

## **Raising Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) Scores through Purpose-Driven Vocabulary Acquisition**

**Authors :** Edward Sarich, Jack Ryan

**Abstract :** In contrast to learning new vocabulary incidentally in one's first language, foreign language vocabulary is often acquired purposefully, because a lack of natural exposure requires it to be studied in an artificial environment. It follows then that foreign language vocabulary may be more efficiently acquired if it is purpose-driven, or linked to a clear and desirable outcome. The research described in this paper relates to the early stages of what is seen as a long-term effort to measure the effectiveness of a methodology for purpose-driven foreign language vocabulary instruction, specifically by analyzing whether directed studying from high-frequency vocabulary lists leads to an improvement in Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) scores. The research was carried out in two sections of a first-year university English composition class at a small university in Japan. The results seem to indicate that purposeful study from relevant high-frequency vocabulary lists can contribute to raising TOEIC scores and that the test preparation methodology used in this study was thought by students to be beneficial in helping them to prepare to take this high-stakes test.

**Keywords :** corpus vocabulary, language assessment, second language vocabulary acquisition, TOEIC test preparation

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