



注释对二语阅读中 词汇附带习得的影响研究

Effects of Glosses on Incidental Vocabulary Acquisition
in Second Language Reading


易红波◎著

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Abstract

Wilkins (1972: 111) holds that “without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed.” Schmitt (2015: 4) also argues that “learning vocabulary is an essential part of mastering a second language.” They both emphasize the significance of vocabulary in language learning. It is generally believed that there are two ways to learn vocabulary, intentionally and incidentally. Even though the result of incidental vocabulary acquisition is not always satisfactory, nobody can deny that it is an important way to acquire vocabulary. After all, “vocabulary learning is incremental in nature.” (Schmitt, 2015: 21)

The current research, which is composed of three empirical studies, aims to investigate the effects of the languages employed in glosses, the number of the options provided to glosses, and glossing positions on reading comprehension and incidental vocabulary acquisition through reading for the learners with different language proficiency. Three questions are raised in each empirical study.

1. Which type of glosses is more facilitative to learners' reading comprehension? Are there significant differences in reading

comprehension between the learners with different language proficiency under different glossing conditions?

2. Which type of glosses is more beneficial to learners' incidental vocabulary acquisition through reading? Are there significant differences in vocabulary gain and vocabulary retention between the learners with different language proficiency under different glossing conditions?

3. Are there significant differences between learners' vocabulary gain and vocabulary retention under each glossing condition? Are there significant differences between vocabulary gain and vocabulary retention for the learners with different language proficiency?

In each empirical study, the learners are divided into the group with higher language proficiency and the one with lower language proficiency, according to the results of two Vocabulary Levels Tests. Glosses of 10 target words chosen from the same text are provided in different languages, with different options and in different positions. The participants are required to take an immediate vocabulary test after finishing two reading tasks, and two weeks later, a delayed vocabulary test with the same items, but in a different order, is given to the same participants. The tests take the form of the Vocabulary Knowledge Scale. After the first vocabulary test, some participants are chosen to be interviewed about their opinions of glossing conditions. All the data collected is analyzed by means of SPSS 20.0.

The first empirical study is to investigate the effects of the languages employed in glosses on reading comprehension and incidental vocabulary acquisition through reading for the learners with different language proficiency. There are four different types of glosses, that is, Chinese glosses, English glosses, Chinese plus English glosses, as well as null glosses. It is found that there are significant differences in learners' reading comprehension under four different glossing conditions. To be exact, significant differences are found in learners' reading comprehension between four glosses, except between Chinese glosses and English glosses. There are also significant differences in reading comprehension under each glossing condition between the learners with different language proficiency. As for vocabulary gain, significant differences are found under these four glossing conditions. To be specific, significant differences in learners' vocabulary gain are found between Chinese glosses and null glosses, English glosses and Chinese plus English glosses, as well as between null glosses and Chinese plus English glosses. There are also significant differences in vocabulary gain between the learners with different language proficiency under each glossing condition, except under the condition of Chinese glosses. As to vocabulary retention, glossing conditions have a significant effect on learners' vocabulary retention. However, significant differences only exist between Chinese glosses and Chinese plus English glosses, and between null glosses and

Chinese plus English glosses. In terms of the differences between vocabulary gain and vocabulary retention, significant differences exist under each glossing condition. For the learners with higher language proficiency, there are significant differences between vocabulary gain and vocabulary retention under the condition of both Chinese plus English glosses and null glosses, while for the learners with lower language proficiency, significant differences are found under each glossing condition. In brief, glosses can greatly improve learners' reading comprehension and their incidental vocabulary acquisition through reading, especially Chinese plus English glosses.

