

The Role of Monolingual and Bilingual Dictionaries in ESL Learners' Vocabulary Learning

JAYANTA KUMAR DAS
(VFSTR) University, India

ABSTRACT

This study examined the effects of dictionary use and contextual guessing on vocabulary retention. A group of 44 advanced level learners were divided into three groups. All the groups were asked to take up a reading test but under different reading conditions. One group was provided monolingual dictionary entries, another group was provided bilingual dictionary entries and the third group was provided no-access to the dictionary while doing the reading task. A vocabulary retention test was given a week later to test how much of the vocabulary has been retained as a result of reading with dictionaries and contextual guessing. The study revealed that the learners who used dictionaries retained more number of words than the learners who did not. The study also showed that the learners who used monolingual dictionaries during the reading task performed better on the retention test than the learners who used bilingual dictionaries.

The study clearly shows that dictionaries are a strong factor in vocabulary learning in the ESL context.

1. INTRODUCTION

“Vocabulary learning is one sub-goal of a range of goals that are important in the language classroom” (Nation 2001: 1). However, there has been a relative neglect of vocabulary acquisition research and related areas of lexical research in second language acquisition (SLA). Other areas of research like