Attention to and learning of idiomatic expressions and content words in different types of captions: An eye-tracking study

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In this presentation we report the results of two eye-tracking experiments in which we investigate the effects of textual enhancement on L2 learners’ processing and learning of idiomatic expressions (Experiment 1) and content English words (Experiment 2) through video with L2 English captions. In Experiment 1, Group 1 (N=10) watched a 20 minute video in which the target idiomatic expressions were visually enhanced; for Group 2 (N=10), the distractors were enhanced; Group 3 (N=10) watched the video in which the captions had not been manipulated. All the participants were eye-tracked while watching the video. Results showed that the subjects in Group 1 showed more learning gains of the target expressions. In Experiment 2, the participants formed three groups: Group 1 (N=10) were eye-tracked while watching a 25 minute video with the target content words enhanced in the captions; for Group 2 (N=10) captions were not manipulated; Group 3 (N=10) was a control group (no captions). After the eye-tracking session, each subject completed the plot-comprehension test and three vocabulary tests measuring (1) form recognition, (2) meaning recall, and (3) meaning recognition. Results revealed longer fixation times (i.e., enhanced noticing) and higher learning gains for the highlighted words. Results are discussed in light of the theorizing of multi-modal input learning (Paivio 1986), incidental and intentional vocabulary learning (Hulstijn 2003), as well as SLA-beneficial textual enhancement (Sharwood-Smith 1991).

References


Keywords: input enhancement, eye-tracking, captioning, vocabulary learning.