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Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers,

It is my great pleasure to offer our readers the 2016 issue of *Vocabulary Learning and Instruction* (VLI). In these pages you will find articles with topics ranging from “a lexical network approach to the acquisition of English verbs of memory” by Shun Morimoto to an exploration of English loanwords by Kaori Nakao. You will also find a first for *VLI* – a book review. The new book by Paul Meara and Imma Miralpeix entitled *Tools for Researching Vocabulary* is reviewed by Jon Clenton. Completing this issue, Rob Waring reports on the recent Vocab@Tokyo conference.

As a reminder, *VLI* is an open-access international journal that provides a peer-reviewed forum for original research related to vocabulary acquisition, instruction, and assessment. Submissions are encouraged from researchers and practitioners in both first language, and EFL and ESL contexts.

Please enjoy the pages to follow, and we wish you a prosperous 2017.

Raymond Stubbe,

Editor, *VLI*

A Lexical Network Approach to the Acquisition of English Verbs of Memory: The Case of Japanese Learners

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Abstract

The present study investigated the acquisition of L2 English memory verbs, *memorize*, *remember*, and *recall*, by Japanese learners within the framework of a lexical network. In the fields of psychology and cognitive science, the human memory has been conceptualized as consisting of three cognitive phases, namely *input*, *retention*, and *output*. In English, *memorize* and *recall* are used for the input and the output phases, respectively, while *remember* can be used across the three phases. In order to investigate the extent to which Japanese learners of English can appropriately make differential use of these verbs in relation to the above cognitive phases, a test called “the Memory Verb Acceptability Judgment Test” was administered on 173 Japanese university students grouped into three proficiency levels. The results showed that while they were able to accept *memorize* and *recall* with high accuracy for the input and the output phases, respectively, they tended to accept *remember* primarily for the retention phase, failing to fully accept it in the remaining two phases. This tendency was observed even among those learners whose average length of stay in English-speaking countries was 5 years. It was also revealed that basic-level learners tended to over-generalize *memorize* for the retention phase. Based on the overall results, theoretical and pedagogical implications of the lexical network approach are discussed.

1 Introduction

In the field of English teaching and learning, it has been widely acknowledged that the ability to fully use what is called basic words such as verbs and prepositions constitutes an integral part of communicative English competence (Henriksen, 1999; Meara, 2002; Schmitt, 2000; Tanaka, 2012) since they appear more frequently and cover a large proportion of the running words in spoken and written texts across a wide range of discourse types (Nation, 2001).

There have been a number of studies which investigated the acquisition of L2 basic words by Japanese learners of English such as the verbs of vision (Hiki, 1995), the verbs of utterance (Sato & Batty, 2012), the verbs of perception (Sato & Tanaka, 2015), dimensional adjectives (Takahashi, 1985), and the verbs like *put* (Shirai, 1990) and *give* (Tanaka, 1983, 1987). These previous studies showed that Japanese learners often failed to make full use of basic words and exhibit under- and over-generalizations.

Researchers have sought to identify the factors which make the acquisition of basic words difficult. One of these factors is that almost all basic words are polysemous words having multiple semantically related senses (Schmitt, 1998). For example, *Oxford Dictionary of English* (third edition) lists as many as nine major senses for the verb *take* such as “lay hold of (something) with one’s hands,” “remove (someone or something) from a particular place,” “make, undertake, or perform (an action or task),” and so on. Including the number of sub-senses under each major sense, learners face the daunting task of remembering each sense one by one in a cumulative manner, resulting in a heavy learning burden.

The polysemous nature of basic words is related to the second factor, input dependency. When learning the meaning of a given polysemous word, learners are not usually exposed to all of its exemplars but only to its subset. In the case of the verb *take*, if learners are predominantly exposed to exemplars under the “lay hold of (something) with one’s hands” sense, it is likely that they would not be able to use it in other senses. Learners’ mental representation of the word’s meaning is therefore dependent upon the nature of the input they have been exposed to (Tanaka, 1987).

Furthermore, given a set of exemplars, learners do not necessarily take in all of them, as new words are processed through a well-developed conceptual and semantic structure in their L1 (Ijaz, 1986; Kellerman, 1978, 1979). Tanaka and Abe (1985) argued that in L2 lexical acquisition, learners often go about learning new L2 words by adopting what they call the “search-translation-equivalent (STE) strategy,” in which they attempt to understand the meaning of a given target word through its translation-equivalent. In the case of Japanese learners, they often formulate a “*take* = *toru*” formula in learning the verb *take*. However, this strategy can only be effective as long as the semantic ranges of the L1 and L2 words completely overlap. However, in the case of basic words, most of which are polysemous, this strategy impedes learning since the meaning potential of the target L2 word cannot be fully captured by a single L1 translation-equivalent. It is therefore necessary to take cross-linguistic differences into consideration in investigating the acquisition of basic words.

1.1 The Lexical Network Model

In recent years, there has been a growing interest among the researchers of second language lexical acquisition with regard to lexical networking (Haastrup & Henriksen, 2000; Verspoor & Lowie, 2003; Wolter, 2006). It is premised on the fact that words do not exist in learners’ mental lexicon in isolation but instead interrelate with other words to form a network (Crossley, Salsbury, & McNamara, 2010; Lakoff, 1987; Meara, 2009; Norvig & Lakoff, 1987). There are a number of organizing principles of lexical networking. One of the major principles is the associative network, which assumes that upon hearing a given word, a set of semantically related words will be triggered (Schmitt, 2000). For example, the word *dog* typically triggers responses such as *pet*, *leash*, *bark*, and *bone*. Although the responses can vary among people, Schmitt (2000, p. 38) states that “associations from groups of respondents exhibit a great deal of systematicity.” Another dominant organizing principle of lexical networking is the thematic principle

(Lehrer, 1974), which states that words can be categorized under specific topics or fields such as sports, politics, weather, the Internet, and health.

In addition to the above two principles, there is yet another important one called the conceptual principle, in which words are grouped together into semantic domains such as the domain of possession, the domain of breaking, and the domain of vision (Miller & Johnson-Laird, 1976). For instance, the domain of breaking consists of verbs such as *destroy*, *shatter*, *fracture*, *disintegrate*, *crack*, and so on.

Within the lexical network framework, Sato and Tanaka (2015) investigated the acquisition of English verbs of perception (e.g. *see*, *listen*, *smell*) by Japanese learners within the matrix of five domains (olfactory, taste, visual, auditory, and tactile) and three semantic phases (*action*, *experience*, and *result*) (Gisborne, 2010; Terasawa, 2008). For instance, the verb *smell* in the olfactory domain can be used in the following three semantic phases:

- (1) Action: Naomi *smelled* the roses when she found them by the road.
- (2) Experience: Naomi *smelled* roses when she entered the house.
- (3) Result: The rose *smelled* very good.

Sato and Tanaka developed the following lexical network shown in Table 1 and investigated which domain(s) were more problematic to Japanese learners of English.

The results of the lexical network test of perception verbs showed that in terms of the five sensory domains, the order of difficulty from easiest to most difficult turned out be: olfactory = tactile / visual = taste / auditory. The order of difficulty in terms of the three semantic phases was as follows: experience > action > result, from easiest to most difficult. Among all combinations, [+auditory, +result] was found to be particularly difficult for the learners. Sato and Tanaka argued that their frequent incorrect use of *hear* for *sound* was induced by cross-linguistic transfer. They concluded that “[l]exical development involves lexical networking, and the domain-specific lexical network approach that highlights the verbal domain of perception, for example, may be beneficial in network-building, which, in turn, leads to the development of inter-lexical competence” (p. 18).

Table 1. A Lexical Network Framework of the Basic Verbs of Perception in English (Sato & Tanaka, 2015)

	Three semantic phases		
	Action	Experience	Result
Olfactory	<i>smell</i>	<i>smell</i>	<i>smell</i>
Taste	<i>taste</i>	<i>taste</i>	<i>taste</i>
Visual	<i>look</i>	<i>see</i>	<i>look</i>
Auditory	<i>listen</i>	<i>hear</i>	<i>sound</i>
Tactile	<i>touch/feel</i>	<i>feel</i>	<i>feel</i>

Based on the lexical network approach, the present study focused on the domain of memory, which has not been the target of investigation in the previous studies.

1.2 Memory Verbs in English and Japanese

In psychology and cognitive science, the human memory has long been conceptualized in terms of what is called the “computational metaphor” involving three cognitive phases, namely *input*, *retention*, and *output* (Atkinson & Shiffrin, 1971; Craik & Lockhart, 1972). As shown in Table 2, input is processed and stored in the memory, and gets retrieved for use just like a computer. In English, *memorize* and *recall* are used for the input and the output phases, respectively, as in the following examples.

- (1) We had to *memorize* the parts of the brain in our biology class. [input]
- (2) I can clearly *recall* the moment when the accident happened. [output]

Unlike *memorize* and *recall*, the verb *remember* can be used in all of the three phases as follows:

- (1) The researcher asked a group of students to *remember* seven random numbers. [input]
- (2) I will *remember* this day throughout my life. [retention]
- (3) I can't *remember* the face of my homeroom teacher. [output]

Although *remember* can be used across the three phases, it has to be noted here that these phases are not mutually exclusive but are the aspects of the memory schema which can be cognitively highlighted or focalized (Langacker, 1987).

In Japanese, the verb *oboeru* is used for the input phase, and *oboeteiru* for the retention phase, and *omoidasu* for the output phase as follows:

- (1) Watashitachi-wa seibutsu-no jugyo-de nou-no bui-wo
We in our biology class the parts of the brain
oboenakereba narimasendeshita.
memorize had to
- (2) Watashi-wa kyo-no hi-wo issho oboeteimasu.
I this day throughout my life will remember
- (3) Watashi-wa tannin-no sensei-no kao-wo omoidasukotoga dekimasen.
I the face of my homeroom teacher recall can't

Table 2. A Lexical Network Framework of the Basic Verbs of Memory in English

Three cognitive phases				
Input	→	Retention	→	Output
<i>memorize</i>		–		–
<i>remember</i>		<i>remember</i>		<i>remember</i>
–		–		<i>recall</i>

The cross-linguistic network of the memory verbs between English and Japanese can be illustrated as in Figure 1.

Given the above cross-linguistic network, the question is: Given a set of verbs of memory, which is easier or more difficult to learn, and why?

