

Effective Glosses in Reading to Help L2 Vocabulary Learning for Low-Intermediate Technology University Students in Taiwan

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Abstract : It is controversial which type of gloss condition (i.e., gloss language or gloss position) is more effective in second or foreign language (L2) vocabulary learning. The present study compared the performance on learning ten English words in the conditions of L2 English reading with no glosses and with glosses of Chinese equivalents/translations and L2 English definitions at the side of a page and at an attached sheet for low-intermediate Chinese-speaking learners of English, who were technology university students in Taiwan. It is found first that the performances on the immediate posttest and the delayed posttest were overall better in the gloss condition than those in the no-gloss condition. Next, it is found that the glosses of Chinese translations were more effective and sustainable than those of L2 English definitions. Finally, the effects of L2 English glosses at the side of a page were observed to be less sustainable than those at an attached sheet. In addition, an opinion questionnaire used also showed a preference for the glosses of Chinese translations in L2 English reading. These results would be discussed in terms of automated lexical access, sentence processing mechanisms, and the trade-off nature of storage and processing functions in working memory system, proposed by the capacity theory of language comprehension.

Keywords : glosses of Chinese equivalents/translations, glosses of L2 English definitions, L2 vocabulary learning, L2 English reading

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