

## The Effects of First Language and Second Language Glosses on Incidental Second Language Vocabulary Acquisition among Low proficiency Learners in a Computer Assisted Language Learning Environment

A. Rasakumaran

English Language Teaching Centre, University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka  
arasa@jfn.ac.lk

**Abstract:** Vocabulary has been one of the most important variables that affect second language learning (Egbert, 2005) and lexical errors are the most common among second language (L2) learners Meara (1984). This is true of the undergraduates of the University of Jaffna who learn English as a Second Language (ESL) as evidence from their written corpora reveal. The limited knowledge of vocabulary of the undergraduates has impacted on their reading comprehension and in turn on writing in both conventional and Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) environment. Studies of many scholars (Nagy, Herman and Anderson, 1985; Nation and Coady, 1988; Stoller and Grabe, 1993) have revealed that there is a symbiotic relation between vocabulary knowledge and reading. The extent of students' vocabulary knowledge relates strongly to their reading comprehension and overall academic success (Baumann, et.al, 2003). Therefore it is important to improve the vocabulary knowledge of the undergraduates in order to facilitate the learning of ESL. Further, only the first few thousand most common words are learnt by a L2 learner through direct instruction and the rest of the words are learnt incidentally. However, vocabulary acquisition is incremental. Therefore this study investigated whether L2 incidental vocabulary acquisition can be enhanced using L1 glosses and L2 glosses among low proficiency L2 learners and compared the effectiveness of L1 glosses and L2 glosses in enhancing incidental vocabulary learning in a CALL environment. The study revealed that both L1 and L2 glosses enhanced incidental vocabulary acquisition. However, L1 glosses were more effective compared to L2 glosses for low proficiency L2 learners.