Vocabulary Development Using a Questionnaire

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A questionnaire on Japanese university students' strategies for learning vocabulary revealed that our students do not make frequent use of strategies for recycling new words or putting words into use. To give students experience with these strategies, we designed a vocabulary learning component as part of an intensive language course using a movie and the screenplay as text. This paper explains the guidelines used in the selection and coordination of activities, and then gives a step-by-step description of the activities used in the course.

　本論では、EFL大学生の語彙学習方略を調査した結果を分析しながら、より効率的な語彙学習プログラムを開発した試みを紹介します。始めに行なったアンケート調査では、語彙習得に必要な学習方法、例えば新しい単語を使用することがあまり行なわれないことが判明しました。このような語彙学習方法を体験させるために、ある大学の集中授業の際に、さまざまな方法を学生に学ばせました。この際の語彙の選択基準と学習タスクを具体的に説明します。

Students in our university classes often express interest in learning vocabulary for a variety of reasons, from raising scores on a standardized test such as the TOEFL to developing a larger repertoire of words for using in conversation. Learners' awareness of vocabulary as important for specific skills as well as for overall language proficiency is supported by research. Laufer (1992) has shown that vocabulary plays a role in specific areas of language proficiency such as reading fluency. Research has also shown that it plays an important role in helping to build overall L2 language proficiency (Schmitt, 2000; Sokmen, 1997). Thus based on student needs and interests, and backed by research on the important role of vocabulary learning in language development, we wanted to incorporate vocabulary learning in a more focused and systematic way into our university classroom activities.

However, we realized that there was a crucial element missing from this equation: What strategies do learners themselves actually use to learn, retain, and activate words? Having this information seemed essential in planning activities. To answer these questions we developed a 35-item questionnaire on vocabulary learning strategies and piloted it at the universities at which we teach. For our purposes here we will only look at the results of a simple "use/don't use" format of the questionnaire to see the pattern of strategy use under three main headings: discovering meaning, consolidating and extending word knowledge, and strategies for planning learning. Then we will describe in detail a program which used film as text

and the activities we designed to encourage learners to use a wider range of vocabulary learning strategies. For a full account of the development of our questionnaire, descriptive statistics and their interpretation please refer to Maeda and Naoumi (2004) and Maeda (2005). The questionnaire in English and Japanese is shown in Appendix 1.

Patterns of Strategy Use

The questionnaire focuses on the use of strategies for discovering meaning, for consolidating learning, and for planning learning. Several individual items on the questionnaire have been condensed into subheadings under these three main categories (Table 1). For example, under "guessing from context" there are four items on different aspects of guessing. The results are presented this way because we are interested in looking at the kinds of strategies used, rather than specific instances of a certain type of behavior.

Tab1e 1. Results of questionnaire with a yes/no response for use of strategies

Discovery	% of group use
Guessing from context	80%
Dictionary use (mono- and bilingual dictionaries)	72%
Social interaction to discover meaning (in a group, ask teacher)	24%

Consolidation	
Oral repetition (repeat words aloud, study pronunciation)	69%
Visual repetition (practice writing, study word lists)	61%
Word structure (study word morphology)	59%
Semantic encoding (learn word with synonyms, paraphrase word)	50%
Imagery (create a mental image of word)	44%
Contextual encoding (remember word in a sentence, group words)	38%
Study aids (make word cards, keep word notebooks)	38%
Social interaction using words (group work, talk with NS)	28%
Planning Learning	
Review words over time	51%
Look for words in many sources	69%

Of the discovery strategies, using the dictionary to check meanings and guessing the meaning from context are used by the largest percentage of students. In contrast, strategies for consolidating understanding and remembering words show a patchy distribution of use. Students use oral and visual repetition frequently, but there is less use of strategies to remember words in a meaningful context (contextual guessing), limited use of study aids to remember words,

and fewer opportunities to use words in interaction (social interaction). On the other hand, we were encouraged to see that students look for vocabulary in a variety of sources.

