

COMPUTER-BASED GLOSSES VS. TRADITIONAL PAPER-BASED GLOSSES AND L2 LEARNERS VOCABULARY LEARNING

Malahat YOUSEFZADEH
Islamic Azad University
Ardabil, IRAN

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the superiority of computer-based glosses in comparison with traditional glosses. 80 participants were divided into two groups (computer-based gloss group and traditional gloss group). Computer-based group received instruction through computer. i.e. new words were presented with their pictures and L1 translations and traditional group received instruction on the paper only with L1 translation. The results (pre and post-tests) were analyzed using a t- test. The results indicated the superiority of computer-based gloss group over paper-based gloss ones.

Key Words: computer-based gloss paper-based gloss, L2 learners, vocabulary learning.

INTRODUCTION

Harley (1996) mentioned that vocabulary knowledge is fundamental to the development of second language proficiency. Tozcu & Coady (2004) indicate that vocabulary knowledge is closely linked to reading proficiency, and additionally it leads to greater success in school. Within the scope of second language learning, glosses can be defined as information on important words through definitions or synonyms (Hee, 2005).

Review of the Related Literature

Hong (2010) states that researchers generally agreed that the use of vocabulary glosses in L2 reading materials is a common practice and glosses, facilitate reading comprehension and vocabulary learning in both printed materials and electronic materials. Yanguas (2009) explored the effects of multimedia glosses on both vocabulary learning and reading comprehension. The results of this study showed that all multimedia gloss groups (textual, pictorial, textual & pictorial) noticed and recognized significantly more of the target words than the control group (no gloss); no significant differences were found among any of the groups in production of the target vocabulary items, the combination gloss group significantly outperformed all other groups in reading comprehension. Bowles (2004) mentioned one technique traditionally used to facilitate learner's text comprehension and promote incidental vocabulary learning is glossing, that is providing short definitions or explanation of the meanings of words in a given text. These glosses, traditionally placed in the margins of texts are intended to aid participants' comprehension and to limit dictionary consultation that may interrupt the L2 reading process. As Pachler (2007) says one of the advantages of electronic glosses is that on screen presentation can make lexical items and their linguistic feature salient. Razagifard (2010) confirmed that the combination of textual and pictorial glosses was more beneficial in facilitating the learning of second language vocabulary than providing only textual or pictorial glosses for learners.

Research Question

RQ: What are the effects of computer-based glosses vs. paper-based (traditional glosses) on vocabulary learning of second language learners?

Alternative Hypothesis

H1: There are significance differences between computer-based gloss and paper-based (traditional) gloss in vocabulary learning of second language learners.

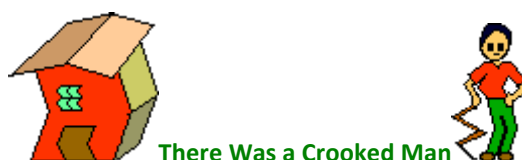
Independent and Dependent Variables

Independent variable was the gloss type (computer-based and paper-based) and dependent variable was students' scores measured by post-test.

METHOD

Participants: 80 students in Ardabil high school were randomly divided into two groups using two gloss types (computer-based gloss group=40 and paper based gloss group=40). All of them were at elementary level.

Materials: 60 new words derived from EnchantedLearning.com, were divided into two lists. One for computer-based gloss groups with pictures and L1 translations e.g.



Crooked: کج- بد شکل



Old lady: پیر زن

swallow: قورت دادن-بلعیدن

fly: مگس

and the other for paper-base gloss group was the same words on paper, only with L1 translation. Crooked: کج- Old lady: پیر زن بد شکل swallow: قورت دادن- بلعیدن fly: مگس

Procedure

All of the 80 participants were at elementary level, based on the results of Longman Placement Test administered by researcher (Dawson, 2005). Before the treatments all the participants underwent a vocabulary pre-test not only to compare its result with post-test, but also to choose unfamiliar words for glossing. The pre-test included 60 multiple-choice items. 40 new words were unfamiliar to all of the students. After words during treatments sessions half of participants received computer-based glosses (new words with pictures and L1 translation and half of them received the same passage with traditional glosses (only L1 translation). During the treatment sessions computer group participants were gathered in the school computer laboratory and the traditional group participants were taken to a classroom and presented with a printed paper of same words. After one week a multiple-choice post-test was administered. It included 20 multiple-choice questions. Both groups answered the post-test questions on the answer sheet.