One of the major factors which can influence the relative difficulty of learning L2 lexicon is learners' L1 (Ijaz, 1986; Kellerman, 1978, 1979; Ringbom, 1987). As discussed above, learners often go about learning L2 lexicon by employing the STE strategy and seek one-to-one correspondence between the L2 word and its L1 translation-equivalent. With the use of this strategy, it can be hypothesized that Japanese learners approach the English memory verbs in the following manner:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{memorize} &= \text{oboeru} \\ \text{remember} &= \{\text{oboeru}, \text{oboeteiru}, \text{omoidasu}\} \\ \text{recall} &= \text{omoidasu} \end{aligned}$$

From this, we can hypothesize that *memorize* and *recall* are easier to learn than *remember* since they can be equated with a single translation-equivalent in Japanese. On the contrary, *remember* can be more problematic for learners since there is no single translation-equivalent which fully captures its meaning potential. In addition, learners' mental representations of the meaning of *remember* can be biased depending on the nature of input they have been exposed to. For example, when learners encounter *remember* used in the retention phase as in "I will *remember* this day throughout my life," they will formulate a hypothesis such as "*remember* = *oboeteiru*." As learning proceeds, they may encounter *remember* used in other phases, which will force them to restructure their initial hypothesis (Hatch, 1974). Depending on the nature of input they have encountered, their hypotheses can take various forms such as "*remember* = *oboeteiru*," "*remember* = {*oboeteiru*, *omoidasu*}," and "*remember* = {*oboeteiru*, *oboeru*, *omoidasu*}." However, once learners' hypotheses get "fossilized" at some point of the learning process, it will lead to the under-generalization of the verb. For example, once learners' hypothesis of the

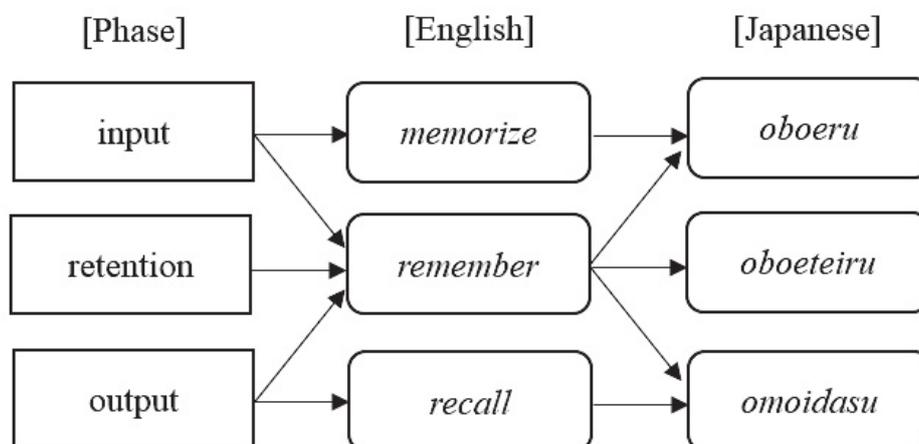


Figure 1. Lexical Network of the Memory Verbs in English and Japanese.

meaning of *remember* gets fossilized at the stage of “*remember* = {*oboeru* [input], *oboeteiru* [retention]},” it is likely to be underused in the output phase as *omoidasu*. The number of available translation-equivalents can therefore be one of the factors which can affect the relative difficulty of learning L2 words.

1.3 Research Questions

Based on the above discussion, the present study addressed the following research questions:

- (1) To what extent can Japanese learners recognize appropriate use of the English verbs of memory in relation to the three cognitive phases of memory?
- (2) Is there a relationship between the acquisition of the verbs of memory and the level of English proficiency?

Although there are a number of other verbs related with memory in English, the present study dealt with *memorize*, *remember*, and *recall*, all of which are covered at school and appear frequently in everyday speech and writing, and can therefore be considered basic. For both research questions, the ability to accept the appropriate verb(s) is the dependent variable, and the level of proficiency and the three cognitive phases are the dependent variables.

2 Methodology

2.1 Participants

The participants in this study were 173 Japanese university students (71 females; 102 males) from two different universities. Their age ranged from 18 to 23 years old with the average of 19.6. According to their TOEFL-iBT scores (mean = 53.5, SD = 23.0), the participants were placed into three groups. The first group consisted of 67 students (41 females; 26 males) whose average TOEFL score was 32.4. The second group was made up of 91 students (23 females; 68 males) with their average TOEFL score being 64.5. None of the students in the first and the second groups had had prior experience living in English-speaking countries, and had studied English in Japan for an average of 8 years. The third group consisted of 15 students (7 females; 8 males) who had lived in English-speaking countries for more than 1 year. Their length of stay ranged from 1 to 17 years with the average of 5 years. Their average TOEFL score was 80.7. One-way ANOVA performed on the TOEFL scores of the three groups showed that there were statistically significant differences among the average scores of the three groups [$F(2, 170) = 111.634$, $p < 0.001$]. *Post hoc* tests revealed each pairwise comparison was significant ($p < 0.01$ for each).

2.2 Materials

In order to measure Japanese learners' ability to choose the appropriate verbs of memory, a test called “the Memory Verb Acceptability Judgment Test”

was devised. The test consisted of 15 items, five from each of the three semantic phases. For each item, the context of situation was presented in Japanese, followed by its English translation. There is a square bracket in the English sentence, and the participants were asked to judge whether or not each of the three verbs could be used to fill the bracket. They were asked to put a circle if the given verb was acceptable, and cross it out if not. They were told that there could be two or more appropriate or inappropriate verbs. In addition, their judgment must be based on how accurate the English sentence reflected the Japanese sentence. The following are examples of the test items:

(INPUT)

[Context] Kenkyusha-ha hikensha-ni nanatsuno randamu no suji-wo oboeruyou shiji shimasita.

The researcher asked a group of students to seven random numbers.

→ memorize (), remember (), recall ()

(RETENTION)

[Context] Kono goon-ha kesshite wasuremasen.

I will always your kindness.

→ memorize (), remember (), recall ()

(OUTPUT)

[Context] Jiko-ga okita shunkan-no kotowo senmeini omoidasukotoga dekimasu.

I can clearly the moment when the accident happened.

→ memorize (), remember (), recall ()

Two versions of the test with a varying order in the presentation of test items were developed, and each participant was given one of the two versions on a random basis.

Prior to the administration of the test, three native English-speaking teachers who are proficient in Japanese took the test and a 100% agreement in their responses was obtained.

2.3 Procedures

The participants were first given a short questionnaire on their biographical data and language learning background. In order to ensure their prior knowledge on the three target memory verbs, they were asked to write the meaning of each verb in Japanese, and all of them were able to provide appropriate words in Japanese. Although there were some variations as to the words provided, they were judged acceptable as long as they had similar meanings. For instance, verbs like *omoiokosu* and *yobidasu* were considered to be semantically equivalent to *omoidasu*. After the instructor of the class read the directions aloud, the participants took the Memory Verb Acceptability Judgment Test, which took about 20 minutes to complete.

For each item, the participants' responses were scored. One point was given to each verb that a participant marked as acceptable, and the percentage of participants who accepted each answer choice was calculated. The data management and analysis were done by using EXCEL (Microsoft, Redmond, WA) and SPSS (IBM, Armonk, NY).

3 Results

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics of the acceptability judgment test scores for *memorize* (KR20 = 0.69). The mean acceptance rates are presented in Figure 2. The average acceptance rate for items testing the input phase was over 90% while that for items testing the output phase was 8.74%. As for the retention phase, the acceptance rates of Group 2 and 3 were found to be close to 30%. On the contrary, 51.94% of Group 1 accepted *memorize* in the retention phase.

Table 4 summarizes the results of two-way ANOVA. The main effects for level [$F(2, 510) = 6.416, p < 0.01$] and phase [$F(2, 510) = 374.724, p < 0.01$] were significant. There was a significant interaction effect between level and phase [$F(4, 511) = 8.148, p < 0.01$]. *Post hoc* pairwise comparisons revealed that learners in Group 1 accepted *memorize* in the retention phase significantly higher than those in Group 2 and 3 ($p < 0.01$). There were no significant differences among the three groups in the input and the output phases.

Descriptive statistics of the acceptability judgment test scores for *remember* are shown in Table 5 (KR20 = 0.65). Figure 3 illustrates the mean acceptance rates. The average acceptance rate in the retention phase was 87.28%. While the acceptance rates of Group 2 and 3 were over 90%, that of Group 1 remained at 79.40%. As for the input and the output phases, the average acceptance rates turned out to be rather low, 46.36% and 65.78%, respectively.

The two-way ANOVA results are summarized in Table 6. The main effect for level turned out to be insignificant [$F(2, 510) = 2.786, p = 0.063$] while the main effect for phase was significant [$F(2, 510) = 38.068, p < 0.001$]. No significant interaction effect between level and phase was identified [$F(4, 510) = 1.275, p = 0.279$]. In terms of the phase, Tukey's *post hoc* test revealed that the differences between the three phases were all statistically significant at the 0.001 level, yielding the following order of acceptance:

$$\textit{retention} (87.28\%) > \textit{output} (65.78\%) > \textit{input} (46.36\%)$$

Table 7 shows the descriptive statistics of the acceptability judgment test scores for *recall* (KR20 = 0.55). The mean acceptance rates are presented in Figure 4. The average acceptance rate in the input phase was 6.36%, and that in the retention phase was 24.86%. As expected, the acceptance rate in the output phase turned out to be the highest, 86.36%.

Table 8 summarizes the results of two-way ANOVA. The main effect for level was not significant [$F(2, 510) = 1.251, p = 0.287$] while that for phase turned out

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of the Acceptability Judgment Test Scores (*memorize*)

	Input		Retention		Output	
	Mean (%)	SD	Mean (%)	SD	Mean (%)	SD
Group 1 ($n = 67$)	88.96	20.89	51.94	29.76	11.18	18.08
Group 2 ($n = 91$)	93.63	18.35	29.89	26.56	7.03	16.00
Group 3 ($n = 15$)	96.00	15.49	30.67	31.95	8.00	12.65
Total ($n = 173$)	92.02	18.89	38.50	30.12	8.74	16.43

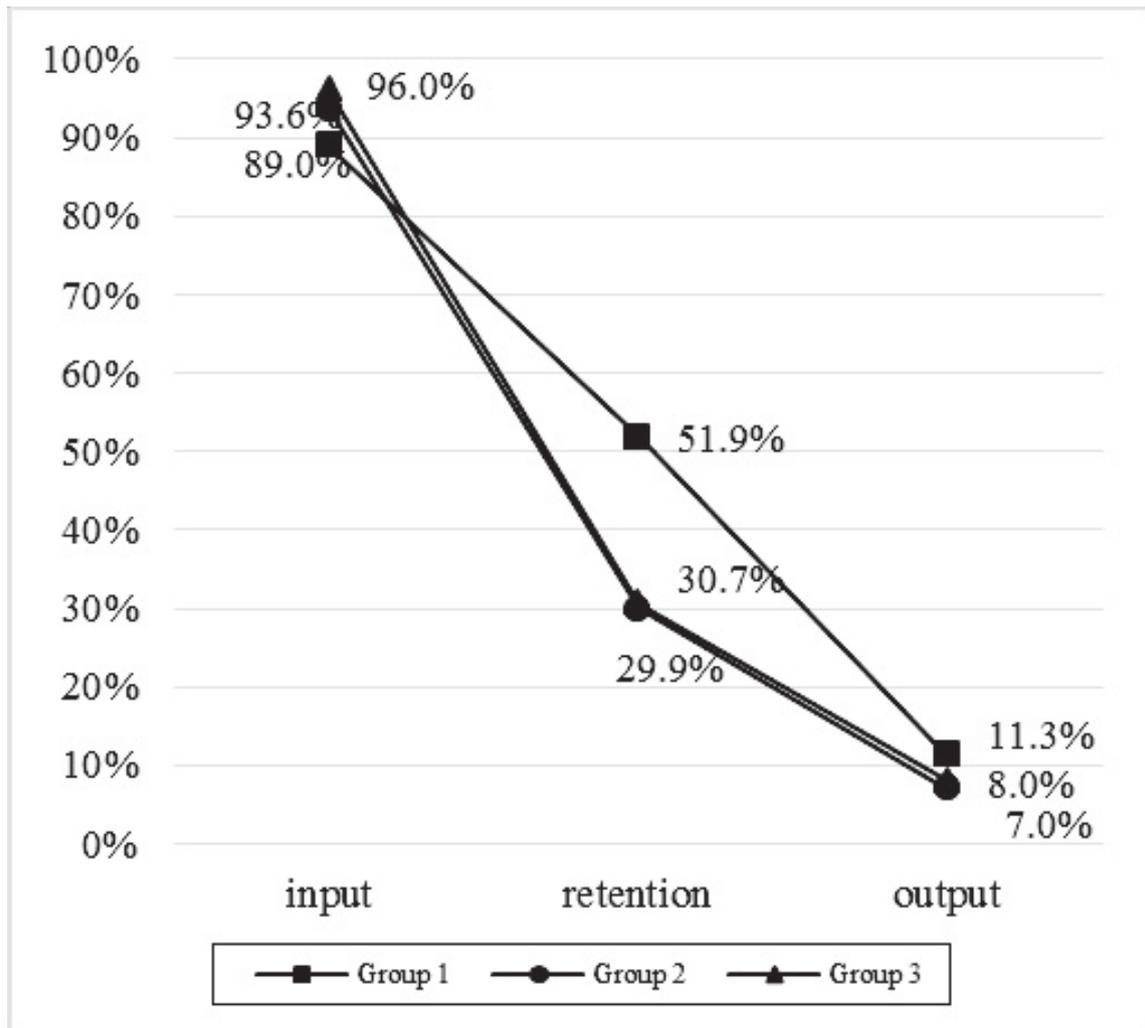


Figure 2. The Mean Acceptance Rates of *memorize*.

