The Effect of Glossing on EFL Learners’ Incidental Vocabulary Learning in Reading
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Abstract
Glossing is a technique which is used to aid reading comprehension and vocabulary learning. The aim of the present study is to investigate the effect of glossing on incidental vocabulary learning of learners with low English proficiency. In addition to gloss and no-gloss comparison, different types of glosses, L1 and L2, were compared as well in terms of their effect on incidental vocabulary learning. For this comparison, no-glossed, L1-glossed and L2-glossed versions of a reading text were used. A total of 126 preparatory school students at Niğde University participated in the study and they were randomly assigned into one of the groups: L1 gloss, L2 gloss and no-gloss. After they read the text, they were given an immediate post-test, a multiple choice vocabulary test. They took the same test two weeks later as a delayed post-test. The participants also completed a student opinion questionnaire about their preference and usage of glosses. The results of the vocabulary tests indicated that, L1 gloss group significantly outperformed L2 gloss group and no-gloss group was significantly better than L2 gloss group. The survey results also indicated that participants preferred glosses in reading and they gave preference to L1 glosses. The results of the study may have some implications suggesting that L1 glosses were especially beneficial for learners with low English proficiency.

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1. Introduction

In order to use a second language successfully, learners need to have large vocabularies and for achieving this vocabulary targets set to be learned should be high (Schmitt, 2008). However, within the limited time of instruction in the classroom, it is not possible to teach large amounts of vocabulary items (Cunningham, 2005). In addition to intentional vocabulary learning, learners also need to make use of incidental vocabulary learning and as Schmitt (2000) states, it should be complementary. In the light of this information, there have been a lot of studies investigating incidental vocabulary learning in second language learning (Day, Omura, & Hiramatsu, 1991; Dupuy & Krashen, 1993; Horst, Cobb, & Meara, 1998; Paribakht & Wesche, 1999). It was shown with the help of those studies that new words can be incidentally learned while reading. However, as concluded by Hulstijn (1992) those studies showed low retention rates of the word meanings. In addition, it is always stated that learners need to have multiple exposures to the vocabulary items in different contexts in order to learn the words incidentally. Nevertheless there is not an agreement on how many times learners need to be exposed to the target words and what kind of exposure is needed for successful learning (Huckin & Coady, 1999). Lastly, another problematic point of incidental vocabulary learning through reading is about low proficiency level learners. As stated by Schmitt (2000) guessing the meaning of new words is very difficult unless readers know a high percentage of words on a page. L2 learners cannot make guesses as effectively as native speakers of the language due to the fact that their vocabulary knowledge or general proficiency level is not as high as native speakers (Ko, 2012).

Glossing is one of the ways that can be used for enhancing incidental vocabulary learning (Hong, 2010). Lomicka (1998: 41) defines glossing as “typically located in the side or bottom margins, glosses are most often supplied for ‘unfamiliar’ words, which may help to limit continual dictionary consultation that may hinder and interrupt the L2 reading comprehension process”. Glossing can be used as one of the ways of input modification and it has some advantages as concluded by Ko (2005). Firstly, instead of wrong guesses, learners get the help of knowing the meaning of a new word. It is an important issue because once learners make erroneous guesses, they seem reluctant to change them (Haynes, 1993). Hulstijn (1992) found that erroneous guesses are prevented with the help of glosses. Secondly, instead of looking the new words up constantly, glosses help learners read and enjoy their reading without any interruption. Thirdly, with the help of glosses, learners can activate their prior knowledge on the topic with the new knowledge in the text and it is very beneficial for them in terms of understanding and remembering the content of the text. Also, as they encounter words in a context and they make use of their prior knowledge about that topic, learning can become more meaningful and it may help retention of the learned words. The last advantage of glosses mentioned by Ko (2005) is that it provides learners greater autonomy and learners can look up the unknown words.

