



REVIEW OF ADVANTAGES OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF GLOSSING ON VOCABULARY LEARNING AND READING COMPREHENSION

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ABSTRACT

Knowing about the factors that have influence on vocabulary learning and reading comprehension, positively or negatively is crucial. We know that learning vocabulary is one of the most important factors in learning the second language. One of the approaches in learning vocabulary is incidental learning that is an essential part of vocabulary learning. Knowing the vocabulary causes the better understanding of the reading, to reach to this goal we need to facilitate the learning of the vocabulary by some tools and devices to have better result .one of the most useful and effective tools is gloss. Glossing as a vital tool in learning vocabulary and reading comprehension has different types and it has some implications for the teachers to help their students as an assistant, and also it is a tool to save the time instead of looking up the words in dictionaries.

KEYWORDS: Glossing, Reading comprehension, Vocabulary, EFL

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary or lexicon is one of the most important parts in learning second language. Learning vocabulary, of course is very important, too. According to Knight "learning words can be considered to be the most important aspect of second language learning. Alessi and Dwyer (2008) point that "the lack of vocabulary and frustration of looking up new words are the main obstacles of second language readers".

Hunt and Belgar (1998) offered incidental learning, explicit instruction, and independent strategy, to reach to vocabulary learning. The most important part that had vital role was incidental vocabulary learning. Researchers accepted the fact that incidental vocabulary acquisition happens in second language learning. According to Huckin & coady "except for the first few thousand most common words, L2 vocabulary is largely acquired incidentally.





Gass (1999) suggested that it doesn't mean by the incidental vocabulary learning that learners don't take care of lexes in question; but he or she pays attention on comprehending the reading text over ally and the result of this process is memorizing the words.

In addition, Huckling and Coady (1999) asserted in a review of an article about incidental vocabulary learning that much second vocabulary learning occurs incidentally while the learner is engaged in extensive reading" (p.181).

It is exciting to mention that children in a short period of time are able to learn their fist language through reading by the help of incidental vocabulary learing.some researchers have suggested different procedures to raise learning of incidental vocabulary. First: using dictionary, second guessing the word through context, and third: glossing.

A successful reading depends on high vocabulary knowledge. There is a mutual direction between vocabulary and reading, as vocabulary increase the comprehension of the reading and reading causes high knowledge of vocabulary.

It is said most of the time students and language learners are not interested in reading and they mention that reading is unenjoyable part of l2 learning and it is hurting for them as a result lack of reading causes difficulty in vocabulary learning, and it is clear it is supposed as main problem for l2 learners. It is needed to the EFL/ESL learners to do the reading and not using the dictionary to make it more enjoyable and they don't feel frustrated by unfamiliar words.

When students read the new words in a reading text they are unsuccessful to pay attention to the words that they are unfamiliar with them so in this situation vocabulary learning doesn't happen. A lot of researchers for example Yoshi (2006), Nation (2002) mentioned that glossing is one of the successful ways and in fact successful tools for increasing the concentration on the new words by the learners specially ESL/EFL learners.

Most of the time and in most papers incidental vocabulary refers to something that that is obtained by the learners without special paying attention or focusing on the context. Wesche and paribakht defines incidental vocabulary like this "incidental vocabulary refers to the process in which learners focus on comprehending meaning of reading and listening context rather than on the intentional vocabulary learning and acquire vocabulary as a "by-product". Nation has clarified that in learning vocabulary incidentally, the learner pays more attention on some other elements, sometimes the massages that are carried by a speaker or a writer. If the number of unfamiliar words is not so many in such messages, fairly large vocabulary learning can happen even if the learner's attention is not directed toward vocabulary learning".





Reading is known as a basic skill in the field of learning second language. According to Chastain (1988) it is necessary for second language learners to acquire the knowledge of reading to communicate and to read more and more quantities of authentic materials. It is clear that a factor that is vital and should be considered as an important factor during learning second language is reading.

As EFL learners live in an environment that English language is not spoken, in this context reading can be an important source for language input for majority of this kind of students. An ideal text for reading is a symbol for writing. It is confirmed reading has positive effect on knowledge of vocabulary of the learners, and also on spelling and writing (Harmer, 2007). In most countries reading has a top situation in teaching English lessons in contrast to other skills in schools and at university.

Harmer (2007) has pointed that meaning as the message of the writing is very important in reading. As it is very important skill, there are so many ways for students to read the text and comprehend its (Khalaji & Vafaeeseresht, 2012). The activities have been changed by them in the classroom to acquire better result in reading comprehension.

Many factors have essential effect on L1 reading comprehension. Literacy of the L1, top-down and bottom-up strategies, background knowledge, different skills of reading, and having knowledge of vocabulary. It is important to mention, vocabulary is considered as the most important ones in reading comprehension.

