

Using a smartphone app to give dynamic and non-dynamic feedback on vocabulary learning

What this research was about and why it is important

This research is about teaching new vocabulary items to language learners in an interactive and collaborative manner based on the *sociocultural framework*, using learners' smartphones. The term "dynamic glosses" was used to represent a set of hints and prompts incrementally ordered from the most implicit to the most explicit to help the learners identify the correct definition of a number of unknown words. When a learner faces an unknown word, the teacher begins the process of dynamic glossing to help the learner identify the correct definition by providing a series of dynamic glosses such as hints, prompts and leading questions in an incremental manner. For this study, the learners' smartphones were used as a medium of interaction between the teacher and the learners using the *telegram* application. This could help the teacher to interact with several students in a dynamic manner at the same time.

What the researchers did

- **Participants:** The participants included 47 Iranian intermediate-level English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners including 32 females and 15 males. The participants were randomly assigned to three groups including two experimental groups (**dynamic glossing** and **nondynamic glossing**) as well as a control group. Each of the two experimental groups included 15 participants while the control group included 17 learners.
- **Treatment:** Each group participated in two learning sessions. The participants all received 5 texts that included a number of unfamiliar words for each session via the *telegram* application. The participants of the two experimental groups were asked to read the texts they received via *telegram* and ask for the meaning of the unknown words by sending a message via telegram to a mediator (i.e., a teacher) who responded to the messages.
 - **dynamic glossing group** - the mediator began a dynamic glossing session after receiving a message from a learner asking for the meaning of an unknown word.
 - **nondynamic glossing group** - the mediator simply sent the definition of each unknown word whenever a learner asked for.
 - **control group** – participants were only asked to read the texts they received via telegram without having an opportunity to ask for the meaning of the unknown words.
- **Tests:** Two tests were used to measure vocabulary knowledge before and after the learning session. As the pre-test, the learners were presented with a list of words and were asked to write a Persian or English definition in front of each word. For the post-test, the learners were presented with a text of about 400 words. Some words, including the target words for which the learners received glosses during the treatment sessions, were removed from the text and were replaced by their Persian definitions as well as the first English letter of each word. The learners were asked to read the text and supply the missing target words.

What the researchers found

- Both dynamic and nondynamic glosses were effective for helping learners to learn the new words.
- However, the results revealed that dynamic glosses were more effective than nondynamic glosses for vocabulary learning.
- The results provide evidence for the potentials of mobile technology for vocabulary teaching. Furthermore, this study suggests that learners can benefit from dynamic interactions with their teachers during which learners receive hints and prompts to identify the meaning of the unfamiliar words.

Things to consider

- The results provide evidence for the potential of mobile technology for vocabulary learning.
- Furthermore, this study suggests that learners can benefit from dynamic interactions with their teachers during which learners receive hints and prompts to identify the meaning of unfamiliar words.

How to cite this summary: Rassaei, E. (2020). Using a smartphone app to give dynamic and non-dynamic feedback on vocabulary learning. *OASIS Summary* of Rassaei (2020) in *The Modern Language Journal* <https://oasis-database.org>.

This summary has a [CC BY-NC-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/) license.