Table 4. ANOVA: Tests of Between-subjects Effects (*memorize*)

Source	Sum of squares	df	Mean squares	F value	Sig.	η^2
Level	6091.005	2	3045.502	6.416	0.002	0.007
Phase	355767.948	2	177883.974	374.724	0.000	0.403
Level*Phase	15472.422	4	3868.106	8.148	0.000	0.018

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics of the Acceptability Judgment Test Scores (*remember*)

	Input		Retention		Output	
	Mean (%)	SD	Mean (%)	SD	Mean (%)	SD
Group 1 (<i>n</i> = 67)	42.99	35.55	79.40	25.58	66.57	33.46
Group 2 (<i>n</i> = 91)	47.03	38.34	92.31	15.99	64.18	32.87
Group 3 (<i>n</i> = 15)	57.33	31.05	92.00	21.11	72.00	35.30
Total (<i>n</i> = 173)	46.36	36.71	87.28	21.46	65.78	33.19

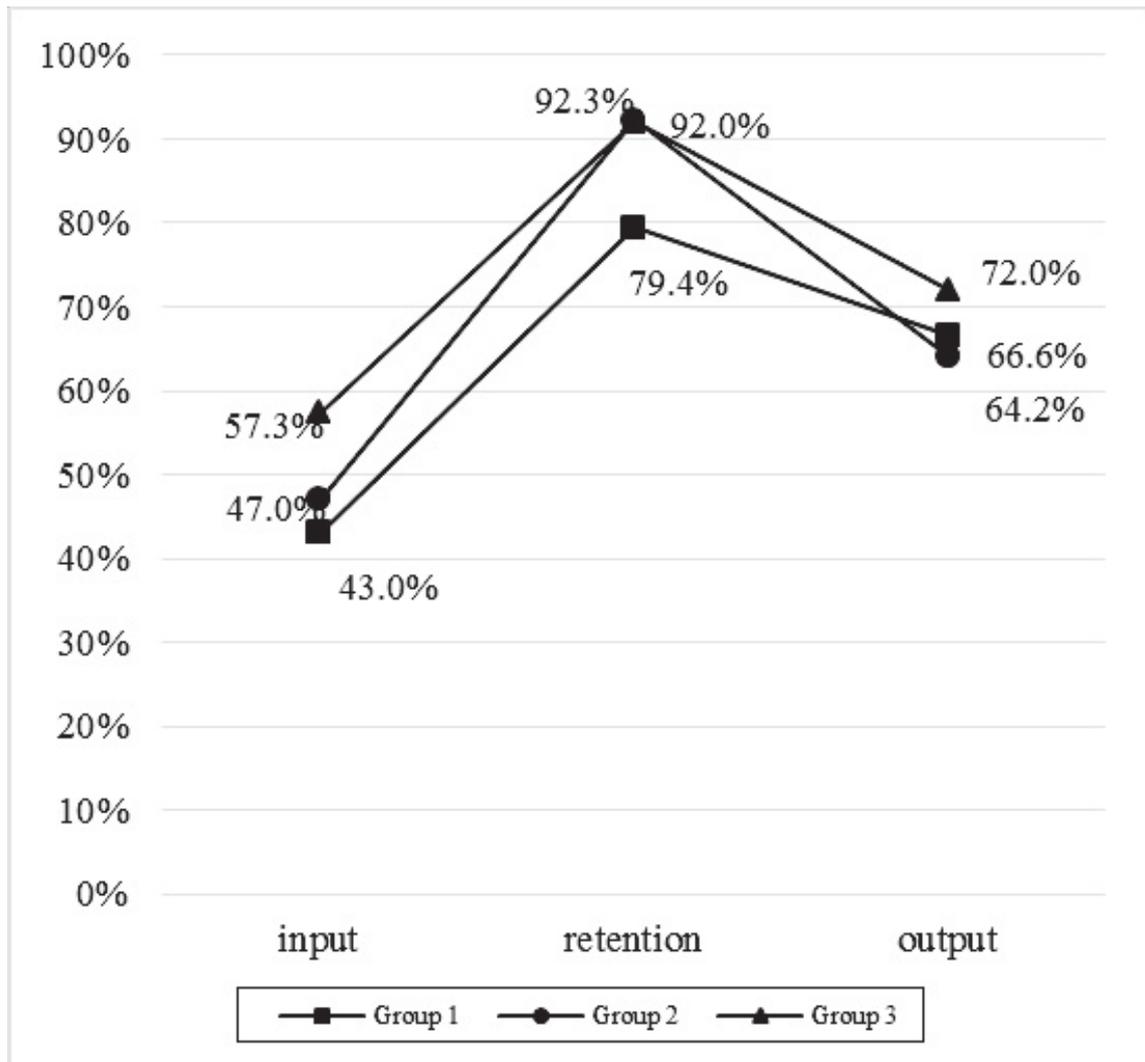


Figure 3. The Mean Acceptance Rates of *remember*.

to be significant [$F(2, 510) = 380.941, p < 0.001$]. The interaction effect between level and phase did not reach significance [$F(4, 510) = 0.812, p = 0.518$], indicating that there was no significant differences in the extent to which each group accepted each verb.

4 Discussion

The first research question of the present study addressed the extent to which Japanese learners of English can recognize appropriate use of memory verbs in relation to the three cognitive phases of memory. It was found that learners were

Table 6. ANOVA: Tests of Between-subjects Effects (*remember*)

Source	Sum of squares	df	Mean squares	F value	Sig.	η^2
Level	5355.757	2	2677.879	2.786	0.063	0.008
Phase	73178.320	2	36589.160	38.068	0.000	0.113
Level*Phase	4902.439	4	1225.610	1275	0.279	0.008

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics of the Acceptability Judgment Test Scores (*recall*)

	Input		Retention		Output	
	Mean (%)	SD	Mean (%)	SD	Mean (%)	SD
Group 1 (<i>n</i> = 67)	10.75	19.80	26.27	23.67	85.97	22.02
Group 2 (<i>n</i> = 91)	3.52	10.58	24.62	27.18	86.59	23.30
Group 3 (<i>n</i> = 15)	4.00	8.28	20.00	22.68	86.67	16.33
Total (<i>n</i> = 173)	6.36	15.06	24.86	25.42	86.36	22.18

able to use *memorize* and *recall* in the input and the output phases, respectively, with high accuracy since the use of each verb is restricted to single phases. On the contrary, *remember* turned out to be the most problematic of the three verbs since it can be used across the three phases. It was also revealed that while learners were able to accurately accept *remember* in the retention phase, they tended to under-generalize it in the input and the output phases. In addition, learners showed a tendency to over-generalize *memorize* and *recall* in the retention phase.

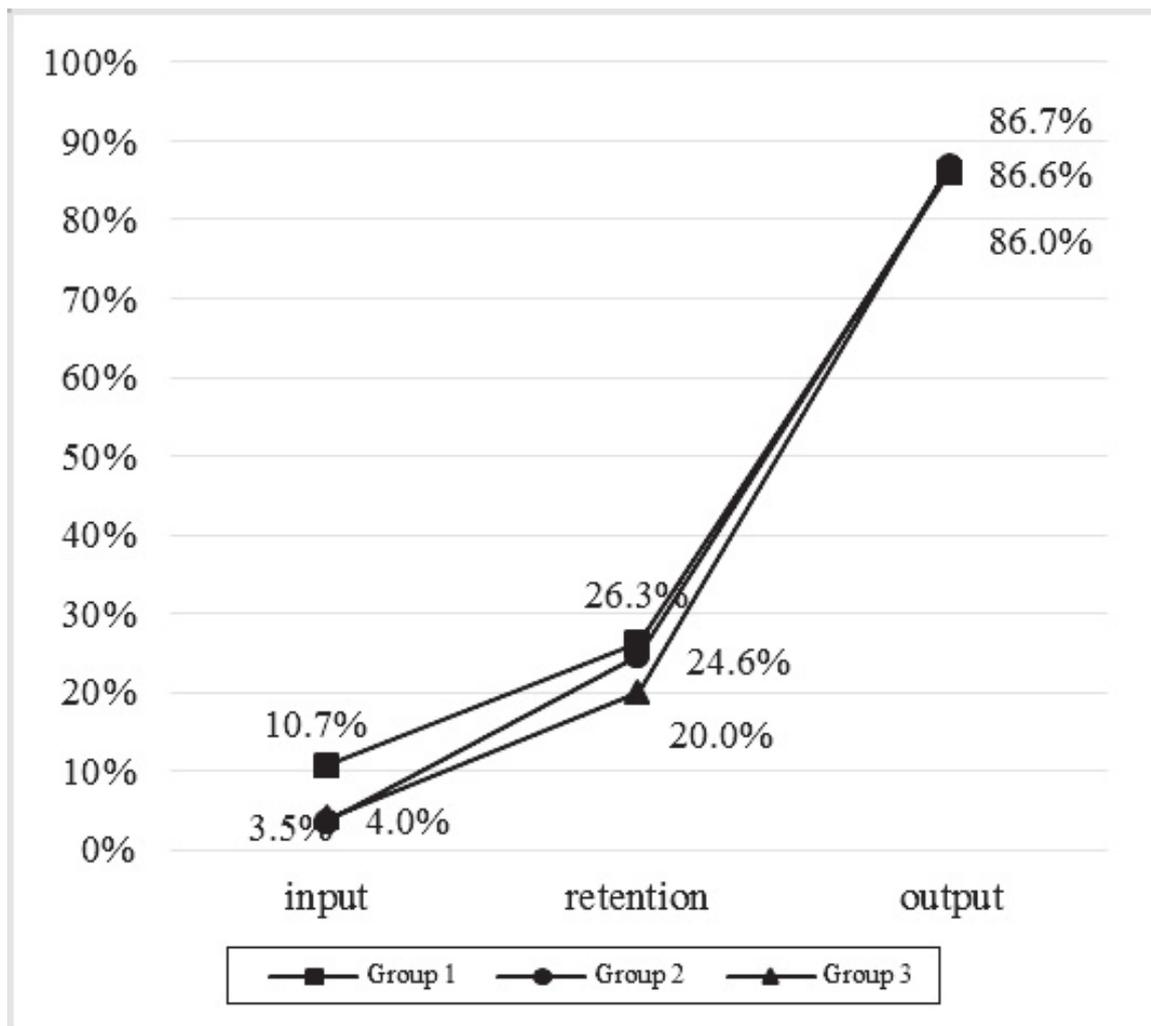
Figure 4. The Mean Acceptance Rates of *recall*.

