

Comparison of the Vocabularies of High School Textbooks Abiding by the New and Old Curriculum Guidelines by the MEXT

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A new guideline for high school education by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology took effect in 2013 and the average pages per an English textbook published in Japan increased approximately by 11%. This paper investigated its effect for vocabulary acquisition, creating two corpora, each of which represented the old or new high school textbooks, and exploring 1) to what extent the number of words to be acquired incidentally has increased, 2) features of the words appearing more frequently in the new textbooks, and 3) what kinds of words in a word list edited for English learning in secondary education in Japan are not covered in the new textbooks. The results showed that 89 or 158 words in two separate estimations may be the potential increase by the change of the guidelines. Although the increase itself should be welcomed, the numbers were rather small in consideration of a recent scientific estimation of the numbers of necessary words for English use. It was also found that several hundreds of basic words in the basic word list above did not take any occurrence in the textbooks.