We decided to focus on activities that would involve learners with consolidating their knowledge of words, provide lots of recycling, and also provide opportunities for using words in interaction. We then set about incorporating these activities into the vocabulary component of an intensive course taught by one of the authors.

Course Design

The course was an intensive residential English course designed for university students. Students were divided into elementary, intermediate, and advanced classes on the basis of the CELT test, with about ten students in each class. The author was assigned to teach the intermediate level class. The movie that was selected by the course coordinator for use in all morning classes held during the course was *The Mummy*. It was then the responsibility of each instructor to adapt the material to suit the level of his or her students. Each student bought a textbook by Screenplay Publications (2000) with the screenplay in English and Japanese. The textbook series rates movies for level of listening difficulty in nine different categories on a scale from 1 to 5. The categories are conversation speed, pronunciation clarity, American accent, foreign accent, vocabulary, jargon, jokes, slang and vulgarity, and grammar. *The Mummy* has a rating of 20, which falls in the intermediate band of 17-24 set by the publisher.

Students had 15 hours of classroom instruction on the movie, three hours each day for five days. Students viewed the whole movie first, and then the movie was studied in greater depth over the five days. The textbook is divided into ten chapters, with two chapters covered a day.

Word Selection

The first step for planning the lexical component of the course was to select lexical items. We chose 91 words or phrases on which to focus over the five days of the course. The selection criteria were frequency of occurrence throughout the movie and words that students would need in order to understand either the plot, or the scenes chosen for further study.

The next step was to devise a variety of activities. We set up the following guidelines for designing activities.

1. Make clear to learners which words and phrases are the focus of study.

2. Develop learner awareness of the words they know and those they do not know.

3. Make sure words are recycled and encountered in a number of activities.

4. Provide ample opportunity for learners to use the target words in communicative activities.

Setting Goals and Evaluating Results

The morning classes were divided into two 90 minute periods. At the beginning of the first period, students were given a checklist of the words to be covered on that day and asked to check the items they knew. Most reported knowing

about 50% of the words. The checklists were collected and the students were given a fresh sheet with the same vocabulary. They were divided into small groups and had 30 minutes to find the items in the textbook and check the meanings. Students were encouraged to give definitions in English. The instructor then checked definitions with students and gave more examples of usage in English. The students took notes and later shared their notes with others in the group. This procedure was followed each day with a new set of words. Students were told at the outset that they would be tested on these words at the end of the course.

During the second period, the students were given activities to encourage them to use the target words in different activities. These included answering comprehension questions, acting out parts of the dialogues, and summarizing the events in the movie. These activities will be explained in detail below.

On the last day of the course students were given the checklist containing all 91 words and asked to indicate which words they knew. As a group, they reported knowing from 79% to almost 100% of the words. Table 2 shows the scores for three students in the group.

Table 2. Words reported known before and after course (out of 91 words)

Student	Words reported known before	Words reported known after
1	56 (62%)	90 (99%)
2	45 (49%)	82 (90%)
3	29 (32%)	72 (79%)

Next, students were given a test of twenty items selected from the items they had reported not knowing before the start of each class. They were asked to give a translation in Japanese, or a definition in English. Two students had perfect scores with all definitions in English. The student who had reported knowing the fewest words was able to give ten correct translations in Japanese. Others in the group were able to give 14 or 15 correct answers. Finally, students were asked to write as many new words as they could remember in five minutes. The minimum was 15 and the maximum was 35 words. These were informal evaluation measures, but the intention was to show students a simple method to estimate their own progress and to build confidence in their efforts.

Activities for Practicing and Using Vocabulary

Each day, students were given worksheets with a variety of tasks to complete. The worksheets were collected on the last day and counted as part of the students' grades. We have selected the following activities to illustrate our work with vocabulary. Although they were developed for one particular intensive course, they could easily be adapted for use in regularly scheduled classes and with other movies. We indicate the days the activities were used as a guideline.

Day 1

Icebreaker

These activities both orientated students to the movie theme and encouraged them to interact for the first time. The activities also enabled the instructor to check student fluency in producing language, something not measured by the CELT test used for class placement.

