

Vocabulary learning through EFL classroom communication

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It has been claimed that second language input becomes intake when learners are able to notice the form, meaning, and function of a linguistic item (Izumi, 2013; Schmidt, 2001; Schmidt & Frota, 1986). It has also been found that items tend to be more noticed when they are topicalized by the class participants (Slimani, 1989, 1992; Fujii, 2013). In this research, the presenter looks at the relationship between students' vocabulary learning and classroom communication. It investigates English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' course of action during group discussions and the effects of these experiences (i.e., being exposed to different lexical items during discussions) on their recall and learning of lexical items. The participants (n = 20) were enrolled in a compulsory intermediate English course in Japan. Their discussions, which proceeded both in their L1 and L2, were audio- as well as video-recorded and then transcribed. Most of the class time was allotted for group discussions and the main source of learning was peers' speech. After each lesson, the participants were asked to reflect on lexical items they had learned in the lesson. Later, they took an end-of-term vocabulary test in which the lexical items they had recalled appeared to examine their understanding. The findings showed that the degree to which the learners had elaborated on a word in class varied, affected by its part of speech, its location in a studied sentence, and the participants' ability to topicalize the word. Lexical items were more noticed and retained when the words were actively used in the participants' in-class speech. The study also implies the importance of classroom participants who are capable of topicalizing lexical items that are often omitted in many learners' interactions.