

2013年度関西英語教育学会（第18回）研究大会 概要

6月8日（土）

14:40～16:05 特別講演

Lexical facility: Developing vocabulary knowledge as a skill
-it's what you know and when you know it-

講師

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There is direct relationship between vocabulary size, which is the number of words an individual knows, and the ability to function in English. For example, it is assumed that a person must know roughly the 2000 most frequent words in English to take part in everyday conversation. To read a university textbook in English this number increases to 8000-10,000 words. But size alone is not enough. To function fluently the individual needs to be able to retrieve these words from memory quickly and effectively. Thus vocabulary knowledge must be viewed as a dynamic skill in which the individual knows the needed words (the what) and is able to retrieve quickly (the when). This skill, which combines vocabulary size and speed, is called lexical facility.

This talk is about lexical facility, both why it is important and how it can be developed. In the first part I will describe the relationship between lexical facility and fluent performance in users of English as a second language. Key concepts will be explained and an overview given of research that has examined vocabulary size and speed as predictors of performance in domains such as academic English reading and writing, as a tool for language program placement, and as a means to identify learner readiness to take standardised tests like TOEFL and IELTS.

In the second part I will consider ways in which lexical facility can be developed in the classroom. Traditional approaches to vocabulary instruction have focused on developing the learner's vocabulary size, with no attention given to vocabulary retrieval speed. A small but growing number of researchers have attempted to develop retrieval vocabulary speed in the various instructional settings. This research will be surveyed for examples of how retrieval speed can be developed in the classroom and how this might affect learning outcomes. Also presented are results from a recent study from a Chinese language class at the University of Queensland that examines the effect of word form retrieval practice on the learning Chinese characters. The talk will conclude with a plea for more research on the role that lexical facility, particularly retrieval speed, can play in second language vocabulary learning and use.