

THE BACKSEAT LINGUIST

Commentary on research in second language acquisition and language education

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Spelling Nonsense Words Requires Rules Useful in Spelling Nonsense Words

MARCH 4, 2012 BY TBL

Study Reviewed: P. Mitchell, N. Kemp, & P. Bryant. (2011). Variations among adults in their use of morphemic spelling rules and word-specific knowledge when spelling. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 46(2), 110-133. There's no better way to start a discussion of almost any topic related to reading and writing than a quote from Frank Smith. Here's one [...]

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Do You Need to Read 8,000,000 Words to Acquire 2,000?

FEBRUARY 17, 2012 BY TBL

Study Reviewed: Hill, M., & Laufer, B. (2003). Type of task, time-on-task and electronic dictionaries in incidental vocabulary acquisition. *International Review of Applied Linguistics*, 41(2), 87-106. I recently came across a reference to a claim related to vocabulary acquisition that struck me as rather usual: Hill & Laufer (2003) stated that a second language reader [...]

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The Most Studied, Fastest Growing, and "Best Represented" Languages in U.S. Colleges

FEBRUARY 10, 2012 BY TBL

A recent post by Brad Peterson on the supposed popularity of Chinese language study around the world sent me digging for some data on the whole question of what foreign/modern languages are popular in U.S. schools and, well, what we mean by "popular." There are at least three ways you could define popular when it [...]

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Even Better Than You Think: More Good News for Incidental Vocabulary Acquisition

JANUARY 28, 2012 BY TBL

Study Reviewed: Frishkoff, G., K. Collins-Thompson, C. Perfetti, and J. Callan. (2008). Measuring incremental changes in word knowledge: Experimental validation and implications for learning and assessment. *Behavior Research Methods*, 40(4), 907-925. We have long known that we acquire most of our vocabulary, in both a first and second language, through reading (Krashen, 1988). Our knowledge [...]

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TBL comments on current research and practice in language education.

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