In her study Ko (2012) also examined the effect of L1 and L2 glosses as well as no-gloss on L2 incidental vocabulary learning. In this study, 90 participants were randomly divided into three groups; no-gloss, L1 gloss and L2 gloss. The first group read the text with no-gloss, the second group read it with L1 gloss and the third group read it with L2 gloss. After reading the glossing, they were given immediate vocabulary tests and four weeks later they took the delayed vocabulary test. They were also asked to complete a student opinion questionnaire in order to see their reactions and opinions about glossing in reading texts. The results of the study revealed that on the immediate and delayed tests glossed groups outperformed no-gloss group, but in the delayed test there was not any significant difference between two groups. The analysis of the student questionnaire showed that the participants preferred L2 glosses in their L2 reading materials. The present study is designed to investigate the effect of L1 and L2 glosses on incidental vocabulary learning by using a paper-based text. It is a replication of the study of Ko (2012) and it investigates the effect of L1 and L2 glosses on incidental vocabulary learning compared with no gloss condition. It replicates the original study in an EFL context with low English proficiency, elementary level, participants. As a result, different reading text and questions were administered to the participants of the present study. It will be helpful to see whether proficiency level is an important issue in terms of making use of glosses or not. The present study aims to contribute to the existing studies on gloss with these additional goals and features by seeking to answer the following research questions:

1. Will different gloss types result in different vocabulary learning and reading comprehension scores on an immediate vocabulary test?
2. Will different gloss types result in different vocabulary learning and reading comprehension scores on a delayed vocabulary test?
3. Is there a difference in vocabulary learning scores between the immediate and the delayed tests?
4. What are the learner opinions and reactions toward different types of glosses?

2. Methodology

2.1. Participants and Setting

The study was conducted in an EFL setting, at the Department of Basic English at Niğde University, Niğde, Turkey, where university students study English for general purposes during a complete academic year before they start their university education at their departments. 156 undergraduates participated in the study, 30 of them in the pilot study and 126 of them in the main study. None of the participants lived in an English-speaking country. They were at elementary level when they participated in the study. According to the results of placement test they took before they started their English education at the Department of Basic English, they were placed at different levels. For making sure that the groups were homogenous in terms of their English proficiency levels, one-way ANOVA was conducted by using their midterm results. The ANOVA results showed that there was not any significant difference between the groups \[ F (54,101) = 1.068, p = .382 \] in terms of their proficiency levels. 42 participants read the text with no-gloss, 42 of them with L1 gloss and 42 of them with L2 gloss.

2.2. Materials

The reading text that was used in the study was “The Lies People Tell”. It was taken from the book “Q: Skills for Success – Reading and Writing-1” (Lynn, 2011). An authentic text was not used in the text, but the text was taken from a skills book as the participants had low English proficiency.

For testing the target vocabulary items, a multiple choice vocabulary test with 16 items was created. It was aimed to measure if the participants learned the target vocabulary items receptively or not and for this aim a multiple choice vocabulary test was created. Each question in the multiple choice vocabulary test measured one target vocabulary and included four options, one correct answer and three distractors. The distractors were tried to be seen as plausible as possible. In order to prevent the advantage of one group over the other, 16 questions in L1 and 16 questions in L2 were included; the total number of the vocabulary items was 32. The delayed vocabulary test was the same as the immediate vocabulary test, except for rearranging the items and distractors. The same design of the study of Ko (2012) was used in the present study.

For finding out the participants’ opinions and reactions about glossing in reading materials, Ko (2012) also designed a student opinion questionnaire. It included four items and the first item asked if they prefer glossing or no glossing with the explanation of the reason behind it. In the second item, what language they prefer the gloss to be in was asked. To be able to understand their actual use of glosses in the study how they read the text was asked in the third item with four choices: (a) focused on the meaning of the story and, and looked at the glosses when coming across unknown words; (b) focused on the meaning of the story and, at the same time intentionally memorized the glosses; (c) only memorized glosses; and (d) an open-ended option to explain any other ways if they used. The last item checked how many glosses they used while reading with the options; (a) most of the glosses, (b) more than half of the glosses, (c) half of the glosses, (d) some of the glosses and (e) never looked at the glosses (p. 64). Turkish version of the same opinion questionnaire design was used in the present study. It was administered after immediate vocabulary test without announcing it before to the participants.