Step 1: Vocabulary

Students brainstormed vocabulary under three categories: movie genres, people who work in movies, and words to evaluate movies. This vocabulary was written up on the board and checked for spelling.

Step 2: Question formation

Students prepared 10 questions with both wh-questions and yes/no questions. Students were encouraged to ask open-ended questions as well as more factual questions.

Step 3: Interviews

We divided students into pairs and they took turns asking each other their questions. This was repeated several times with different partners.

Step 4: Report

The students wrote a simple account of their findings for homework.

Day 2

Movie Orientation

Movies often have an opening scene which introduces the story, some of the main characters, and also uses vocabulary which reappears throughout the movie. These activities oriented students to the movie context and story line.

Step 1: Vocabulary

The vocabulary in the first scene is related to ancient Egypt and the process of mummification. While this sounds esoteric, the 30 vocabulary items chosen recur throughout the movie and were necessary to discuss later scenes.

Step 2: Vocabulary bingo listening activity

After studying the vocabulary list from this scene, each student made a bingo card using the words from the list. They then viewed the scene without English subtitles. No one came up with a bingo, so we viewed the same scene again with English subtitles and this time most students were able to find the words.

Step 3: Jigsaw activity

While this scene was still fresh in their minds, the students were divided into groups of three and given a copy of the scene cut into twenty strips. The students had to put the strips in order.

Step 4: Storytelling

Each group was then assigned a section of the story and had to summarize it. At the end of the class students from each group read out their summaries to retell the whole story. We noticed that some students were beginning to use more complex words such as *mummification*, *sarcophagus*, and *curse* that recur throughout the movie.

Day 3

Dialogue Exploitation

These activities used a scene in which the hero and heroine have an argument. These activities are suitable for a short dialogue in any movie.

Step 1: Vocabulary bingo listening activity

Again the bingo game was used to sensitize the students to the vocabulary. This included a number of multi-word items which are common in colloquial English, but which are difficult for students to recognize as one item. One example is the phrase *to play around with something*.

Step 2: *Scribes and Messengers*

Sentences from the dialogue were typed out and taped to the wall outside the classroom. Each member of the group took turns as the messenger. The messenger memorized a sentence and returned to the group to repeat it. The other members wrote down the sentence as it was dictated. The messengers could return to look at the sentence as often as needed, but they could not write anything down. When all groups had finished, the sentences were checked and the group with all the sentences written down correctly was the winner.

Step 3: Reviewing the scene

The scene was shown again. Students reported they were able to "catch" much more of the dialogue.

Step 4: Acting out the scene

We finished this class with the students acting out the dialogue. Although the performances were not perfect, they were much smoother than usual acting activities.

Day 4

News Reporting

Most movies have scenes which lend themselves well to news reporting. The scene chosen was the regeneration of the mummy and the murder of the curator of the Cairo Museum by a mob.

Step 1: Vocabulary

First we brainstormed the vocabulary for the process of regeneration using the relevant sections of the textbook. Next we brainstormed vocabulary related to the crime of murder.

Step 2: Finding the facts

Using the textbook, students had to find the facts of the story and answer the questions who, what, why, when, where, how and also to decide how much background they should give. This activity was developed from an idea in Stempleski and Tomalin (2001, p. 69). Students had a worksheet (Appendix 2) to help them organize this. We went over the answers to the questions carefully, referring to the relevant pages in the textbook. We were careful to use the target vocabulary in the model answers. The students then used the answers to these questions to make a news report.

Step 3: Summarizing with headlines

The students wrote a headline for their reports.

Step 4: Live news reporting

One member of each group acted as the reporter from Cairo.

Day 5

Wrap up

These activities were similar to the icebreaker activities on the first day, but this time *The Mummy* was the theme. This activity was designed to recycle vocabulary from the course and give the students an opportunity to evaluate the movie.

Step 1: Reviewing

We reviewed both the first day's vocabulary and question formation.

Step 2: Making questions

The students worked in groups to make up questions. We checked the questions carefully and encouraged the students to use the vocabulary reviewed.

