

BAR-ILAN UNIVERSITY

**Repeated Activity with a Dictionary in an E-book and its
Contribution to Learning New Words among Kindergarten Children**

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Abstract

In the present study we examined (a) the effect of repeated activity in an e-book with a dictionary for learning difficult words versus a condition in which dictionary support was not given (b) the effect of learning difficult words in a story in terms of receptive comprehension, words explanation and production of words. Seventy eight preschool-kindergarten children from a low socio economic status (LSES) participated in this study; they were randomly divided into two groups, experimental and control. In the pretest, we examined receptive comprehension of words, interpretation of words, and production of words that appeared in story. Two reading sessions with each child took place in the experimental group during the intervention stage. In each session, the child read independently from an e-book that provided an automatic interpretation of difficult words in the story. After receiving meaning of the word, the child was requested to press on the dictionary word, and the word meaning was provided once again. This process was repeated twice, so that in each session the child heard the meaning of the word three times. At the end of each session the child was assessed by the set of tests, which were provided to him during pre-test. In other words, first posttest was held after the word and its meaning was revealed for three times; the second posttest was held after the word and its meaning was revealed for six times. Ten from the overall assessed difficult words were explained by the dictionary in the story. Eight additional difficult words that appeared in the text did not receive dictionary interpretation. Children in the control group participated in a regular kindergarten program and were assessed at the same time as children in the experimental group during pretest, posttest 1 and posttest 2. The findings indicates that children, who were active with the e-book with a dictionary significantly improved their new words learning in terms of measures of receptive comprehension, words' explanation and words' production, compared to children in the control group, who participated in a regular kindergarten program. In regards to receptive comprehension measure, no statistically significant difference was found in the experimental group between words that received dictionary support versus words that didn't receive such support, both in posttest 1 and posttest 2. Words explanation measure showed that, children in the experimental group received higher scores on words that appeared in the dictionary compared to words that were not supported by the dictionary. This finding was found in both, posttest 1 and posttest 2. In regards to words production measure, a significant initial advantage was found in pretest for words that didn't appear in the dictionary compared to words that did. In both post-tests, words that were displayed in the dictionary decreased the initial gap. Nevertheless, the initial gap between the two types of words did not determine the effectiveness of the dictionary. To sum up, the presence of difficult words in the text assisted children to understand them on the receptive level. Their ability to interpret words was significantly improved after an interpretation was provided by the dictionary. In terms of words production measure, the findings imply that dictionary support may promote the ability to produce words. In regards to the number of

repetitions, improvement was found after three repetitions of the dictionary words for the word explanation measure only. An additional improvement was recorded following another three repetitions. This study contributes to our understanding of the effectiveness of an e-book with a build-in dictionary and repetition of dictionary words in promoting learning on three levels of words acquisition. Its uniqueness comes forward in separating between three levels of words knowledge and examining how different types of learning (direct/implied) might influence the improvement in each of those levels. Moreover, for the best of our knowledge, the present study is the first to examine the effects of repetition for dictionary words in the story, without repeated reading of the entire story. The educational implications of these findings and suggestion for a follow up studies is discussed