

ICT and Vocabulary Acquisition in Two Different Groups of Spanish and Portuguese Learners

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Abstract

Recent research on Second Language Acquisition (SLA) shows that computer-assisted language learning (CALL) leads to an improvement of cognitive and social skills which are involved in the natural process of communication and which especially enable the acquisition of new lexicon. Bearing this in mind, we have started using blended learning in Spanish and Portuguese classes, with the help of an internet platform, MONDO, provided by Stockholm University.

This study focuses on the learning of new vocabulary in two different groups of students at Stockholm University: a group of intermediate learners of Spanish (n=16) and a group of learners of Portuguese at beginners' level (n=11).

Two sets of experiments have been conducted with each group: one using blended learning and one based on traditional learning activities. The one using blended learning includes three different cognitive skills: listening and reading, on the internet, and speaking about a specific topic, in class, by means of a debate. The acquisition of new vocabulary through these activities has been evaluated and compared to the acquisition of new vocabulary when no ICT was used and students worked with a glossary and a text where they had to use the words they were supposed to learn. The evaluation of the two learning methods consisted on a task where the students were asked to fill-in the blanks with the right word in its correct grammatical form.

The results of the experiments with the Spanish group have shown that there is a significant difference between the two methods ($p=0,0151$), indicating that the inclusion of ICT reinforces the acquisition of specific vocabulary. A similar set of experiments will be conducted with the Portuguese group and similar results are expected.

The outcome of the experiments ran with both groups will be presented and discussed at the conference.