Nation (2009) mentioned that all texts don't need to be simplified because there are other ways to help the vocabulary carrying extensive reading. They consist of elaborating the words, reading by the help of computer and glossing. According to most researchers glosses are one of the most ordinary instruments for adapting the text as glosses help the learner or reader understand the reading through vocabulary.

Pedagogical implication of this study

The presented study indicates that different glosses can be useful and appropriate to learn simply the incidental vocabulary. During the reading activity students pay attention to the new words by the gloss and result is, getting the knowledge that is necessary for learning new words. It is interesting to say that by glossing students don't need to use their dictionary to find the new words so interruption to find new words in dictionary doesn't happen during the process of reading, and as a result, wrong inference doesn't occur for the words that are unknown for the learner in the text they are reading. So, gloss can make the students as second language learners sure that they understand the text exactly and it can help them get the meanings of the new vocabulary.





In order to have a successful glossing in teaching reading second language we as instructor should consider the following factors: the designer should not choose a lot of words to be gloss according to his or her interest and judgment but actually select the words according to the degree of their importance and usefulness. It can be helpful to ask the learner to select the words by highlighting them in the text based on degree of difficulties.

The designer should consider the proficiency level of the students because the proficiency of the students and the glosses should be matched together. Also glosses need to be clear and appropriate to the text. To encourage the students it is a good idea to color or underline the glossed word, of course it should mention that it could affect the speed of reading and sometimes comprehension of the reading.

Incidental vocabulary learning and its relationship with the reading comprehension

Incidental learning vocabulary refers to kind of the learning process in that learners focus more on the comprehension especially in reading or listening than the intentional vocabulary learning. Nation has clarified that in this process learner attend to focus on elements such as message that is produced by the speaker. There are some evidence in different studies that show the relationship between incidental vocabulary and reading.

Glosses

A gloss is defined as the meaning or a short description of a word, or its better to say of an unknown word for the L2 students to make the comprehension of the reading better in fact by glossing we help the learner to promote his or her reading comprehension. Short definition is the description that Nation (1983) gave to gloss. Segler (2001) had other definition for gloss, he defined it as a translation or short explanation for difficult and hard words that can't be understood by the learners like some technical words that exist in technical texts.

Glosses can focus on the three different characters. Glosses may be written in the first language, in the target language or it can be written in a third language. It is important to mention that the third type is not as regular as the first and second type. Another point is that glossing is not just a translation of the difficult words or it is not just a definition for the unknown words but they are criteria.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Different scholars have the same definition and somehow similar definition for glossing. For instance Otto and Hayes (1982) define glossing as "adjunct aids" and holds that the term gloss and glossing are being used to designate and describe the systematic use of marginal notes and other extra text notations to direct reader's attention while they read" (p.1).





Stewart and Cross (1991) present a same description and claimed that glosses are often apply in subject area in reading texts. Hun and Plass (1996) recognizes two different glossing one of them is traditional glossing and another one is multimedia glossing and stated that "the traditional method for glossing or annotating words is to provide the definition or explanation of the word either in the L2 or in the native language(L1) of the readers".(p.183).

Some other definitions that are as same as the above definitions are suggested by researchers as Cheng and Good (2009) and Lin and Huang (2008). Lomicka (1998) defines glosses as "short definition or notes in order to facilitate reading and comprehension processes for L2 learners"(p.41). According to Roy (1999)," glosses are many kinds of attempts to supply what is perceived to be deficient in a reader's procedural or declarative knowledge"(p.96).

Jacob (1991) points to glossing in different ways; first, bottom-up points of view, second top-down, and third interactive point .according to his view on bottom-up, glossing can be appropriate to reading comprehension, his view on top-down, glossing is useful for comprehension, and the third one that is interactive and in fact is the combination of two previous ones, its view is that both are necessary and essential.

Based on some related literature, some of the researchers found the impacts of the phenomenon glossing on vocabulary learning but those findings were not consistent. Glossing is considered as a tool that is useful in many foreign language textbooks. We can consider glossing as one of the simplest ways to understand the meaning of the new vocabulary in a text, as glossed words are located in the marginal on the presented page or other pages, so the students as L2 learner; don't need to look up in dictionaries to find the meanings of the unknown words.

A lot of research has shown that existence of gloss is more beneficial than absence of gloss for the purpose of the learning vocabulary incidentally. The effects of gloss have tested by Hulstijn, Hollander and Greidonus (1996) on incidental vocabulary learning. These researchers tried to study the effect of marginal glosses, using dictionary, and unknown word reoccurrence on incidental vocabulary learning. Another example is about Dutch students who learned French, they read the text under one of these conditions: marginal glosses (L1), using a bilingual dictionary, reading just the text without any kind of gloss, or any kind of dictionary. After comparing these three conditions it was confirmed that marginal glosses (L1) had more affections on learning vocabulary than using bilingual dictionary or using the text lonely.