Table 8. ANOVA: Tests of between-Subjects Effects (*recall*)

Source	Sum of squares	df	Mean squares	F value	Sig.	η^2
Level	1138.632	2	569.316	1.251	0.287	0.001
Phase	346754.204	2	173377.102	380.941	0.000	0.412
Level*Phase	1478.972	4	369.743	0.812	0.518	0.002

One of the possible reasons for the above findings could be the number of available L1 translation-equivalents. As discussed earlier, learners approach L2 lexicon with a well-developed conceptual and semantic structure in their L1. This naturally leads them to rely on the STE strategy. In the case of the memory verbs, *memorize* and *recall* can straightforwardly be equated with a single translation-equivalent as in “*memorize* = *oboeru*” and “*recall* = *omoidasu*.” On the contrary, the meaning of *remember* cannot be fully represented by a single translation-equivalent since it requires distinct L1 verbs for each phase as in “*remember* = {*oboeru*, *oboeteiru*, *omoidasu*}.” Since *remember* was accepted across the three phases, it can be assumed that these L1 translation-equivalents all existed in the learners’ mental lexicon. Given this fact, we need to turn our attention to the relative strengths of association between *remember* and each L1 translation-equivalent since they can vary depending on the nature of input learners have encountered in the course of learning. For the participants in this study, *remember* was understood in the following order: *remember* = {*oboeteiru* [retention] > *omoidasu* [output] > *oboeru* [input]}, indicating that it was more firmly associated with the retention phase than the other two phases. In support of this finding, the meaning of *remember* was consulted in five major English-Japanese dictionaries,¹ which together with textbooks are one of the primary sources from which learners understand its meaning. It was found that all of them listed *oboeteiru*, which is used for the retention phase, as the first sense of the verb *remember*, followed by *omoidasu*, used for the output phase. Interestingly, none of the five dictionaries had a separate entry for the input phase, putting it together under the retention phase. As learners tend to focus on the first entry in the dictionary (Prichard, 2008), it can be assumed that their understanding of *remember* could have been biased toward the retention phase rather than the remaining two phases.

Given the fact that each translation-equivalent is associated with *remember* with varying degrees of strength, the question of what leads to such differences now arises. One of the possible factors could be the inter-lexical relationship among the three verbs. Since *memorize* and *recall* can only be used in the input and the output phases, respectively, *remember* could have been taken as the one to be most strongly associated with the retention phase, following the principle of division of labor. It is therefore conceivable that learners had formulated the following schema for the use of the memory verbs: {input: *memorize*, retention: *remember*, output: *recall*}. As each verb is associated with a single phase, it imposes less burden on learners. The mental representation of the memory verb network by Japanese learners in the present study can be schematically represented as in Figure 5 below.

The second research question of the present study was concerned with the relationship between learners’ use of the memory verbs and their level of English proficiency. The overall results showed that the higher the level of proficiency, the

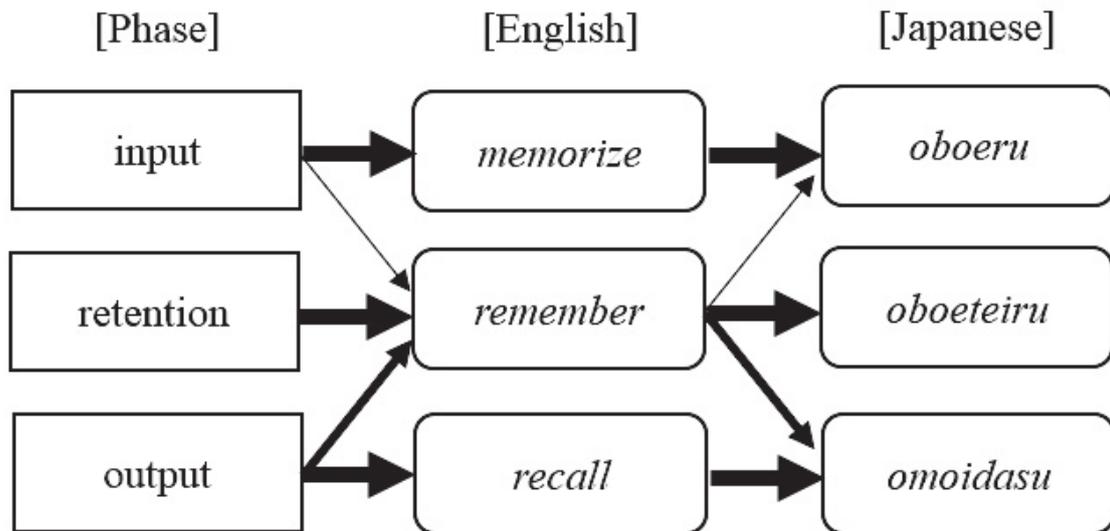


Figure 5. Mental Representations of the Memory Verb Network by Japanese Learners in the Present Study. The thicker the lines, the stronger the relationship between each element.

better learners can recognize appropriate use of each verb. It was also revealed that compared to Group 2 and 3, Group 1 tended to over-generalize *memorize* in the retention phase and under-generalize *remember* in the retention phase, indicating that they had not yet achieved accurate understanding of which verb is responsible for which phase. In addition, in the case of *remember*, it is worth noting that even those learners who had prior experience living in English-speaking countries for a certain period of time under-generalized *remember* in the input and the output phases, 57.3% and 72.0% respectively, despite being exposed to a large amount of language input. This implies that incidental learning alone may not be sufficient for obtaining accurate knowledge of the use of the memory verbs but instead be supplemented by more explicit, systematic learning.

As a pedagogical implication, in teaching memory verbs, it would be beneficial for learners to be presented with them in a cross-linguistic network and be shown how each verb is used in relation to the three phases of memory rather than being presented with them in an isolated manner. Due attention has to be paid to *remember* since it covers multiple phases, and learners should be encouraged not to understand its meaning from a single translation-equivalent. The format used in the acceptability judgment test in the present study can be an effective form of awareness-raising exercise through which learners can systematically understand which verbs are used in each situation. This way of instruction can be effective not only for learners at the basic level but also for those who are at the intermediate level or above. Needless to say, learners should also be exposed to an ample amount of usage in parallel with the above explicit, systematic instruction.

5 Conclusions

The present study investigated the acquisition of English memory verbs by Japanese learners within the framework of a lexical network. It was revealed that compared to *memorize* and *recall*, learners had difficulty realizing the meaning

potential of *remember*. More specifically, they were able to use it accurately in the retention phase but tended to under-generalize it in the input and output phases regardless of their level of English proficiency. The present study also argued that (1) the number of available L1 translation-equivalents, (2) the relative strengths between each verb and its L1 translation-equivalent, and (3) the inter-lexical relationship among the verbs in a given conceptual domain can affect the relative difficulty of acquiring English memory verbs.

As has been seen, utilizing the concept of a lexical network is of theoretical and practical importance. From a theoretical point of view, the lexical network approach enables researchers to look into the nature of the acquisition of L2 basic words in a more detailed manner than dealing with single words. For teachers, lexical networks can be a useful tool for presenting the words to learners more systematically, leading to a better understanding of how a given conceptual domain is organized in L2.

Note

1. The dictionaries consulted were *The New Century English-Japanese Dictionary*, Second Edition (Sanseido, 1991), *GENIUS English-Japanese Dictionary*, Fourth Edition (Taishukan, 2006), *The WISDOM English-Japanese Dictionary*, Third Edition (Sanseido, 2013), *O-LEX English-Japanese Dictionary*, Second Edition (Obunsha, 2013), and *PROGRESSIVE English-Japanese Dictionary*, Fifth Edition (Shogakukan, 2012).

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Appendix

15 Sentences in the Lexical Network Test of Memory Verbs

(1) Input

I'm trying to □ the names of all AKB48 members.

The researcher asked a group of students to □ seven random numbers.

We had to □ the parts of the brain in our biology class.

I can't □ so many lines in such a short time.

I have to □ twenty new words by tomorrow.

(2) Retention

I will □ this day throughout my life.

I will always □ your kindness.

I'm not sure whether I can □ this information until next week.

□ your promise.

Even though we are far apart, please □ me.

(3) Output

I'm trying to □ the time when we first met.

I can clearly □ the moment when the accident happened.

I can't □ his phone number.

He has the ability to □ past events.

I can't □ the face of my homeroom teacher.

Loanwords for Language Learners: Help or Hindrance?

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Abstract

Background: Loanwords are a growing component of the Japanese language. During the past six decades, the majority of new loanwords entering the Japanese language have come from the English language. For native Japanese speaking students, loanwords are a source of potential frustration and support, both within their L1 and L2 (English).

Aims: To explore and further our understanding of students' knowledge of high frequency loanwords.

Sample: One hundred thirty undergraduate students of mixed major, studying in a compulsory course (*Eigo/Eigokaiwa*), at Kyushu Sangyo University, participated in this exploratory study.

Methods: This study compares loanword self-reported difficulty (L2) with students' productive knowledge in their L1. This study was undertaken with a group of first- and second-year students ($n = 130$) enrolled in compulsory English classes.

Results: For half of the loanwords examined, self-reported difficulty and students' productive knowledge was consistent. The remaining words examined were inconsistent with self-report measures, generally underestimating students' actual productive knowledge.

Conclusions: Error analyses of students' L1 sentences indicated that inconsistencies observed between self-report and productive knowledge may be due to students' partial knowledge of words expressed through their reliance on *katakana* translations of the words tested. Implications for practice and future directions are discussed.

1 Introduction

Japanese learners of English must learn many English words that are loanwords in their L1. It may be the case that loanword knowledge helps students to learn a new language (Gass, 1996; Odlin, 1989, 2003). Due to the large number of English loanwords in the Japanese language, loanword knowledge might be particularly important for Japanese students of English. For this reason, it is important that the link between loanwords and English vocabulary acquisition is explored with Japanese learners of English.

The relative difficulty of learning similar versus dissimilar words across L1 and L2 has been extensively researched (de Groot, 2006; Ellis & Beaton, 1993). Ellis and Beaton (1993) found that phonological congruence between an L2 target lexical item and the L1 translation had a major influence on potential L2 vocabulary acquisition.

Consistent with this finding, de Groot (2006) concluded that, “words with a ‘cognate’ translation in the FL [Foreign Language] . . . were learned far better than those with a noncognate translation” (Schmitt, 2010, p. 72). Schmitt (2010) suggested that this effect is due to both the relative similarity/dissimilarity of the words in L1 and L2, and the way those words are processed. Morphological congruency between L1 and L2 vocabulary can make lexical items easier to learn (Schmitt, 2010). It is essential therefore that teachers and course designers attend to the similarities and patterns between students’ FL and the second language under study in order to encourage adaptive language acquisition (Nation, 1990). While Daulton (2011) examined university students’ attitudes towards loanwords, this study did not examine students’ knowledge of loanwords. As a result, it is still not clear empirically what the effect of loanword status is on students’ L2 vocabulary acquisition. In addition, there has been no study to date that has tried to compare and examine student’s cognate knowledge of vocabulary with their productive knowledge.

Following a review of the literature, this article will present results comparing the pattern of relationship between self-reported difficulty of loanwords and students’ L2 understanding of these words.

2 Literature Review

2.1 History of Loanwords Gairaigo Within L1

Although the country of Japan has never experienced a large immigration of people since the Japanese first settled the country, the Japanese language has undergone a sustained influx of foreign words. The first examples of this influx began early in Japanese history in the fourth century, when Japan borrowed Chinese characters (*kanji*) from China. In the sixth century – at the beginning of the Heian period – these borrowed characters were used as a foundation for creating the original Japanese phonetic scripts *hiragana* and *katakana*. The first vocabulary to come from the West arrived in the sixteenth century when the Portuguese and Dutch languages came with European explorers, and the influx continued with increasing trade. The next major inflow of foreign words coincided with the Meiji Restoration (nineteenth century), during which Japan underwent rapid modernization. During the Meiji Restoration, many aspects of Western culture were adopted, and the primary source of new borrowed language was English. While words of Chinese origin are loanwords in a restricted sense, the current research, undertaken in a globalized world, focuses on loanwords that are used in *katakana* today and are primarily of English language origin. The globalization of Japan has coincided with dramatic changes to the Japanese language. Specifically, during the past five decades, the number of English loanwords incorporated into the Japanese language has rapidly increased. In 1964, the National Institute for Japanese Language (NIJLA) undertook a lexical analysis of the kind of Japanese language employed in 90 magazines for one year (in 1956). The results indicated that in 1956, only 9.8% of magazine text was composed of loanwords, whereas in 1994, 33.8% of similar magazine text consisted of loanwords (NIJLA, 2005). These results indicate that loanword use in Japan has steadily increased since the 1960s and can almost certainly be expected to continue to increase in the future.

