Suggestions for glossing in graded readers

HE Mu
YAP Foong Ha
Outline

Suggestions for glossing in graded readers

The role and benefits of glossing

Problems identified in graded readers

Suggestions
Text modification

- Simplified written input
- Textual input enhancement
- Glossing
Simplified written input

- Vocabulary
  - Fewer idioms
- Syntax
  - Fewer proper nouns
  - Short syntax
- Length of text
  - Repetition
Textual input enhancement

- Bolding
- Capitalizing
- Underlining
- Italicizing
Glossing

L1 translation

L2 elaboration
Theoretical underpinning

- Studies in all three research strands of textual modification share the same underlying hypothesis – namely,
  - (1) that textual modification implicitly promotes readers’ attention to targeted items (e.g. vocabulary and syntactic structures) in the input (text), and
  - (2) that learners exposed to modified input should be substantially better in understanding the content.
Proposed benefits of glossing

☐ Glossing helps to limit dictionary consultation that may interrupt the L2 reading process.

☐ Marginal glosses are easier to use than a dictionary.

☐ Glossing contributes to consciousness-raising. HOW?

☐ Glossing also reinforces form-to-meaning connections.
Results of empirical studies

- Glossing promotes L2 comprehension (e.g. REFS).
- Glossing facilitates vocabulary learning (e.g. REFS).
Problems identified in graded readers

- The selection of glossed items appear to be done from the publishers’ perspective based on their perception that these words would be incomprehensible to the L2 readers.
Example

- Scrooge and Marley were business partners……. Oh, but Scrooge was a mean man. He never spent any money, and he never gave any away. He was a miser. And he was a cold and solitary man.

(A Christmas Carol)
Reasons

- The major international graded reader series are intended for the learners of English all over the world instead of a particular country or socio-cultural context.

- In different countries, the words causing difficulty to readers are different, while the publishers gloss the words which are considered to be generally difficult.
Suggestion

- A comparison between the graded readers and the local English language teaching syllabus will help to localize the graded readers and improve the quality of glossing.
Problems identified in graded readers

- The words used to explain a difficult word are even more difficult than the original one.
Example

- The Ghost of Christmas Present was the second of the three spirits that haunted the miser Ebenezer Scrooge, in order to prompt him to **repent**. He carries a large torch, made to resemble a **skull**, and appears accompanied by a great feast.

- *(Skull is explained as *cranium*.)*
Suggestions

☐ L2 elaboration:

- the bone structure that forms the head and surrounds and protects the brain.

☐ L1 translation:

- 头（盖）骨
Summary

- The efforts to improve glossaries in graded readers help to ensure a smooth reading experience and reduce the lexical burden of the students in their reading process.
- This facilitates vocabulary development in reading.