Step 3: Interviewing

Each group interviewed three other teachers on the course for 30 minutes, ten minutes with each teacher.

Step 4: Expressing opinions

As a reporting activity on the interviews, each student wrote a final report on the movie. The students were encouraged to use the framework: I agree with (name) that (…). However, I disagree with (name) that (…) because (…).

The teachers remarked that the questions were pertinent and covered the major aspects of the movie. In these final reports we found that the students used many of the vocabulary items targeted for the course.

Conclusion

Students often show interest in working on vocabulary development, but at the same time they are not sure what this entails. The results of a questionnaire on vocabulary learning strategies indicated that our learners could benefit from activities for both consolidating learning and actually using newly learned words. To meet these needs, we designed a series of interrelated activities and tasks for vocabulary enrichment for an intensive course. Vocabulary learned in the context of a movie provided learners with ample opportunities to recycle new words naturally in both consolidation and production activities. By introducing such activities and showing students that they can learn and retain vocabulary we encourage the development of tools for more independent learning.

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Appendix 1: Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire

The questionnaire was given in Japanese. Students were asked to respond with a simple *use* or *do not use*.

設問A

知らない単語の意味を知るには、あなたはどのようにしますか。

1. 単語の品詞を考える。(名詞, 動詞, 形容詞などを単語の品詞を探りながら意味を考える。)

2. 接辞と語根に分析して, 意味を検討してみる。(例：happiness > happy + ness = 幸せな+名詞にする接尾辞＝幸福)

3. 非言語的なヒントから意味を検討してみる。(例：読解の場合、絵, 写真, などを見て単語の意味を考える。聞き取りの場合, 周りの状況, 人の表情, などから意味を考える。)

4. 読解の場合, 単語の意味を前後の文脈から検討してみる。

5. 知らない単語が出てきても読み続ける。

6. 英和辞典で意味を調べる。

7. 英英辞典で意味を調べる。

8. 教師に日本語の訳を求める。

9. 教師にやさしい英単語に換えてもらう、または英語の同義語を教えてもらう。

10. その単語を使った別の文を作ってもらい, 文の意味から単語の意味を考える。

11. 先生以外の人に意味を教えてもらう。

12. 仲間同士やグループ内で, 意味を考える。

設問B

学習した単語の意味が分かった後, その単語を覚えるため, または理解を深めるため, あなたはどのようにしますか。

13. 単語の意味や使い方の練習を他の人と一緒に学習する。

14. Native speakerと話して, 単語の意味, 使い方を学ぶ。

15. 単語を勉強する時に、その単語の意味をイメージしながら記憶する。(例：mountainを覚えようとする時に, 実際の山のイメージを頭の中で浮かびながら, 勉強をする。)

16. 覚えようとしている単語に関連する単語と一緒に勉強をする。(例：bananaを覚えたいとき、知っている果物の名前を思い浮かべて、勉強をする。あるいはmonkey, sweet, yellow, jungle, など他の単語と関連させて、学習をする。)

17. 覚えたい単語の反対語、または同義語を調べ, 一緒に覚える。(例：important という単語の場合, 同義語significant, necessaryも覚える, 又はimportant とその反対語のunimportantと覚える。)

18. 覚えたい単語を使って、文を作る。

19. 単語の綴り(スペル)を意識して勉強する。

20. 単語の発音記号を調べて, 覚える。

21. 覚えたい単語を声に出してみて、勉強する。

22. 単語の形を思い浮かべながら, 勉強する。

23. 多音節の単語の場合、その単語の語根と接辞に分析して, 単語を覚える。

(例：unthinkable>un (=not) + think (=考える) + able (=できる, 形容詞をつくる)

24. 単語の品詞を考えて, 単語を勉強する。

25. 単語を他の表現(言い換え)と一緒に覚える。(例：shout = to talk very loudly)

26. 単語を学習する時に, 動作と一緒に覚える。

(例：seize (=つかむ, にぎる)を覚えようとする時に, 手を使って何かをにぎるような動作をする。)