2.3. Procedures

A pilot study was conducted with 30 students before the main study both for deciding on the target vocabulary items and finding out the time needed for reading the text. In the pilot study, the participants were asked to read the text and underline the unknown words. Then, they were asked to go through the text again and write the guessed meaning of the unknown words. The words unknown to 60% or more of the participants in the pilot study were selected as target words following the study of Ko (2012) she explained it as these items were evaluated to cause difficulty for reading comprehension.
Before the immediate reading comprehension and vocabulary tests were administered, the participants were asked to read the text. They were told that after reading the text they were going to be asked questions, but it was not told them that they would be given both comprehension and vocabulary tests. After they completed reading the text, the reading materials were collected and multiple choice comprehension questions were given. After they answered the comprehension questions, their papers were collected and multiple choice vocabulary tests were distributed. As there were both L1 and L2 versions of the vocabulary tests, half of the groups were given the L1 first and then L2 version and the other half L2 first and L1 later. However, the questions in Turkish and English were not given together to the participants; otherwise they would have used one form for guessing the meaning of the words in the other version. After the tests, the participants were asked to complete the student opinion questionnaire.

Ko (2012) gave the students an unexpected delayed vocabulary test four weeks later. However, in the present study a two-week span was used following similar studies (Yoshi, 2006; Kost et al., 1999).

2.4. Data Analysis

Vocabulary tests were evaluated in three steps as it was done in the study of Ko (2012). First, correct answer in Turkish version was rewarded 1 point and correct answer in English version was rewarded 1 point. Consequently, the maximum score that a participant could get was 32 points (16 items x 2 versions). Second, the score of words that were correct both in L1 and L2 versions were found. Third, by dividing the score rewarded to the learner by 2, the number of gained words was found. For regarding a learner knows a word, the learner was expected to know the word both in L1 and L2 versions. The student opinion questionnaire results were analyzed based on tallies. For the first question in which the reason was asked for their preference of L1 or L2 gloss and the answers were analyzed by grouping the written responses.

3. Results

3.1. RQ # 1: Will different gloss types result in different vocabulary learning scores on an immediate vocabulary test?

Immediate post vocabulary test’s reliability, which was measured by Cronbach’s alpha, was 0.80. Descriptive statistics of the immediate vocabulary test according to different gloss types are shown in the Table 1. Descriptive statistics results of the immediate vocabulary test reveal that highest scores were obtained by L1 gloss (M = 22.90), followed by no-gloss (M = 21.19) and L2 gloss (M = 18.12) groups. It is also mentioned in the analysis part that the mean scores represent the mean of the highest number of the correct answers both L1 and L2 tests. The number of the words gained was calculated by dividing the mean by 2 as each word was used both in L1 and L2 tests.

Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations of the Immediate Vocabulary Test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Words gained (M/2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No gloss</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>21.19</td>
<td>5.042</td>
<td>10.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1 gloss</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>22.90</td>
<td>4.160</td>
<td>11.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2 gloss</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>18.12</td>
<td>6.185</td>
<td>9.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>20.74</td>
<td>5.524</td>
<td>10.37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to see whether there was any significant difference among no-gloss, L1 gloss and L2 gloss groups in the immediate vocabulary test, one-way analysis of variance test was conducted. The results of this test showed significant difference at the p < .05 level among gloss type groups [F (2, 125) = 9.147, p = .000] with a medium effect size (Partial Eta Squared = .12) (Cohen, 1988). As one-way ANOVA results indicated significant difference between groups, Bonferroni’s post hoc analysis was performed in order to see which types of gloss have significant difference between each other. Post hoc analysis results indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between no-gloss (M
= 21.19, \(SD = 5.04\) and L2 gloss (\(M = 18.21, SD = 6.18\)) conditions (no gloss > L2 gloss, \(p = .023\)) and L1 (\(M = 22.90, SD = 4.16\)) and L2 gloss (\(M = 18.21, SD = 6.18\)) conditions (L1 > L2, \(p = .000\)). However, there was not any significant difference between no-gloss and L1 gloss groups.

3.2. RQ # 2: Will different gloss types result in different vocabulary learning scores on a delayed vocabulary test?

In order to find the answer of the second research question for the delayed vocabulary test, the same statistical analyses were also used. The reliability of the delayed vocabulary test .853, measured by Cronbach’s alpha. As they are shown in Table 2, L1 gloss condition had the highest mean score (\(M = 27.57\)), followed by no-gloss (\(M = 24.0\)) and L2 gloss conditions (\(M = 20.02\)), respectively. The descriptive statistics results of the delayed vocabulary test supported the immediate vocabulary test results, all three conditions were in the same rank in both of the vocabulary tests.

