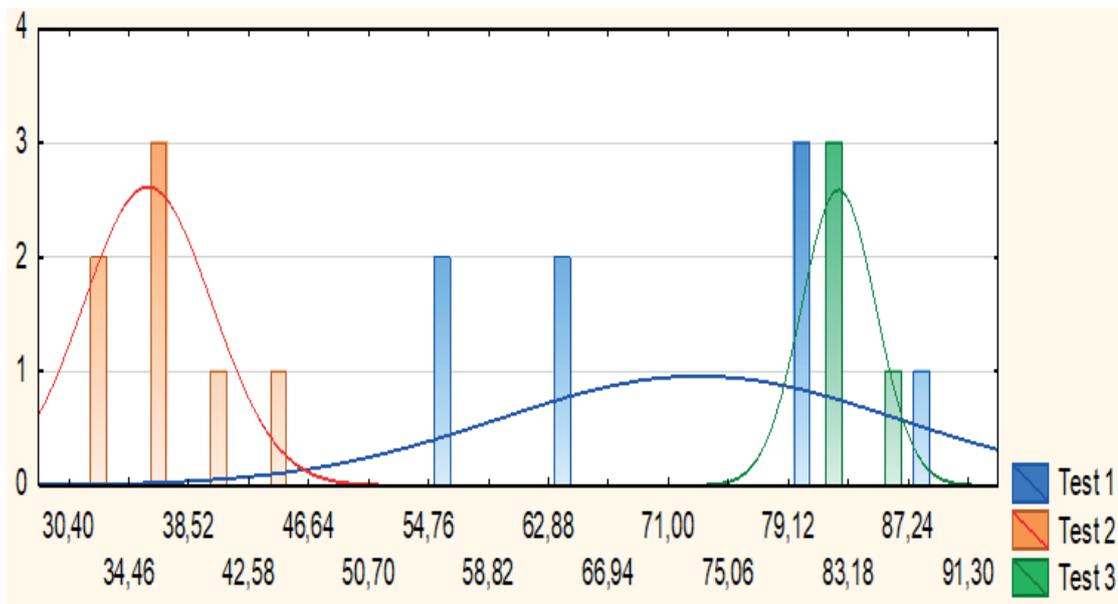

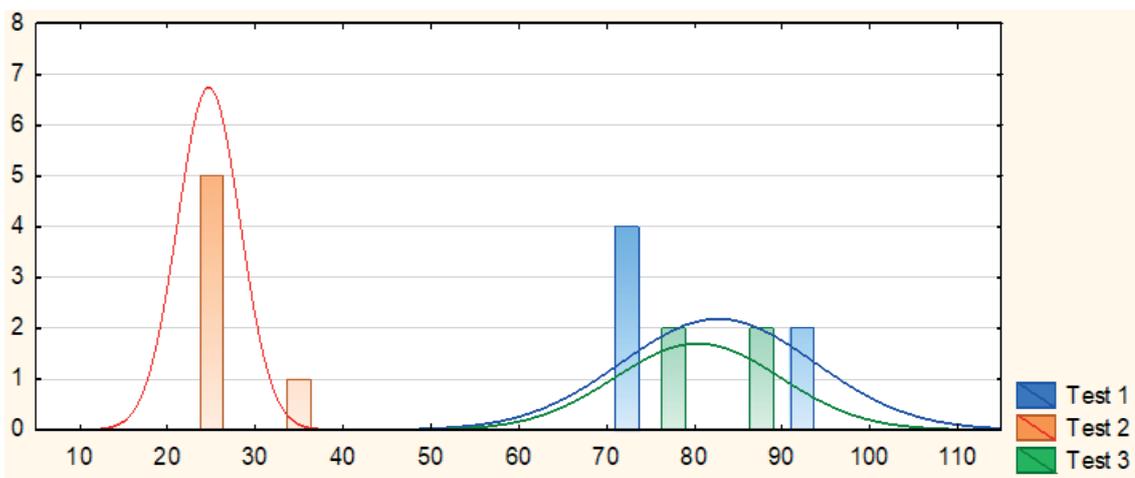*Figure 4: Normality test – control group (source: own processing)*

Figure 5: Normality test – experimental group

The statistical analysis using the Mann-Whitney U test (Table 4) showed a significant difference between the groups in Test 2 (U=0.500; p=0.004) in favor of the control group (Graph 12). However, Tests 1 and 3 did not show any statistically significant difference between the groups (Test 1: U=16.500; p=0.336 and Test 3: U=7.500; p=1.000).

Tests 1 and 3 assessed passive vocabulary, while Test 2 focused on active vocabulary. The significant difference found in Test 2 suggests that the control group performed better in retaining active vocabulary. One possible reason is that both storytelling and loud reading approaches had a similar impact on passive vocabulary retention, as shown in Tests 1 and 3. However, in the case of active vocabulary, a notable difference was observed, favoring the control group.

VARIABLES	Mann Whitney UTest Marked differences are significant at P<.500									
	K	E	U	Z	P	Z	P	N(K)	N(E)	2*1
TEST 1	52.500	52.500	16.500	-0.90	0.36	-0.91	0.362	8	6	0.35
TEST2	69.500	21.500	0.500	2.857	0.004	2.897	0.004	7	6	0.001
TEST3	18.500	17.500	7.500	0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000	4	4	0.887

Figure 6: Mann-Whitney U Test

In Test 3, both groups improved a lot. The experimental group's scores went up by about 55%, and the control group's scores increased by around 46%. Although the experimental group did slightly better than the control group in Test 3, the difference was not big enough to be considered significant.

The results of Tests 1 and 3 were very similar, with both groups performing almost the same. This may be because both tests focused on passive vocabulary, which means that both storytelling and loud reading helped students remember passive vocabulary well.

However, in Test 2, which focused on active vocabulary, both groups had a significant drop in their ability to produce vocabulary

Conclusion:

This study looked at how well two teaching methods, storytelling and loud reading through translator devices help students learn vocabulary in a foreign language. The study used two groups: one group learned with

storytelling, and the other with loud reading. After learning, students took three vocabulary tests to check their understanding of both passive and active vocabulary.

The results showed that for Test 1 and Test 3, which focused on passive vocabulary, there was no big difference between the two groups. However, in Test 2, which focused on active vocabulary, the control group (using loud reading) did better than the experimental group (using storytelling). This suggests that loud reading might be better for learning active vocabulary.Even with these limitations, the study gives useful insights. Both storytelling and loud reading help with passive vocabulary, but loud reading seems to work better for active vocabulary. More research is needed to confirm these findings and explore why these methods affect vocabulary learning differently.

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