Abstract

In anticipation of compulsory foreign language education beginning in 2011, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology has produced a textbook called *Eigo Noto* [*English Notebook*] for the new fifth and sixth grade curricula. In this study, the *Eigo Noto* vocabulary was examined with regard to vocabulary size, level, and efficacy; the amount of overlap with the junior and senior high school (JSH) textbook vocabulary currently used nationwide; and the semantic categories to which the *Eigo Noto* vocabulary belongs. It was found that: 1) over half of the 386 words used in *Eigo Noto* appear in JSH textbooks; 2) a significant number of words fall into semantic categories, such as ‘life and living things,’ ‘food,’ and ‘entertainment’; 3) many words ranked at the 8th grade or higher are included; and, 4) when supplemented to JSH textbook vocabulary, the vocabulary of *Eigo Noto* enhances the vocabulary coverage in certain language activities such as survival English. Overall, the *Eigo Noto* vocabulary could function both as a basis for elementary education as well as an important supplement to secondary education.