Data analysis

Table 1: Means and Standard deviation obtained in post-test

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Computer-based group	40	17.85	1.13
Paper-based group	40	15.20	2.16

As the descriptive statistics in table 1 indicates, computer group had a higher mean and lower standard deviation in comparison with traditional paper-based group. This implies that computer-based group did better than paper-based group. Also result from a paired –sample t-test showed that there is a significant difference between the means of two groups. Since the two-tailed significance value of .002 is less than alpha=.05, we can support the alternative hypothesis.

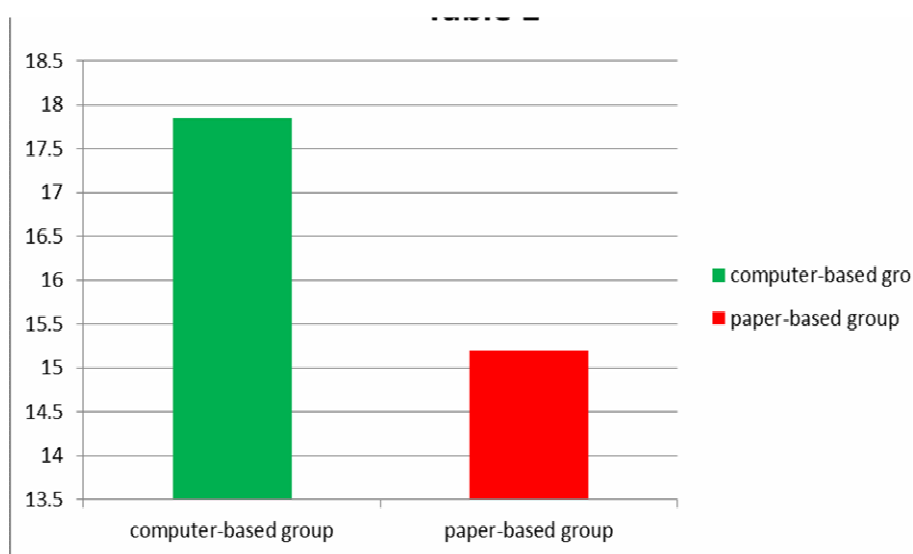


Figure1: Group's mean for post-test

The mean differences indicate the differences between the two groups. (Figure 1)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The result of the present study showed that computer-based gloss group outperformed significantly than traditional gloss group in vocabulary learning. Online vocabulary teaching can further individualized the language learning experience and raising the awareness of strategies which they can use to learn on their own after they leave the language classroom as suggested by Atay and Ozbulgan (2007, as cited in, Kilickaya & Krajka, 2010). This result is contrast with Bowles (2004) who found that there is no difference between two groups. It is similar to Spirit (2008) compared WordChamp drilling with paper study of frequency word vocabulary. The result showed both method (WordChamp and paper study) are effective for acquiring vocabulary, the former is more effective than paper. Therefore we can conclude that computer plays an important role in vocabulary learning. We as a teacher should be aware of the benefits of technology in the language classroom.

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BIODATA AND CONTACT ADDRESS OF AUTHOR



Malahat YOUSEFZADEH graduated from Islamic Azad University of Ardabil with an M.A. degree in teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). Her research Interest is online learning.

Malahat YOUSEFZADEH
M.A. of teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL),
Phone: 00984517742164
Cell: 00989141970052
E. Mail: Yousefzadeh5351@yahoo.com

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