2.2 *Loanword L2 Issues and Attempted Solutions*

While loanwords are powerful tools for enriching Japanese language expressions, these new words also cause considerable confusion for some FL speakers (NIJLA, 2006). Acknowledging the difficulty loanwords cause, NIJLA has suggested that the difficulty of some loanwords is a very real problem for some native speakers of Japanese, as the government and newspapers have been careless in their use of loanwords, therefore causing considerable confusion for L1 speakers (NIJLA, 2006). As a result of this trend, NIJLA initiated the *Gairaigo iinkai* (loanwords committee) in August, 2002, and then four times between 2003 and 2006. Based on these *Gairaigo iinkai*, the NIJLA proposed that 176 loanwords be restated in the original Japanese (*hiraganakanji*) terms in order to reduce confusion for Japanese language speakers. For example, “accountability” (アカウントビリティ) has a clear original Japanese (*hiraganakanji*) definition, *setsumei sekinin* (説明責任). Similarly, the loanword “access” (アクセス) has three separate (*hiraganakanji*) definitions: (1) *setsuzoku* (接続), (2) *kotsu shudan* (交通手段), and (3) *sannyu* (参入).

In a recent article, *Asahi Newspaper* (2013) reported on an example of the growing use and potential confusion caused by loanwords for L1 speakers of Japanese. In this newspaper article, a 71-year-old man filed a lawsuit against a national television broadcaster, *Nippon Housou Kyoukai*/Japan Broadcasting Corporation (NHK). In his lawsuit, he demanded that NHK assume responsibility for the emotional distress caused by excessive use of loanword on television: for example, *kea* (ケア “care”), *risuku* (リスク “risk”), and *toraburu* (トラブル “trouble”) (*Asahi Newspaper*, 2013/6/26). The claimant asked the National Television station not to use such loanwords unless absolutely necessary. With so many loanwords in the Japanese language (48,100 loanwords are included in the *Concise Dictionary of Katakana Words*) and increasing rapidly, elderly people who are not used to using these words, but see and hear them in newspaper and on the television, are clearly having trouble understanding the meaning of some words (NIJLA, 2006).

2.3 *The Current Study*

Within this exploration, the difficulty of target vocabulary is an important component. The difficulty of the target learned language is generally considered to be strongly related to the acquisition and effective utilization of vocabulary knowledge.

It might be the case that loanwords play a crucial role in English language acquisition for native speakers of Japanese. Second-language researchers agree that vocabulary acquisition is an essential part of language learning, both for low- and high-proficiency students (Grabe, 1991; Laufer & Nation, 1999; Nation, 1990; Schmitt, 2000). Knowledge of the top 2,000 headwords is sufficient for a learner to read and understand more than 80% of the words of any given text (Nation, 1990) many of which are loanwords (Daulton, 2008).

While Nation has noted that loanword knowledge may assist in language acquisition, empirical research has consistently indicated that some Japanese language speakers have inconsistent knowledge of loanwords (Daulton, 2008). For Japanese students learning English, there are several ways in which loanword knowledge may also impede language acquisition. Uchida’s (2001) review of the

literature suggests that when English words enter into the Japanese language, the words' phonetics, morphology and semantics often change. When English words become a loanword within the Japanese language, they undergo a range of potential adaptations. Adaptations may include phonological, orthographical and semantic shifts. For example, "strike" (su-to-ra-i-ki) has changed from one syllabic sound to five – that is, proparalepsis. Furthermore, "strike" has two meanings in Japanese, one is original "ストライキ" (meaning) and "ストライク" is a baseball term. In this way, loanwords may inhibit the processing and acquisition of some English vocabulary. For example, two English words "glove" and "globe" are both represented as *guroobu* (グローブ) in Japanese, which might confuse second/foreign language learners as these words' orthography is the same in *katakana* (Japanese).

Despite the long history of loanwords within the Japanese language and potential difficulties loanwords might cause Japanese students of English, scant research has been carried out in this area of language learning. Research that has been carried out has often taken the form of content analysis of existing Japanese text (e.g., NILJ, 1964) or the use of yes/no checklists (Gibson & Stewart, 2011). Content analyses have informed us about the growth and nature of loanwords in the Japanese language, and checklist research has suggested that these words may be easy due to their loanword status (Gibson & Stewart, 2011). Despite these advances, the validity of checklist data is still in question (Stubbe, 2012), and the productive knowledge and use of loanwords by Japanese learners of English is poorly understood. By examining the relationship between productive L1 knowledge of loanwords, relative to word difficulty – self-reported difficulty determined with large sample checklists – the current study aims to contribute to this field. In addition to the theoretical contribution of this research, there are clear practical implications for exploring the relationship between lexical knowledge and loanword status. Preliminary results from an ongoing content analysis of KSU's first- and second-year wordlist, employing past British National Corpus (BNC) analysis (Nation, 2004) and the *Concise Dictionary of Katakana Words* (Sanseido, 2010), suggest that a large (74%) percentage of words taught are loanwords. It may be that some Japanese learners of English, especially beginners, learn more directly from *katakana* than English to start. This is consistent with research that has indicated that L1 exerts a considerable effect on the learning of L2 vocabulary (Ellis, 1997; de Groot, 2006; Schmitt, 2010). Particularly, L2 words that match L1 orthographical and phonological patterns are easier to learn (de Groot, 2006). Daulton (2010) studied correspondences of the 3000 word families of the BNC to common Japanese loanwords by frequency level, concluding that "in 54.8% of word families [of the first 1000 most frequent words], one or more members corresponded to verified Japanese loanwords."

Due to the very close connection between L2 1K words and students' L1, it is essential that we examine the vocabulary knowledge of students who are learning English vocabulary at the 1K level to explore the effect of loanwords on English vocabulary learning and knowledge. It is therefore important to examine the link between loanwords and English vocabulary acquisition with Japanese students learning English.

This exploration should employ the wealth of research already undertaken to assess word difficulty through self-report measures in conjunction with an objective measure of students' productive vocabulary knowledge of the same words (Gibson & Stewart, 2011). Because assessing beginner students' productive L2 knowledge is necessarily problematic and due to potential concerns highlighted in the literature

review regarding L1 comprehension of loanwords, L2 productive knowledge should be employed. This research will provide insight into self-reported knowledge and related word difficulty by examining students' L1 productive knowledge. This research will also offer teachers a sense of both the barrier and benefit that loanwords can be for beginner Japanese EFL students.

3 Aims

This study has two aims: (1) to compare Japanese students' self-reported knowledge of the meaning of English loan words with their knowledge, as observed on objective productive vocabulary test, and (2) to qualitatively examine students L1 use of high-frequency English loanwords.

4 Methods

4.1 Sample

One hundred thirty undergraduate students of mixed major, studying in a compulsory course (*Eigo/Eigokaiwa*), at Kyushu Sangyo University, participated in this exploratory study.

4.2 Procedure

In a prior study, Gibson and Stewart (2011) explored the self-reported difficulty of 900 of the first 2000 most frequent words of English, based on the Longman English corpus employed in the *Longman English–Japanese Dictionary* (Bullon, 2007). Self-reported difficulty data were collected through yes/no checklists ($n = 2768$), with multiple forms using anchor items to connect the test forms under the Rasch model (Linacre, 2013). Word difficulty was calculated using the Rasch logit difficulty measure taken from the collective student responses regarding their self-reported vocabulary knowledge.

For the current study, students were asked to write one English and one Japanese sentence for 10 loanwords selected from a prior curriculum-wide test. The words for this test were selected from the top 2000 high-frequency words. The task took between 8 and 15 minutes for students to complete.

The instructions that prefaced the test asked the participants to write one English and one Japanese sentence for each of the 10 loanwords listed. Students were encouraged to try to write a sentence for all words.

4.3 Analysis

Japanese translations of target vocabulary were coded into incorrect and correct. Correct translations were then coded based on *hiraganakanji* or *katakana* usage. Sentences were coded based on sentence structure: just the word, a subject–verb sentence employing the word, and more than a subject–verb sentence employing the word. Table 1 presents coding employed in the current study.

Table 1. Coding for Japanese and English Vocabulary Examined

Definition	Writing type	Score	Sentence level	Score
Incorrect		0	Word	1
Correct	<i>Hiragana/kanji</i>	1	S+V	2
	<i>Katakana</i>	2	More than S+V	3

Categories were graphed with difficulty data for each word. Graphs were then employed to compare the self-reported difficulty and students' productive L1 knowledge of the words.

5. Results

The results of this study are presented in the following order. First, the pattern of difficulty and productive knowledge is presented. Second, an error analysis of students' answers is presented. Finally, three questions arising from the pattern of students' comprehension of the Japanese meaning and the word's difficulty are presented.

5.1 Pattern of Difficulty and Productive Knowledge

Students' productive knowledge of 4 ("master," "limit," "version," and "tool") out of the 10 target loanwords was consistent with the words' self-reported difficulty (Figure 1). From "roll" to "battery," there is a slow increase in productive difficulty but a slow decrease in self-reported knowledge. "Paragraph" and "cash" was the exception to this trend. Students indicated that "paragraph" was the most

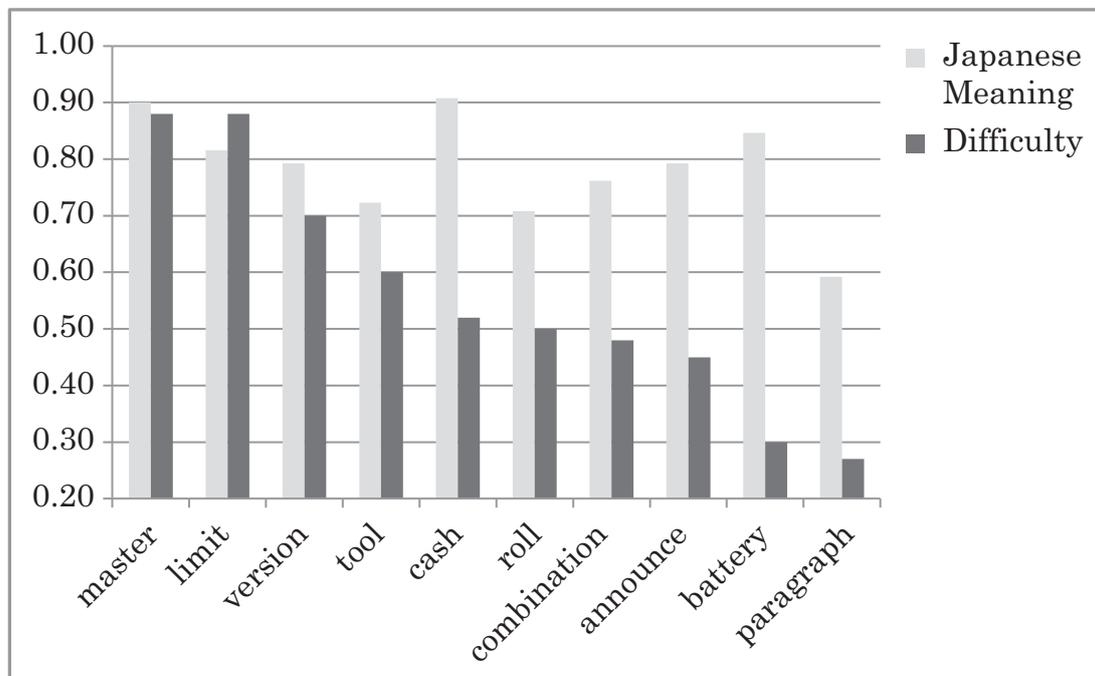


Figure 1. Self-reported Difficulty Represented by Percentage and Productive Word Knowledge (Japanese Meaning) Represented by Percent of Correct Productive Use of the Word in a Japanese Sentence.

difficult item of the 10 tested, while “cash” was reported as being far more difficult than productive Japanese knowledge results indicated.

