Individual differences and their effects on L2 vocabulary intake

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The study focused on the incidental learning of nonwords in L2 written input, and its aim was to analyse the effects of the individual differences of L2 Educational Background, Reading for pleasure in their L1 & L2, Working Memory, and Language Aptitude, in the learning outcomes of receptive and productive knowledge of the following word’s aspects: association, grammatical functions, and orthographic forms. The participants were adult Spanish speakers (mean age = 22.9). They completed five pre-tests for individual differences before the main exposure task, which consisted of reading authentic materials containing the target words. After reading the texts, participants undertook six post-tests for the receptive and productive knowledge of the words’ aspects mentioned above. Pair-sample t-tests showed that participants achieved higher scores in receptive versus productive tasks, all three comparisons (Orthographic tests, Grammatical function tests, Association tests) were significant. Pearson correlations showed positive correlations between receptive knowledge of orthographic forms and L1 reading for pleasure, grammatical functions and L1 reading, receptive and productive knowledge of grammatical functions and phonetic memory. One-Way ANOVA showed that in receptive knowledge, the intake of nouns was significantly higher than adjectives, and verbs. In productive knowledge, the intake of nouns was higher than adjectives, and verbs, and that, in overall, learning of nouns (62%) was significantly higher than those of adjectives (30%) and verbs (50.5%). It is concluded that receptive knowledge was higher than productive knowledge, that phonetic memory has an effect on the receptive and productive knowledge of grammatical functions, that reading for pleasure in the L1 has an effect in the receptive knowledge of orthographic forms and in the productive knowledge of grammatical functions, and that the intake of nouns both receptively and productively was higher than adjectives and verbs.

Keywords: receptive and productive vocabulary, Incidental Learning, Individual Differences, vocabulary learning.