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分野/ Field : Reading/ Vocabulary

テキスト単語難度と理解度

Authentic Texts, Simplified Texts and Text Comprehension

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There have been many arguments which claim that the simplification of language texts for second language learners at tertiary level is beneficial. However, others argue the benefits of authentic texts. This presentation reports the respective benefits of each text-type and the implications for the language classroom. First, the effects of text simplification on comprehension are investigated. Second this research attempts to determine if individual differences in text comprehension can be attributed to individual vocabulary sizes.

Data was taken from 14 Japanese first year university students who were studying at a mid-level private university in Tokyo. Four news texts were used for the experiment and were selected from the 'odd news' section of the Yahoo website. The four texts were then simplified by replacing low frequency words with higher frequency words. This resulted in a total of eight texts, four simplified and four authentic. The learner's vocabulary was measured using Nation's (2001) vocabulary levels test.

The experiment was a repeated measure balanced design. First the students were split into two groups. They were given an article and were given five minutes to read it. The first group was given the simplified articles, and the second group was given the authentic ones. After reading the articles they were required to explain the article from memory to their partner who was a member of the other group within a two minute time-limit. The second repetition followed the same procedure, but the first group received the authentic articles, and the second received simplified ones. In this way, each student read and explained a simplified

and an authentic article. The explanations were recorded using Sony BP-350 IC recorders, and the recordings were transcribed.

Text comprehension was measured by three analytical measures of the recorded explanations. The first was the length of the text, the second was the number of meaning units, and the final measure used was the text organization. The results were analyzed with a two-way repeated measures ANOVA for each of the measured variables. In addition, a correlation analysis was conducted in order to determine if variation in comprehension could be explained by differences in individual vocabulary size.

The results demonstrated that there was a clear effect for the simplification of the internet news articles. Participants who read the simplified article were able to produce significantly more words, and more meaning units than when they read the authentic article. The correlation analysis failed to produce any significant results due to the small sample size. However, the correlation between authentic text comprehension and vocabulary size neared significance ($r = .453$, $p = .103$), which accounts for 20% of the variance in comprehension of the authentic text. There was no correlation observed between the simplified text comprehension and vocabulary knowledge.

These results indicate that, first, comprehension of a simplified text is greater than that of an authentic one for these learners, and second, individual variation in the comprehension of the authentic texts may be accounted for by the extent of vocabulary knowledge. These results will be discussed in terms of both the implications for language acquisition and implications of using authentic and simplified texts in the language learning classroom.