The considerable gap in students’ self-reported productive knowledge of the final five words presented in Figure 1 suggested that some aspect of these words was either inflating students’ productive knowledge or reducing their self-reported knowledge. One potential explanation for this misalignment is that over half (52%) of students’ use of “combination” and 60% of student’s use of “battery” in Japanese were as *katakana* rather than the original *hiraganakanji* usage. This result indicates that while students may not be confident in their knowledge of a words’ meaning, they have a sense of the word’s *katakana* usage. For example, for the word “combination,” students generally used *konbilkonbineeshon* rather than *kumiawase* or *suuji[moji]no kumiawase* (組み合わせ, 数字[文字]の組み合わせ), which, based on the *Longman English–Japanese Dictionary*’s Japanese frequency corpus, are the two most common definitions of “combination.” For “battery,” students generally used *batterii* rather than *denchi* (電池) in their productive use of the word. The results suggest that many students’ knowledge of “combination” might be restricted to the *katakana* definition. Similarly, the inconsistency between students’ productive knowledge and the self-reported difficulty “announce” might be attributed partially to *katakana* use (30%). Furthermore, in Japanese, “announce” has a range of meanings, which allow for flexible productive use in Japanese. *Katakana* is generally fixed to one meaning of the word, therefore narrowing its meaning. For example, “battery” has multiple meanings in English and one of those meaning is a baseball term (e.g., pitcher and catcher partner for practice. 彼とバッテリーを組む (*Kare to batterii wo kumu*) meaning “I pair with him in a baseball game.”).

5.2 Common Mistakes Resulting from Shared Katakana Phonology

Seventy percent of students reporting Japanese definition of “roll” were correct. Seventeen percent of students, however, reported 役割を果たす (*yakuwari wo hatasu*) meaning “role”; these two words share the same *katakana* as ロール (*rooru*).

Seventy-three percent of students reporting Japanese definition of “tool” were correct. Nine percent of students, however, reported 背が高い (*se ga takai*), which means “tall.” It is reasonable to assume that this type of error may be due to students thinking in *katakana* and therefore miss-decoding the word.

6 Students’ Error Analysis

One type of error many students made in their use of the 10 words in productive sentences was phonological errors. For example, when students were instructed to employ “tool” in a sentence, some students used the word “背が高い (*se ga takai*),” which means “tall.” Two examples of students’ errors were

Student 1: I am tooler than you.

Student 2: I’m the toolest [in the] class No.1.

These sentences suggest that students are reading “tool” and then phonologically interpreting the word to be “tall.”

A second source of errors for students were *katakana* words that had two meanings in Japanese. An example of such errors can be seen in students’ use of the word “roll” in sentences; “roll” or “ロール (*rooru*)” in Japanese confused both low- and intermediate—proficiency students. Two examples of the kinds of errors students made are

Low—proficiency student: My *roll* is leader.

Intermediate—proficiency student: I played an important roll in a trip to Korea because I could speak Korean and English a little.

7 Three Questions Based on the Pattern of Japanese Meaning and Word Difficulty

An examination of Figure 1 raises three questions based on the pattern of Japanese meaning and word difficulty observed. First, “master,” “limit,” “version,” and “tool” were consistent with the words’ self-reported difficulty. Second, from “role” to “battery” exhibited there was greater productive difficulty but a fewer self-reports of knowledge. For example, students employed *katakana* definitions 52% and 60% of the time for “combination” and “battery.” Students’ *katakana* usage focuses mostly on electronic equipment, such as cars and cell phone. Students generally talked about their cell phones in their Japanese sentences. When wishing to express that their cell phone batteries were dead or running out, students said “*keitai no batterii ga kireta.*” (携帯のバッテリーが切れた “My cell phone’s battery is dead.”) or “*batterii ga sugu kireru.*” (携帯のバッテリーがすぐ切れる “My battery has been running out so fast.”). Students generally preferred to use *batterii* (バッテリー) over *denchi* (電池) for cell phone—related sentences. With regard to car-based sentences, “*kuruma no batterii wo kokan suru hitsuyo ga aru.*” (車のバッテリーを交換する必要がある “I need to replace my car’s battery.”) and “*kuruma no batterii ga agatta.*” (車のバッテリーが上がった “My car’s battery has run out.”). In some cases, students actually got the meaning wrong: for example, “*keitai denwa no juden ga nakunaru.*” In this case, the student misinterpreted the meaning of battery, *batterii* (バッテリー “battery”) as *Juden* (充電 “charge”). Mistakes like this suggest that students may be indicating knowledge of words on the checklist which students have a sense of, but don’t know concretely.

The two exceptions to the patterns observed between productive Japanese knowledge and self-reported knowledge, “cash” and “paragraph,” bear some attempt at explanation. For “cash,” students used the *katakana* translations (37%) more often than *genkin* and *shikin* (現金, 資金 “cash”). One of the loanwords, *kyasshu kaado* (キャッシュカード “cash card”) was commonly used by students: for example, “*kanojo wa kyasshu kaado wo tsukutta.*” (彼女はキャッシュカードを使った “She used her cash card.”); “*Watashi wa kyasshu kaado wo motteimasu.*” (私はキャッシュカードを持っています “I have a cash card.”). As mentioned above, “cash” is recognized as a proper name by some students. There were misinterpretations of “cash card” as “credit card”; for example, “If you use a cash card, you don’t have to bring your money when you go shopping.” If they recognize the

“cash” word as proper name (“cash card”) or misinterpret (“credit card”), when they see “cash” word there is the possibility that they not actually know the meaning. As for “paragraph,” students knew the meaning 52% of time, but about 30% of their use was in *katakana* form. Students generally used *paragurahu* (パラグラフ) rather than *danraku* (段落) in their Japanese sentences. As mentioned above, *katakana* use is not clear. The word “paragraph” is not used on a daily basis by students, perhaps only in their English class. Based on students’ errors in using Japanese, such as *zu* (図 “graph”) and *shashin* (写真 “photograph”), it may be that students more frequently use the word “paragraph” in *katakana* than the original Japanese. Clearly, *katakana* is also Japanese; however, it is not always true that students lack a full understanding of the loanword’s meaning when they use it. When discussing loanword use with students, one student noted that

I guess the meanings of unknown loanwords from the context without asking someone the meaning who use the loanword or looking up the meanings of unfamiliar words. When I don’t know the word, but I sometimes use in *katakana* if I have sense of the word.

This student’s comment indicated that loanword use is flexible, even if students do not understand the meaning, they will be able to express the meaning of unknown loanwords in *katakana*. Clearly, the pattern and exceptions to the patterns remain a matter for further investigation.

8 Conclusions and Future Directions

Self-reported difficulty and productive knowledge were consistent for 4 of the 10 words tested. However, *katakana* knowledge may inflate students’ self-reports of productive knowledge of some loanwords. For many students within the sample for this study, their knowledge of loanwords was often limited to the *katakana* translation, despite the meaning being of low frequency within the Japanese language.

Error analysis of students’ Japanese sentences indicated that *katakana* knowledge may be interfering with students’ interpretation of loanwords. Having a single *katakana* form for two loanwords, such as “ロール,” may confuse both low- and high—proficiency students. This suggests that Japanese learners of English as a foreign language are experiencing a very specific type of interference: processing interference due to polysemy *katakana* words.

In the current study, only loanwords were included in the productive test of students’ vocabulary knowledge; however, an even proportion of loanwords and non-loanwords should be included in future tests. Testing of loanwords with non-loanwords will enable future research to isolate vocabulary acquisition difficulties specific to loanwords.

The effect of students’ field of study on their loanword knowledge and use may also be a fruitful avenue of investigation. It is possible that students in KSU departments such as Information Studies and Fine Arts interpret loanwords through the lens of their studies. For example, in current study, students in the department of Information Studies all translated “version” as “バージョン” (*vaajyon*) and employed the word in sentences describing software. Finally, it is important to test existing theories of loanword acquisition (e.g. Uchida, 2001)

towards an empirically robust loanword theoretical framework. This might be undertaken by categorizing the loanwords within the top 2000 words of English into a theoretical framework such as that suggested by Uchida (2001). Self-reported difficulty of the same loanwords might then be used to validate the framework. Analyses could examine the amount of variance in difficulty explained by a loanword theoretical framework.

9 Limitations

Word classification was provided for each of the 10 words to ensure students understood what word to employ in their sentences on the productive test used in the current study. Instructions for the test, however, strongly encouraged students to attempt a sentence for all 10 words presented by the test. This situation may have played a role in students using the noun form of some words, when the verb form was stipulated by some questions.

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Tools for Researching Vocabulary
P.M. Meara & I. Miralpeix (2017)
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Paul Meara is a genius. This book demonstrates it. This hugely impressive work presents 11 chapters, each describing a utility designed to explore an aspect or aspects of vocabulary knowledge. The book is a tour de force, comprising six sections, serving to demonstrate the humongous achievement of Paul Meara's contribution to the field. The book is accessible to all, but of course ideally suited to vocabulary researchers (from undergraduate to postgraduate). Meara and Miralpeix's volume presents each chapter in the same format, in short: a brief introduction to the program or tool under review, a description of where to access it, how to use it, screenshots, a published paper that uses the program, a reflection relating to where we are now, and a set of questions for readers to follow up on. What follows is a brief description of each of these chapters, presented under each of their section headings.

Part 1: Processing Vocabulary Data

Chapter 1 begins this volume with a description of two programs (V_Words and V_Lists) described as useful for carrying out basic operation on vocabulary data. The chapter is divided into two sections, the first of which describes V_Words. V_Words is described as a small utility program that turns texts into word lists, producing a basic count of all types and tokens in a chosen text. The text directs interested parties towards an online link and presents a basic description of how to use the program. A screenshot produced by V_Words is included in the text, showing token, type, and frequency lists. Section 2 of this chapter describes V_Lists. V_Lists is a utility designed to carry out basic operations on word lists. The text describes that once a user has entered two word lists into V_Lists, the utility then reports lists in three formats: words that appear in one of the lists, words that appear in both of the lists, and a cumulative list that contains words that appear in either of the original lists entered by the user. The generated output can then be used to perform different types of analyses, which I would suggest interested parties pursue. The chapter concludes with comparisons using the programs with an earlier paper (Morgan, 1926) which was originally designed to do the same job manually.

Part 2: Measuring Lexical Variation, Sophistication, and Originality

Chapter 2 describes D_Tools, a utility to compute the lexical richness of a text. The program bases its computation on a statistic (called D) and uses raw text. The chapter describes that D is based on Malvern and Richards's (2004) *vocd-D* and is basically a type/token measure (part of a larger family of statistics which uses type to token ratio (TTR) to explore lexical richness). There is detailed description outlining the complexity of this earlier measure, complex because length of text influences TTR. The text describes the computation D_Tools uses, and directs potential users towards a link. The text includes screenshots of D_Tools and compares data with those generated by *vocd*, reporting that correlations are usually very high. The chapter concludes with reflections on an earlier paper (Miralpeix, 2006) and highlights the need for other approaches to measure lexical richness – reporting McCarthy's view that D remains “the best yet attempt at a lexical diversity thermometer.”

