

CALL-Based Vocabulary Learning: The Effectiveness of Using *PowerWords*

Chieko Kawauchi
Tadamitsu Kamimoto
Sumiko Nagasawa

There is a growing need for a larger size vocabulary as learners reach higher levels of proficiency. Unfortunately, however, there seem to be few chances provided for learners to increase vocabulary knowledge at the university level. In order to fill this void, a vocabulary learning CALL program, called *PowerWords*, was adopted. The main purpose of this study was to see if the program would be effective. The study examined 106 freshmen of Kurume University who were engaged in this program for 10 weeks. Prior to the study, all the students took the diagnostic test for the program to see the appropriate level for them to start with. In order to estimate lexical gains over the period, two parallel tests, which served as a pretest and a post-test, were developed by using the beginning 5,000 words out of the 12,000 wordlist. At the end of the study, a questionnaire composed of 12 items was also given to examine how useful the students found the program to be. The results showed that *PowerWords* was moderately effective in that students' vocabulary size increased on average from 3,244 to 3,348 words by gaining 104 words over the 10-week period. The questionnaire also revealed that a considerable number of the students regarded the program as useful and enjoyable, showing an overall mean of 3.96 on a scale of 1 to 5. More findings were also discussed, and a few suggestions were offered for the programs, ultimately calling for an integration of the vocabulary program into the language courses.