

L1/L2 Electronic Glosses: Effects on Adult Taiwanese EFL Learners' Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary Learning

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Abstract

This study investigated how L1/L2 electronic glosses in different numbers affected adult Taiwanese EFL learners' reading comprehension and vocabulary learning. 100 Taiwanese university students were randomly divided into five groups: (1) English full glossing (EFG), (2) English key-word glossing (EKG), (3) Mandarin full glossing (MFG), (4) Mandarin key-word glossing, and (5) no glossing (NG). Participants took one vocabulary pre-test and proceeded to read an English article, which was followed by one reading comprehension test and three immediate vocabulary post-tests (administration order: form recognition, meaning recall, and meaning recognition). In addition, the four experiment groups answered an exit questionnaire to indicate their user experience of electronic glosses and preferred gloss language.

The major findings were as the following. First, the use of electronic glosses had positive effects on EFL learners' reading comprehension, meaning recall and recognition, especially when the gloss language was Mandarin. Second, the number of electronic glosses was found to negatively affected reading comprehension only when the gloss language was English. Third, Mandarin (L1) turned out to have significant influence on EFL learners' meaning recall. Finally, based on the responses obtained from the exit questionnaire, the majority of the participants seemed to hold electronic glosses in a quite positive light. Mandarin was favored by around half of them as gloss language. The current study supported using electronic glosses to help Taiwanese adult EFL learners' reading comprehension and learning of the meaning of novel L2 words. Furthermore, L1 was suggested to be the gloss language for intermediate EFL learners.

Keywords: CALL; digital reading; electronic glosses; hypertext; L2 reading; number of links; process model for hypertext reading; reading comprehension; revised hierarchical model; vocabulary learning