Table 2. Means and Standard Deviations of the Delayed Vocabulary Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Words gained (M/2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No gloss</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>24.00</td>
<td>4.580</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1 gloss</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>27.57</td>
<td>3.156</td>
<td>13.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2 gloss</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>20.02</td>
<td>6.042</td>
<td>10.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>23.87</td>
<td>5.630</td>
<td>11.93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One-way ANOVA was conducted for seeing if there was any difference among gloss conditions in the delayed vocabulary test and the results indicated that delayed vocabulary test scores were affected by gloss types, as it was in the immediate vocabulary test \([F(2, 125) = 26.631, p = .000]\) with a small effect size (Partial Eta Squared = .3) (Cohen, 1988). In order to examine the differences among gloss types, Bonferroni’s post hoc analysis was performed. According to the results of the Post hoc analysis there was a statistically significant difference between no-gloss (\(M = 24.0, SD = 4.58\)) and L2 gloss (\(M = 20.02, SD = 5.63\)) conditions (no-gloss > L2 gloss, \(p = .001\)) and L1 (\(M = 27.57, SD = 3.15\)) and L2 gloss conditions (L1 > L2, \(P = .000\)). Although there was not any significant difference between no-gloss and L1 gloss conditions in the immediate vocabulary test, there was significant difference in the delayed vocabulary test (L1 > no-gloss, \(p = .002\)).

3.3. RQ # 3: Is there a difference in vocabulary learning scores between the immediate and the delayed tests?

To be able to see whether there was any change over time in terms of vocabulary gains of the participants, a paired-samples \(t\)-Test was conducted for each gloss condition separately. As it can be seen in the Table 3, there was significant effect of time on each gloss conditions; L1 gloss condition (\(t(41) = 7.141, p = .000\)) exhibiting a large effect size (\(d = 1.1; r^2 = .55\)), no gloss condition (\(t(41) = 3.671, p = .001\)) with a moderate effect size (\(d = .56; r^2 = .24\)), and L2 gloss condition (\(t(41) = 3.403, p = .002\)) with a moderate effect size (\(d = .52; r^2 = .22\)). When the total number of the vocabulary gained, without gloss conditions was compared, it was seen that there was also significant difference between immediate and delayed vocabulary tests (\(t(125) = 7.928, p = .000\)) with moderate effect size (\(d = .70; r^2 = .33\)).
3.4. RQ # 4: What are the learner opinions and reactions toward different types of glosses?

The analyses of the student opinion questionnaire were based on the written responses of the participants and tallies. All the participants, in all three groups, answered the first two questions. However, the third and fourth items were about their usage of glosses in the reading text and as the no gloss group did not make use of glosses, they did not answer the last two items of the questionnaire.

The first item of the questionnaire aimed to find out if the participants preferred glossing or not and they were expected to explain the reason of their preference. 93% of the participants preferred having glosses in their reading texts. Their explanations of the preferences were analyzed and their answers were classified into eight categories.

Eight out of 126 participants preferred glosses, but they did not explain the reason of their preference. 81 of them reported that they preferred glosses because they help them understand the text better. Ten people stated that they help learning new words. They stated that with the help of glosses they learn new words while reading a text. Six participants reported that they have low vocabulary knowledge and because of this it is very difficult for them to read and understand something in English. However, with the help of glosses they understood the text better. Four of them indicated that glosses help them to save time while reading and other four participants stated that glosses help them remember the meaning of the words. For two participants, glosses help guessing the meaning of other unknown words and for other two, they help translating the sentences. They reported that for understanding the texts in English, they translate the text into Turkish and it really helps them if they know the meanings of the words. On the other hand, nine participants who indicated that they did not prefer glosses explained their reasons as “I can guess the meanings of the unknown words from the context” and “If I find the meaning of the unknown word myself, I learn it better.”