27. 単語を勉強する時に, 声に出して、繰り返し発音をする。

28. 繰り返し書いて練習をする。

29. 単語のリストを繰り返し勉強する。

30. 単語のカードを作成して, 練習をする。(例：英単語を片面に書いて, 裏に日本語の意味を書く。)

31. 教科書の単語練習問題を積極的に参考にして, 勉強をする。
32. 市販のカセットテープ, CDなどで単語, 例文を聞いて, 勉強を
する。
33. ノートに単語を書き, 情報を書き加えたり, 参考にしたりする。
34. 覚えたい単語を継続的に学習したり, 復習したりする。
35. 学校教材以外のもの, 例えば、映画, テレビドラマ、音楽を聴い
て, 新しい単語, 覚えたい単語に注目する。

English Version of Questionnaire

Section A

When you meet a new word in reading or conversation, what do you do to check the meaning of the word?

1. I think about the part of speech to help me guess the meaning.
2. I look at the root and affixes to guess the meaning.
3. I look for clues to help me figure out the meaning, for example pictures, graphics, or charts.
4. When I am reading, I look at other words in the context for a clue to the meaning.
5. I continue reading even if I do not know the meaning of a word.
6. I look up the meaning of a new word in a bilingual dictionary.
7. I look up the meaning of a new word in a monolingual dictionary.
8. I ask the instructor for a translation in Japanese.
9. I ask the instructor to explain the word in simple English or to give me another word with the same meaning.
10. I ask the instructor for the word in a new sentence and I try to understand the meaning.
11. I ask classmates or others what a new word means.
12. I work with a group of classmates to figure out the meaning of the word.

Section B

What do you do to help remember newly learned words or extend your understanding of them?

13. I study and talk about the meaning of the word and use the word with others.
14. I try to use the word in conversation with a native speaker.
15. I create an image in my mind of the word to help me remember the meaning.
16. I study and remember the word with words that are related.
17. I study and remember the word with its opposite or with its synonym.
18. I make a sentence with the word to help remember it.
19. I think of the spelling of the word to help remember it.
20. I check the pronunciation key of the word to help remember it.
21. I say the word out loud while I study it.
22. I think of how the word looks (the actual shape) while I study it.
23. When a word has three or four syllables, I analyze the word into root and affixes to remember it.

24. I think of the part of speech of the word while I study it.

25. I remember the word with a paraphrase or short definition.

26. I study and remember a word as I act out the meaning.

27. I repeat the word over and over again to remember it.

28. I practice writing the word over and over again.

29. I study word lists repeatedly.

30. I make word cards and study these repeatedly.

31. I use the vocabulary exercises in a textbook to help study and remember words.

32. I listen to cassette tapes or CDs to practice hearing words.

33. I keep a vocabulary notebook and add new information to it, then use it when appropriate.

34. I continue to review newly learned words over a period of time.

35. I try to extend my knowledge of words through a variety of sources such as movies, TV, or music or reading sources other than the class textbook.

Appendix 2: Sample of Worksheet for Creating a News Report

News Reporting

In this part of the movie, the mummy regenerates. In your groups imagine that you are crews sent by rival television stations to the scene to report the story about the regeneration and the mob killing the curator of the Museum of Antiquities in Cairo.

1. Finding the Facts

A good news story gives facts which answer the following kinds of questions.

Who, What, Why, When, Where, How

Please use your textbook to find the answers to the following questions.

Who ordered the mob to kill the Curator?

_____

_____

Who is he?

_____

_____

Why is he in Cairo?

_____

_____

Where did he go?

_____

_____

Why did he go there?

_____

_____

Was he alone?

_____

_____

When did the murder take place?

_____

_____

Who was with the curator?

_____

_____

What other strange events have happened in Cairo recently?

_____

_____

Can you think of any other questions the viewers might have about this event?

_____

_____

2. Writing the report

Use the space below to write your story and refer to the vocabulary we brainstormed earlier.

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Headlines

Write a headline for your story.

_____

4. News from Cairo

Choose one member of your group to be the announcer and report to the rest of the class.