The second empirical study is concerned with the effects of the number of the options provided to glosses on reading comprehension and incidental vocabulary acquisition for the learners with different language proficiency. There are two types of glosses involved, single Chinese plus English glosses and multiple-choice Chinese plus English glosses with two options. It is discovered that glossing conditions have a significant effect on learners' reading comprehension. And significant differences in reading comprehension also exist under two glossing conditions between the learners with different language proficiency. As to vocabulary gain, there are significant differences under two glossing conditions. To be accurate, the higher the learners' language proficiency is, the better their vocabulary gain is under two glossing conditions. As for vocabulary retention, there are

not any significant differences under two glossing conditions, and neither are there between the learners with different language proficiency. With regard to the differences between vocabulary gain and vocabulary retention, it is found that there are significant differences under two glossing conditions. At the same time, significant differences between vocabulary gain and vocabulary retention also exist for the learners with different language proficiency. In short, single Chinese plus English glosses can significantly facilitate learners' reading comprehension and their incidental vocabulary acquisition through reading.

The last empirical study is involved in the effects of glossing positions on reading comprehension and incidental vocabulary acquisition through reading for the learners with different language proficiency. Four types of glosses are concerned, in-text glosses, marginal glosses, footnote glosses and endnote glosses. It is found that glossing positions have a significant effect on learners' reading comprehension. To be exact, significant differences in learners' reading comprehension exist between in-text glosses and marginal glosses, in-text glosses and endnote glosses, marginal glosses and footnote glosses, as well as between marginal glosses and endnote glosses. There are also significant differences in reading comprehension under four glossing conditions between the learners with different language proficiency. To be specific, the higher the learners' language

proficiency is, the better their reading comprehension is under the condition of marginal glosses and endnote glosses. With regard to vocabulary gain, glossing positions have a significant effect on learners' vocabulary gain. Significant differences are found between four glossing positions, except between in-text glosses and footnote glosses. In addition, significant differences in vocabulary gain are found between the learners with different language proficiency. To be precise, the higher the learners' language proficiency is, the better their vocabulary gain is under the condition of marginal glosses and endnote glosses. As for vocabulary retention, glossing positions have a significant effect on learners' vocabulary retention. However, significant differences exist between in-text glosses and marginal glosses, marginal glosses and footnote glosses, as well as between marginal glosses and endnote glosses. It is also found that there are significant differences in vocabulary retention under four glossing conditions between the learners with different language proficiency. Nevertheless, significant differences only exist under the condition of marginal glosses. In terms of the differences between vocabulary gain and vocabulary retention, there are significant differences under each glossing condition. For the learners with higher language proficiency, significant differences between vocabulary gain and vocabulary retention exist under the condition of marginal glosses and endnote glosses, while for the learners with lower language proficiency, significant differences

only exist under the condition of endnote glosses. In brief, marginal glosses are significantly the most beneficial to learners' reading comprehension and their incidental vocabulary acquisition through reading.

Based on the results obtained in these three empirical studies, the general conclusion is that glosses can significantly facilitate learners' reading comprehension and their incidental vocabulary acquisition through reading, especially single marginal Chinese plus English glosses. This result is partially consistent with the Involvement Load Hypothesis, which means the hypothesis needs to be revised.

The research has some implications for the compilation of English textbooks and English vocabulary teaching in practice. Theoretically, the research may throw some insights into the revision of the Involvement Load Hypothesis.

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Chapter One Introduction

Wilkins (1972: 111) once stated that without vocabulary, nothing could be conveyed. Therefore, vocabulary acquisition plays a crucially significant part in L2 learning. Reading is a critically important means to obtain the information we need. For language learners, they can acquire vocabulary through reading. While reading, the learners may try to figure out the meanings of the words with the help of the context, which gradually helps them to incidentally acquire vocabulary knowledge. Nation (1990: 130) also holds that acquiring vocabulary incidentally is one of the most important vocabulary learning strategies. Krashen (1989) even argues that the learners can acquire vocabulary best by means of incidental vocabulary acquisition. In a word, incidental vocabulary acquisition plays a vital role in vocabulary acquisition for language learners. Even so, some scholars express their doubts about the effect of incidental vocabulary acquisition through reading (Rieder, 2002). Therefore, some methods are employed to enhance the effect of incidental vocabulary acquisition, such as providing different types of glosses for the target words, setting different levels of questions, as well as increasing the reoccurrence frequencies of the target words in