Chapter 3 describes P_Lex, a measure to assess the vocabulary produced by L2 learners. The authors highlight two motivations for P_Lex: the first relates to the lack of an efficient measure of lexical sophistication (despite D being “good at” measuring lexical diversity) and the second relates to the need to assess short texts learners produce (as opposed to texts of 200–300 words produced by tasks such as D or Lexical Frequency Profile of Laufer & Nations, 1995). The resulting utility is P_Lex which uses relatively short texts, and which the authors consider to be more reliable with longer texts. They describe P_Lex as being “surprisingly effective” that works “for practical purposes.” The text presents screenshots of P_Lex in operation. The second half of the chapter presents an earlier paper (Meara & Bell, 2001), with subsequent reflections describing where this specific field is currently. The authors describe P_Lex as a simple tool, with data it generates easily comparable with other variables. However, while comparisons with other measures suggest that it is a “robust” tool, results reportedly need to be treated with caution, as “P_Lex is not backed up by a proper theory.”

Chapter 4 describes two utilities that constitute the Lexical Signatures suite. The first utility is a description of V_LexSig, a program that compares the input of two texts with a binary coding in terms of a target word list. The binary coding provides a compact and economical way of describing texts, providing a means to identify lexical similarities and differences. Screenshots are presented in the text. The second utility is SigSorter, which uses V_LexSig as input, and presents different signatures from a data set in order of their relative frequency in the data set. The background reading presented in the text is from Meara, Jacobs, and Roders (2002). The subsequent reflection describes a response to researchers pursuing type-/token-based measures. The reflection presents a discussion in which the authors compare L2 written texts and “surprisingly” find considerable variation as well as a very large number of unique signatures. The discussion centres around the expectation that beginner level texts would be very similar to one another compared with those generated by more advanced L2 learners.

Chapter 5 presents V_Unique, a utility to measure lexical originality. The test was intended as a means to collect test taker words and then compare these words

with other words produced by other test takers. The test is described as useful for learners as well as researchers to explore lexical originality. In general, the authors report minimal overlap between subject data sets. The background reading presented in this section is an adapted unpublished MA thesis by Tzima and Miralpeix (2015); their study is unique because they examine the production of single word lists by way of contrast to earlier studies that deal with texts. The ensuing reflection describes the Tzima and Miralpeix study as exploratory but has the potential to be used to measure other dimensions of vocabulary knowledge, such as recall ability, as well as lexical availability.

Part 3: Estimating Vocabulary Size

Chapter 6 describes the V_YesNo test, which is based on the Eurocentres Vocabulary Size Test (EVST; Meara & Jones, 1990). The original program came from the need for a “quick and dirty” test to efficiently describe the L2 proficiency of speakers taking part in experimental studies. The appeal and advantage of this test is its simplicity, asking whether subjects know an item or not, as opposed to providing multiple choice prompts, for instance. The authors highlight several advantages of this kind of test, one being that students like it. The test, they describe, turned out to be a surprisingly powerful tool. One finding was the “fairly good correlation” with scores for other language skills. The background reading for the test is from Meara and Jones’ (1988) paper. The subsequent reflection highlights a number of issues that arose, and which the authors suggest that they had failed to consider in the earlier study. One issue stems from the false alarm and real word guess combination, from which the authors discuss a number of experimental hurdles and worthy areas of reconsideration for this test.

Chapter 7 describes V_size, which is part of an ongoing attempt to measure the productive vocabulary of L2 speakers, and is a task that the authors report can make statements such as “this text looks as though it was generated by a person whose productive vocabulary is about 5500 words.” The task scores relate to Zipf’s law (which argues for a straightforward relationship between the number of times a word appears in a corpus and its rank order in a frequency list generated from that corpus) and assume that the text produced by a test taker relates to a characteristic frequency profile. The screenshots presented in the text highlight how V_size operates in practice. The background reading for this chapter is from Gesa (2015), adapted from an unpublished MA thesis, and the subsequent reflection sections suggest that further work is needed with this task. However, despite reservations that the test is only as good as the theory on which it is based, the authors suggest it “might reasonably be expected to be used to obtain reliable estimates.”

Chapter 8 outlines a task designed to investigate productive vocabulary size called V_Capture. V_Capture, is “based on an idea developed by biologists interested in counting the number of species in a test area, or the number of animals of a particular type in a test area.” The task, according to the authors, should be “treated with considerable caution,” given that the analogy between species or animal counts and word counts is not straightforward. The task takes two data sets as input, both from an L2 learner, and then uses “Petersen estimates” to predict the productive vocabulary available to the learner. The background reading for this

chapter is from Meara and Alcoy (2010), which presents an analogy between words and frogs. The reflection discusses potential tweaks to the approach taken by Meara and Alcoy, with a lot of discussion reserved for the nature of the capture task given to subjects. The authors discuss alternatives to essay writing tasks and suggest that a “good alternative” is a word association task which might result in more meaningful results.

Part 4: Measuring Lexical Access

Chapter 9 describes a word recognition task, Q_Lex, an exploratory utility designed to assess the ease with which an L2 learner can access a small set of high-frequency words. The task is based on a multidimensional characterization of L2 vocabularies. Rather than thinking of vocabulary in a single continuum, Q_Lex bases its task on the lexicon consisting of two or three dimensions and assesses subjects based on the assumption that L2 processing is different from that of processing in the L1. Q_Lex presents words hidden in a string of letters, the task for the subject being to identify the hidden word. L1 task performance is then compared with L2 task performance, and it presents an index of lexical accessibility. The text shows screenshots of Q_Lex in action. The background reading presented in this chapter is from Meara (1986), and the subsequent reflection calls for more research in this “interesting area” in order to respond to questions about how words are learned in a second language. The chapter highlights the complexities involved in learning a second language, the discussion of which relates to such diverse subjects as the guillotine, floppy disk drives, and experimental psychology.

Part 5: Assessing Aptitude for L2 Vocabulary Learning

Chapter 10 discusses LLAMA_B, which deals with language aptitude, specifically with vocabulary acquisition (learning names for things). Motivation for this particular task stems, according to the authors, from the need to elicit a critical attitude from MA students at Swansea University. The background reading for this chapter is from Rogers (in press), a report written specifically for this volume. The reading and the subsequent reflection is interesting, highlighting that the LLAMA_B task taken appears to result in students evaluating the task and then produces content for subsequent studies. The issues raised by the LLAMA_B task, according to the authors, appear to have generated a whole series of discussions about the nature of language aptitude in terms of the skills necessary to contribute to overall language learning performance. The chapter concludes with discussions relating to the success of the task and suggests that it might be good at distinguishing between good and poor language learners. The authors also report the large volume of interest the task has attracted.

Part 6: Modelling Vocabulary Growth

Chapter 11 discusses the Mezzonfanti program, which is a different utility compared with the other utilities described in this volume and was named after Professor Mezzonfanti from Bologna University (1774–1849) who reportedly could

speak a large number of languages. The Mezzonfanti task is a simulator designed to investigate the way different languages might interact with each other. The task is based on a “little-known” paper by Riegel (1968) who argued for a model of vocabulary acquisition consisting of three factors and resulting in a general formula. The task allows users to simulate with these three parameters and explore what happens when an individual learns two languages either in early childhood or later as an adult. The text presents Mezzonfanti utility screenshots in action. The background reading for this chapter is from Meara (2001), and the subsequent reflection discusses a number of interrelated concerns that stem from the use of such simulations: the lack of modelling use in applied linguistics research, the implications for overburdening learners with a large amount of vocabulary study, the potential interaction between start age and time spent on an L2 course, and the psycholinguistic ability to notice new words in an environment. The chapter concludes with a call for researchers to train themselves for writing computer programs necessary to explore further.

In conclusion/Envoi

To restate, and to conclude, this book represents a huge body of work, the work of a genius. From this standpoint alone, the book is very impressive. Yet the book is not only impressive in this specific regard. The level of detail, argumentation, and insistence that we researchers explore beyond the standard also drive this book. The closing “envoi” calls for researchers to “explore issues in L2 vocabulary acquisition in ways that area uncommon in Applied Linguistics research” is what the current volume represents. While the concluding section suggests that the programs in this collection are “works in progress,” there is a critical underpinning that keeps us wanting to know more. It is precisely this point that propels not only Paul Meara’s work, but any of those individuals who choose to follow up on his huge contribution to this ever-evolving field. To conclude, with Meara and Miralpeix (2017, p. 258): “we hope that the programs in this book will open up for you a world which goes beyond the sometimes very limited horizons of traditional vocabulary research projects.”

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“I Don’t Know” Use and Guessing on the Bilingual Japanese Vocabulary Size Test: Clarifications and Limitations

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Abstract

This paper offers a response to Hutchinson’s comments on our preliminary report of “I don’t know” use and guessing on the bilingual Japanese Vocabulary Size Test (VST), which was published in *Vocabulary Learning and Instruction*. In particular, it provides greater clarification of the English proficiency levels used throughout that paper and a reiteration of what we see as its key findings regarding the range of vocabulary size estimates that were able to be calculated for the participants. Finally, it addresses the methodological limitations of the original study, which, we believe, reduce any determinations about the participants’ personality types or general test-taking behaviors to mere speculation.

1 Introduction

In this paper, we offer a response to Hutchinson’s (2015) comments on our preliminary report of “I don’t know” use and guessing on the bilingual Japanese Vocabulary Size Test (VST; Nation & Beglar, 2007), which was published in *Vocabulary Learning and Instruction* (see McDonald & Asaba, 2015). Not only do we welcome the chance to provide greater clarification of what we see as the key findings of that paper, but we also value the opportunity to again promote greater awareness to several test factors known to impact the validity and reliability of the vocabulary size estimates garnered through the use of the VST with second language (L2) learners. Such factors include determinations on what word family frequency levels should be included, whether a monolingual or bilingual version is most appropriate, and how effective test directions, announced penalties, and/or the inclusion of an “I don’t know” option can be in deterring random, uninformed guessing. We hope that revisiting some of these issues in this paper can again highlight the need for potential users of the VST to consider how they can best ensure that the test will align the purposes for which it is intended.

In our initial report, we presented the findings of a small scale, qualitative study of the test-taking behavior of four first-year, Japanese university students who completed the 140-item bilingual Japanese VST (translated by Sasao and Nakata and available on Paul Nation’s website) modified to include a fifth “I don’t know” answer option in two passes. On the first pass, the students were explicitly told to select the “I don’t know” option on all items that they were unsure about. Then, on

the second pass, the students were told to return to all of these self-identified unknown items and to select the best answer from the original four multiple-choice options. Individual retrospective interviews were subsequently carried out with the four participants to ascertain how these test takers eventually arrived at their guesses to these self-identified unknown items. The recalled thought processes elicited in the interviews were then used to code the answer selections as *informed guesses* based on *true partial knowledge*, *false partial knowledge*, and/or *test strategies* or completely *uninformed guesses* chosen at random. This information allowed five distinct scores (vocabulary size estimates when multiplied by 100) to be calculated for each participant as the various types of guesses identified were selectively excluded or included. The range of scores provided for each individual suggested to us that there may be little difference in the vocabulary size estimates that either include or exclude all guesses for higher proficiency learners but a great deal of difference between these estimates for lower proficiency learners.

In his commentary, Hutchinson (2015) raised concerns about the conclusions we reached in that article, offered an alternative interpretation of the data from the participant we considered the most proficient, and discussed a call for further research at the interface between test-taking behavior and test-taker confidence levels to be more theoretically driven. Hutchinson concluded by pointing out that a possible starting point would be developing a greater understanding of reluctant responses and second attempts, as our original study sought to explore. In what follows, we hope to address what appears to be two critical misunderstandings of our initial report and outline the methodological limitations that prevent us from drawing any firm conclusions about the participants' personality types or the reasoning they may have applied when deciding whether or not to respond to items on their first passes through the test.