A lot of researchers confirmed that gloss usage has a positive impact on acquisition of new words. so many research showed that gloss is more useful and beneficial in contrast to not using any gloss in the field of vocabulary learning. According to Hulstijn (1992)" the use of multiple – choice glosses can decrease the difficulties caused by inadequate contexts and the possibility of





wrong inference".multiple-choice gloss is a kind of glossing in the field of vocabulary learning which needs the effort of the mental and in addition it needs attention to reach the goal.hulstijn did some studies and he got different results. Some studies showed the multiple-choice better performance in contrast to the other group which was L2 gloss group. But other study showed that L1 gloss group acted better significantly than the multiple-choice group in vocabulary learning.

To find out the result of gloss on retention of 20 low- frequency vocabulary, Laufer and Schumeli (1997) did a study in that 128 pupils of high school that their first language was Hebrew, were chosen to be in four experimental groups. One of the groups was given a word list second group received the words in sentence, other group received the words in a passage, the group number 4 received the words in an elaborate text, and they assigned another group as a control group. This study showed that L1 glosses were more beneficial in contrast to L2gloss; either in short term and long term retention. It assumes that the most attention will be on the any new vocabulary in a situation that L1 gloss is applied.

In another research, Grace (1998, 2000) tested the sentence-level L1translation on learning incidental vocabulary, it showed that translation glosses as a kind of effective gloss is effective, too, in this field. Different kinds of research have done about the comparison among different kinds of glosses on vocabulary learning. For example the effect of three different kinds of glossing was examined by Kost, Foss, and Lenzini (1999): text-onlyL1 gloss, picture only gloss, and textL1 and picture gloss. In this research the result showed the text and picture glossing type performed better than the other two kinds of glossing.

In addition, Gettys et al.(2001) examined the impacts of sentence-level L1translation and using glosses in the form of dictionary on incidental vocabulary learning .the consequence of the research indicated that dictionary form glosses was more effective than sentence-level translation gloss on vocabulary learning. The benefits of applying glossing in reading subjects are somehow documented very well. Otto and Hayes (1982) gave attention to apply glosses and they have two reasons to do this: glosses increase comprehension and it assists that kind of learners that are not proficient enough to utilize their ability of reading. They also make the skills of comprehension better.

Some studies have been done on the effect of glossing on reading comprehension and how it makes the comprehension better. Some of the research doesn't show any noticeable difference among different kinds of gloss (e.g. Jacobs et al. 1994) however some other researchers mentioned and showed the superiority of a special gloss over some other types. Nation (2009) considered that glosses can make the reading comprehension better. During recent years using of technology in learning is obvious and we can watch its developments in our classroom, too.





According to rezaee and scharbafshoar (2001)" multimedia facilitates the applications of computers in foreign language education by providing audio-visual presentations and interactions tailored to the needs and interests of different individuals or groups of learners". Marzban (2011) in his study discovered that multimedia performed very well in reading comprehension.

In a special study, Xu (2010) did comparison of the impact of various kinds of glossing on the incidental vocabulary learning, in reading comprehension. Xu describe his research as follow: first, a higher understanding of text will have better and higher amount of incidental vocabulary learning, second, L1 and L2 gloss type can be the most effective and influential type to enhance vocabulary learning and word retention, third, L1 gloss is the most effective one in gaining vocabulary but it is the least effective in retaining the words. Forth, the weakest kind of glossing for gaining vocabulary can be L2 gloss type.

In a master thesis, Lage (2008) wanted to compare the different kinds of glossing on incidental Spanish vocabulary learning through reading comprehension. The research showed no noticeable difference between vocabulary recalling and gloss representation. Also, it was showed that a positive relation between gloss and language proficiency exists.

CONCLUSION

Glosses were considered as tools for better performance in the process of learning vocabulary. Learning vocabulary is considered as an important process that can be facilitated by glossing. Reading comprehension is considered as an important process too, that can be facilitated by different kinds of glossing .so glossing can be very important and vital tool in learning process, especially in vocabulary learning and follow that in reading comprehension. Glosses generally are effective in learning a language and particularly in learning the vocabulary.

These studies can represent some implications for the teachers and for the learners and of course for the developers of the materials in the educational system. These researches are beneficial for the teachers to use them as some activities for listening practice in their classroom. The research result can also show the teachers some guidelines for example when and where and in what situation they can offer the new vocabulary to the students, is it better to represent vocabulary during or after the text that is going to be read. Glosses can act as a tool which are able to balance the situation in which knowledge of the vocabulary doesn't exists or may be isn't enough and for those students who often dependent on their teachers and their dictionary. The implications of the study about glossing prepare new insights for the teachers to help their students to reinforce the reading ability in foreign language learning.





Although there are a number of different researches and various studies about different gloss impact on vocabulary learning and reading comprehension, there are some special subjects that researchers are worry about: most of the researches concentrate just on the surface of the subject and another concern is the obvious differences between the studies that are similar and the results are not conclusive.

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