

Incidental Vocabulary Learning Through Word-Focused Exercises: The Association with Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Mark Feng TENG

*Faculty of Languages and Translation, Macau Polytechnic University,
MCSAR*

Yuwei HUANG

English Linguistics and Literature, Hainan University, China

Atsushi MIZUMOTO

Kansai University, Japan

Reading is an important source of input for incidental vocabulary learning, and vocabulary learning strategies may affect incidental vocabulary learning outcomes from reading. This paper investigates incidental vocabulary learning through word-focused exercises among students learning English as a foreign language (EFL). The extent to which vocabulary learning strategies predict these impacts is also considered. Specifically, this study involved 486 Chinese university EFL students who were randomly and equally assigned to three word-focused exercise conditions: reading with marginal glosses plus comprehension questions; reading with a digital dictionary; and reading and filling in the blanks with a digital dictionary. All learners completed a survey on vocabulary learning strategies. The Vocabulary Knowledge Scale was adapted to measure vocabulary knowledge gains. Results showed that learners who read and filled in blanks with the use of a digital dictionary demonstrated significantly better vocabulary learning outcomes than the other groups. No significant differences were detected between the groups that read with marginal glosses plus comprehension questions or read with a digital dictionary. Multiple linear regression analysis revealed the roles of different vocabulary learning strategies on vocabulary learning outcomes in each group. Relevant implications are provided based on these findings.