Effects of Intralingual Subtitles on L2 Audio-Visual Comprehension: A Meta-Analysis

Post-Doc Project on Evidence-Based Foreign Language Research

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Information

This poster's findings have been submitted to *Language Learning* and will hopefully be published there soon.

Title

Effects of Intralingual Captioning on Second Language Listening Comprehension – A Meta-Analysis

Abstract

This meta-analysis systematically summarizes findings from a large body of quantitative research on the effects of captions (or intralingual subtitles) on foreign or second language (L2) listening comprehension (LC), or rather audio-visual comprehension (AVC). The aim of this article is to provide a reliable quantitative measure of the effectiveness of captions, as well as a detailed description of the relationship between captions and variables moderating their effectiveness on L2 AVC.

Effect sizes were calculated from 39 primary studies yielding 50 unique samples which were coded for potential substantive and methodological moderators. The findings indicate a large overall effect of captions on L2 AVC ($g = 0.98$). Variables moderating the effectiveness include features of study design (e.g., randomization, reliability), study participants (e.g., L2 proficiency, L1 vs. L2 typeface), treatment (e.g., length of video, genre), and publication (e.g., type, year). Findings are discussed in relation to their methodological and pedagogical implications.

Introduction

The value of captions for L2 learners' AVC enhancement has been debated for more than three decades but the question of their effectiveness still seems to be answered differently by researchers and practitioners. For the former their effectiveness appears too obvious, for the latter captions (a) seem like cheating, (b) presumably prevent L2 learners from listening, or (c) cause cognitive overload (e.g., Vanderplank, 2016). This meta-analysis systematically summarizes findings from a large body of quantitative research on the effects of captions on L2 AVC. The aim is twofold:

1. to provide a reliable quantitative measure of the overall effectiveness of captions, and

2. for the first time, allowing for a solid and detailed description of the relationship between captions and variables moderating their effectiveness on L2 AVC.

Research Questions

1. What is the overall effect of captioning on L2 audio-visual comprehension?
2. To what extent is variability across the sample moderated by variables relating to different publication, study design, participants, and treatment indices?

Sources

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