The second item in the questionnaire asked if the participants preferred the glosses in Turkish or English. 68% of the participants who were in favor of glosses preferred them in Turkish, 26% of them in English and 6% of them in both Turkish and English.

The third item of the questionnaire aimed to find out how they read the text. In the analysis of the third item of the questionnaire which was answered by the L1 and L2 glossed groups, it was found that 51 out of 84 participants focused on the meaning of the story and looked at glosses when coming across with unknown words. The number of the participants who focused on meaning of the story, at the same time, intentionally memorized glosses was 28. Only three of the participants reported that they only memorized glosses and only two participants selected the other option. They stated that they used the glosses for translating the text.

With regard to the last item of the questionnaire which searched for how many glosses the participants looked for, it was found that 33 participants looked at most of the glosses (90% - 100%), eleven of them looked at more than half of the glosses (70% - 80%). Nineteen of them reported that they looked at half of the glosses and twenty-one of them looked at some of them (20% - 30%). None of the participants in the glossed groups stated that they did not look at any of the glosses. It is clear from the results of the questionnaire that most of the participant looked at more than half of the glosses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th># of words scored on N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No gloss</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td>10.59</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>5.042</td>
<td>.778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Delayed</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>4.580</td>
<td>.707</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Delayed</td>
<td>13.78</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>3.156</td>
<td>.487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2 gloss</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td>9.06</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>6.185</td>
<td>.954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Delayed</td>
<td>10.01</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>6.042</td>
<td>.932</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Discussion and Conclusion

The results of the present study show that L1 glosses have a positive effect on learners’ L2 vocabulary learning. The first research question of the study aimed to find out if different gloss types will yield different vocabulary learning scores on an immediate vocabulary test. On the immediate vocabulary test, those in L1 and no-gloss groups were significantly better than L2 gloss group. This finding is not congruent with Ko (2012) and Jacobs et al. (1994) who found that glossed groups were significantly better than no-gloss group and there was not any significant difference between L1 and L2 gloss groups. In terms of word gain, this study demonstrates that students who read L1 glossed text could recognize an average of 11.45 words and those who read without glosses were able to recognize an average of 10.59 words. It is possible that they were able to recognize some words just in English or Turkish, but they were not evaluated as vocabulary gain. However, the average of word gain for L2 gloss group was less than the other two groups, it was 9.06. Ko (2012) found that participants in glossed group recognized 5 or 6 more words than no-gloss group, but it is not the case in the present study.

The main reason of the difference between the findings of the two studies, Ko (2012) and the present study, could be the participants’ English proficiency level. The participants in Ko’s study were at intermediate level, however participants of the present study were at elementary level. As they have lower level of proficiency and lower vocabulary knowledge, they could not understand the meanings of the words that were given in L2. Another reason can be vocabulary learning methods. They always want to learn Turkish equivalent of the English words for learning them better. If they do not know the Turkish of any word, they do not feel that they know that word. As a result, they could make use of L1 glosses, but they could not understand L2 glosses. For the no-gloss group’s being better than L2 gloss group, the reason may be giving the words boldfaced. As they realized that some words were given bold, they may have thought that these were important and going to be asked later on. As a result, they forced themselves for guessing the meaning from the context.

In terms of the relationship between L1 and L2 glossing Ko (2012) and Jacobs et al. (1994) did not find any significant difference, however in the present study L1 glossing was significantly effective than L2 glossing. Ko (2012) states that for students who are at low-intermediate to intermediate levels, L1 and L2 glosses were not different. However, for students at high-intermediate or above levels, L2 gloss is more effective. As it is known that the students in the present study are at elementary level, it is not surprising to find that L1 gloss is more effective than L2 gloss.

The effects of gloss types on vocabulary learning were also tested with a delayed vocabulary test. The same results were obtained with the immediate vocabulary test. In addition, in the immediate test there was not any significant difference between L1 and no-gloss groups, but in the delayed one, L1 group was significantly better than no-gloss group. Regarding the significant difference between L1 and no-gloss groups in the delayed vocabulary test, it can be said that participants in L1 group were able to score better because of retention. In the immediate vocabulary test, they saw the meaning of some words for the first time, in other words, they got the input there. During the two-week period, their input turned into an intake and they were able to realize them in the delayed vocabulary test. This significant difference was not because of no-gloss groups’ bad performance in the delayed test, they also improved their vocabulary gain in the delayed test compared with the immediate one. L1 group was able to make use of the positive effect of L1 glosses in the delayed vocabulary test better.