2 Clarification of Proficiency Levels

The first area of concern raised by Hutchinson (2015) seems to be based on a misunderstanding of the proficiency levels used in our study. Throughout the initial report, we exclusively used an average of the overall scores from two administrations of the Test of English for International Communication Institutional Program (TOEIC (IP)) conducted in April 2014 and February 2015 as an external measure of proficiency for the participants, a point which we stated explicitly on page 20. The TOEIC (IP) test is widely used as a proficiency measure in Japan and university students' scores from this test are often used in level placement decisions (TOEIC Steering Committee of the Institute for International Business Communication, 2008), as is the case at the institution attended by the participants in our study. The TOEIC (IP) test comprises two sections, Listening and Reading, which are equally scored out of 495 points and are typically reported as a combined score out of 990. To give further clarity, an enhanced version of Table 1 from our original study is reproduced below with all of the scores listed. General descriptors for various score levels on each subsection of the test can be found at https://www.ets.org/Media/Tests/TOEIC/pdf/TOEIC_LR_Score_Desc.pdf

Given the noted importance of L2 vocabulary knowledge to overall L2 proficiency (Meara, 1996), a strong positive relationship between a learner's

English vocabulary size and her total score on the TOEIC (IP) would be expected. Furthermore, as the VST was designed to test written receptive vocabulary knowledge, valid and reliable scores from this test would be expected to most highly correlate with those from the Reading subsection, particularly given the close ties that have been identified in the literature between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension (Grabe, 2009; Hu & Nation, 2000; Nation, 2006). Viewed in terms of either their total scores or their Reading subsection scores, we believe that the participants' average TOEIC (IP) scores provide a strong and widely interpretable proxy for their English proficiency levels as described in the original study and listed again in Table 1 by the order of ability: from the most proficient to the least proficient.

3 Clarification of the Findings

Although it remains unclear how much of Hutchinson's (2015) subsequent claims stem from this lack of understanding about the external proficiency measures used in the original study, another key misunderstanding seems to lie in his interpretation of the findings we discuss in relation to our third research question: "How much do vocabulary size estimates differ when different approaches to scoring guesses are applied?" (McDonald & Asaba, 2015, p. 17). For reasons that remain unclear to us, Hutchinson claims that we are "giving precedence to the score without guesses" and "going beyond the data" (p. 50). Let us begin our clarification of these findings by revisiting the data we used to answer this research question, reproduced in Table 2.

Looking at how the scores for each individual increase across the table from left to right, as more and more guesses based on reasoning less and less demonstrative of actual knowledge of the target words, led us to draw two sides of the same conclusion from this very small sample of participants. While the scores from the strictest end of the spectrum (the scores without guesses) and those from the most sensitive or lenient end of the spectrum (the scores with all guesses) varied little for the most highly proficient student, Rena (+7 points), they varied a great deal for the three other less proficient students: Risako (+35 points), Rika (+32 points), and Mari (+31 points).

Besides pointing out the striking difference between the variation exhibited by Rena and the other participants in the scores at the two ends of the continuum, we hoped to illustrate the potential risks of relying on either of these scores alone as an

Table 1. Summary of Participant Details and TOEIC (IP) Scores

Participant	Major	TOEIC (IP) total score average	TOEIC (IP) listening average	TOEIC (IP) reading average
Rena	English	775	410	365
Risako	Intercultural Studies	543	288	255
Rika	Psychology	380	230	150
Mari	Bioscience	305	200	105

Note. The TOEIC (IP) total score average listed represents the average from two administrations of the test conducted in April 2014 and February 2015.

Table 2. Scores for Each Participant on the Bilingual Japanese Vocabulary Size Test

Participant	Score without guesses	Score with true partial knowledge-informed guesses	Score with all partial knowledge-informed guesses	Score with all informed guesses	Score with all guesses
Rena	84	85	85	91	91
Risako	54	70	72	80	89
Rika	51	69	70	76	83
Mari	50	62	72	80	81

Note. $k = 140$. Each score can be multiplied by 100 to arrive at a vocabulary size estimate out of a maximum total of 14,000 word families possible (Nation, 2012).

indicator of a learner's English vocabulary size, especially given that the sampling which underlies the selection of words tested on the VST means that each item answered correctly is multiplied by 100 to arrive at a learner's vocabulary size estimate. As the original test instructions for the VST make no accommodation for limiting or penalizing guessing of any kind (Nation, 2012), scores similar to those in the rightmost column would be expected for these learners if this were the only version administered. Classified by these estimates alone, an instructor might conclude that the English vocabulary sizes of these learners would all be in the 8,100–9,100 word family range and that they should all be comparably able to handle texts written using only the 8,000 most frequent word families of English. However, if a version of the test modified to include an "I don't know" option were given to students who conscientiously followed the directions stressing its use for items which they were unsure about, scores similar to those in the leftmost column would be expected from these learners. Classified by these estimates alone, an instructor might conclude that two different sets of reading texts would be required to appropriately match the two distinct tiers of vocabulary size estimates garnered (8,400 word families for Rena and 5,000–5,400 word families for the others).

Rather than giving precedence to either set of these rather blunt estimates, we expressly suggested that the scores listed in this paper in bold in the third column of Table 2 would seem to be the "most sensible figures" to consider since they were based only on answers derived from the kind of vocabulary knowledge that the learners would be most likely to benefit from if they were to encounter these words while reading (McDonald & Asaba, 2015, p. 23). This determination was made following arguments like that of Nagy, Herman, and Anderson (1985), which posit that since word knowledge accrues incrementally and no vocabulary test is able to capture all aspects of this knowledge, a demonstration of partial knowledge should be acknowledged as acceptable evidence of word recognition. To put the rationale behind our preference another way, we believe that the scores in this third column are the ones that would seem to be most relevant to the construct of written receptive vocabulary knowledge that were able to be obtained given the test instructions and research methodology that we employed. Not only does this preference seem best aligned with the underlying construct intended to be measured, but it also seems to negate much, if not all, of Hutchinson's (2015) concern that certain personality types would be unfairly disadvantaged if their guesses were entirely excluded since all correct answers arising from either initial

self-perceived knowledge or subsequent guesses based on *true partial knowledge* contributed equally to these resulting scores.

4 Limitations

One final area that we would like to address in this response involves acknowledging more directly some of the limitations inherent to the original study. As Hutchinson (2015) and the reviewers of our original article have pointed out, there are several key questions that remain unresolved in relation to each participant's interpretation and subsequent application of our first pass test instructions, which explicitly directed them not to guess on items that they were unsure about. We completely agree that this is a key component missing from the original study which is certainly worthy of greater investigation. However, although Hutchinson's reorganization of our results in his Table 1 allows for a worthwhile reconsideration of the results, which does indeed hint at likely differences in the ways the participants responded to items during their first passes through the test, we believe that the methodology we employed, with retrospective interviews only about the items that the learners self-identified as unknown, severely limits any further discussion in this area to mere conjecture and speculation. Given these limitations, any differences potentially attributable to each participant's individual interpretation of the test instructions, threshold level of what constitutes "sure"-ness, susceptibility to faulty intuitions and/or deceptive transparency (Laufer, 1997), and/or personality type remain unclear. A much more rigorous and involved series of interviews aimed at uncovering the conscious reasoning applied to all 140 answer selections would be required before we would feel at all comfortable drawing any tentative conclusions here. Indeed, even if such a methodology were carried out, it seems highly unlikely that it would provide enough information to support the sort of conclusions that Hutchinson already seems more than willing to suggest regarding the participants' English proficiency levels and personality types, much less the occupations which they may be best suited for in the future.

5 Conclusion

We hope that the clarification of the proficiency levels used throughout our original study and the reiteration of the level of sensitivity we feel is most closely linked to the underlying construct targeted by the bilingual Japanese VST that are offered in this response allows for the main points of that paper to be better understood. We appreciate Hutchinson's (2015) concern that test takers with certain personality types may achieve better scores than they would have otherwise received if they were advised to select the "I don't know" option while others may, in turn, receive worse scores than they would have otherwise. However, this concern seems misplaced in relation to our study since we advocated that the scores that include both initial self-perceived knowledge and true partial knowledge would seem to be the most valid of the scores that we were able to tabulate. While there are clearly many important unresolved questions regarding the validity of estimates garnered from the bilingual Japanese VST, we acknowledge that the most important takeaway from our preliminary report is a simple warning that the validity of test scores that do not take factors like test language and non-construct-related guessing into

account may be seriously threatened, particularly for lower proficiency learners. These issues are certainly worthy of further consideration and constructive debate.

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Report

Report on Vocab@Tokyo, September 12–14, 2016

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Vocab@Tokyo—an international conference on vocabulary acquisition and learning—was held at Meiji Gakuin University in Tokyo from September 12–14, 2016. The conference organizers, most of whom were present at the very excellent Vocab@Vic Conference in Wellington, New Zealand, in December 2013, were united in their commitment to try to keep alive the spirit, energy, and atmosphere of the conference. Thus, Vocab@Tokyo was born.

One of our main priorities was to make sure that Vocab@Tokyo was not a series of one-way presentations but that every part of the conference maximized opportunities for presenters and the audience to interact. Thus, we were very fortunate to be allowed to hold the conference at Meiji Gakuin University which had large presentation rooms and a huge area for posters, morning and afternoon breaks, and the evening banquet. These excellent facilities allowed for fluid conversations to take place from morning to evening on each day of the conference. On the second night, many of the participants were also able to enjoy dinner on a boat on Tokyo Bay.

More than 200 participants, with 40% of them coming from overseas, were able to enjoy the 60 papers and 36 posters given over the three days of the conference. The plenary speaker was Tess Fitzpatrick, who talked about *Profiling word retrieval behaviour: generic patterns and individual differences*. She was kindly sponsored by the JALT Vocab SIG. The featured speakers were Tom Cobb, Batia Laufer, Paul Nation, Dianne Schmitt, Norbert Schmitt, and Yukio Tono. The poster format was very well received with participants actively engaged in discussions in the two sessions.

The post-conference questionnaire revealed that Vocab@Tokyo was very warmly praised by the participants, not only in terms of the organization leading up to the event but also the quality of the event itself. Coming in for special praise and ably led by Nick DiNunzio were the cheerful and helpful volunteers, all of whom were EFL teachers-in-training. They certainly helped to give our conference a warm and welcoming atmosphere.

The participants seemed to appreciate the 15-minute presentation–10-minute Q&A format as it allowed for lively exchanges at the end of each session. The participants also welcomed opportunities for lengthy discussions and networking in the long session breaks, during the banquet, and at the poster sessions, which were purposely timetabled at key times in the schedule and positioned in the center area of the conference near the publishers' booths and refreshments.

Overall, it seems that the conference was a huge success with many participants saying it was the best conference they had ever been to. The conference committee would like to thank the following people for making it the success it was—the participants and presenters; JALT Vocab SIG and its officers; the publishers who came on Day Two; Brandon Kramer and his handbook team; Motoko Yoshikawa on registration; the staff at Meiji Gakuin University, and the wonderful helpers.

We are glad to announce that there was a small surplus from the conference. This money is being held by the Lexical Research Foundation for the promotion of second language vocabulary research and pedagogy and to assist any future Vocab@ conferences. We hope that Vocab@ conferences can be held every three years or so, but this needs people to step forward. If any reader is interested in organizing the next Vocab@, we encourage them to contact Rob Waring at waring.rob@gmail.com for more information.

Once again, thanks to all for a wonderful conference!

The Conference website: <https://sites.google.com/site/vocabattokyo/>

The Conference Handbook: <http://vli-journal.org/wp/vocab-at-tokyo-handbook-2016/>

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