With the fifth research question, firstly preferences of the participants in terms of having or not having glosses in reading texts were aimed to be found. Unsurprisingly 93% of the participants preferred having glosses. The percentage of gloss preference was 92% in Ko (2012), very similar results were found. Most of the participants preferred having glosses because they thought that glosses facilitate reading in both of the studies. It is clear that learners of L2 focus on the meaning of unknown words and if they have some unknown words in their reading texts, they cannot understand the details of the text. Another reason of gloss preference in the present study was that they thought it helps them in translation of the text into Turkish. This preference shows that Turkish learners tend to translate what they read in English and in that way they feel that they can understand the text better. As a result, L1 glosses are more helpful for them. Other reasons of preference were having limited vocabulary knowledge, learning new words with the help of glosses, saving time while reading the text, glosses’ positive effect on retention of the new learned word, and making use of glosses for guessing the meaning of other unknown words in the text. Meanwhile, 9 students indicated that they did not prefer glosses because they thought that they can guess the meaning of unknown words from the context or
they learn better if they find the unknown words themselves. Ko (2012) also had similar responses that the participants who did not prefer glosses in her study mentioned that they can make learners lazy. Also, in both studies just a few participants did not prefer glosses, but most of them did. However, when the results of the item which asks for their language preference for glosses, L1 and L2, were analyzed it can be seen that the participants in the two studies have different language preferences; 68% of the participants in the present study preferred L1 glosses, 26% of them preferred L2 glosses and 6% of them preferred both L1 and L2 glosses. On the other hand, in Ko’s (2012) study L1 preference was 18% while that of L2 was 77%. The difference between two studies based on gloss language preference is not surprising as the results of the vocabulary learning show that L2 gloss group was better than others in Ko’s (2012) study while in the present study L1 gloss group performed better than the other groups.

In conclusion, this study has some contributions to the literature on glosses by showing that low proficiency level hinders the positive effect of L2 glosses in vocabulary learning. It can be supported with the finding that even no-gloss group was better than L2 gloss group. As the present study is a replication of Ko (2012), the effect of proficiency level regarding the effects of different gloss types can clearly be seen because of the different proficiency levels of the participants in both of the studies.

5. Pedagogical Implications

Vocabulary knowledge has an important role in language both first and second language acquisition. Wilkins (1974) emphasizes the importance of vocabulary by stating “Without grammar very little can be conveyed without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed.” (cited in Chen, 2009, pp. 95) This extract clearly states the importance of vocabulary. At every proficiency level, vocabulary teaching is given importance and different methods are tried to be used for enhancing learners’ vocabulary knowledge. When the vocabulary knowledge levels of native speakers are analyzed based on their age and education level and those of foreign language learners are measured accordingly, it can be seen that in second language education a lot of time should be allocated to vocabulary teaching. However, it is impossible to cover all the words in the classroom even when just focusing on vocabulary teaching. As a result, it is clear that students should be guided to read in L2 outside the classroom for incidental vocabulary learning. Suggesting them to read graded readers is one of the very common ways of guiding them. However, in the EFL context of Turkish learners, it is observed that most of the students get lost in unknown words and they do not want to read any more or they just try to look up the meanings of each and every unknown word. The results of the present study clearly show that tendency of Turkish language learners in which participants in L1 gloss group outperformed the other two groups. It is thought to be because of low English proficiency level and limited vocabulary knowledge. Thus, at low proficiency levels, learners can be supported more with L1 glossed reading materials. Using L2 glossed materials does not help them improve their vocabulary knowledge or their reading comprehension at low levels because for understanding the definition or synonym in L2, they also need some other words. Even while teaching vocabulary in classroom, it is thought that using L1 translation is the last option, after trying out all the other teaching strategies or techniques. If it is thought that it is difficult for learners to understand the meaning of the target word, L1 translation can be a better and more effective way. They already know a language system and it can be used to enhance the system of L2.

References

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