Original Article

Comparing the Globish Word List with Those Commonly Used in Japan

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This paper compares the Globish word list with those commonly used in Japan in order to evaluate the difficulty level of the Basic 1500 Globish Words. Vocabulary lists used in this study as criteria are the Hokkaido University English Vocabulary List, the JACET List of 8000 Basic Words, and the Standard Vocabulary List 12000. The results show that the Globish word list is better suited for output than input simply because its vocabulary is too limited for natural input from native speakers of English. It seems that native English speakers need to adjust their vocabulary use in order to get one step closer to non-native speakers when communicating in Globish.

Key Words: Basic 1500 Globish Words, Hokkaido University English Vocabulary List, Standard Vocabulary List 12000, JACET List of 8000 Basic Words, VOA Special English Word Book

Introduction

In recent decades, since globalization in various fields has advanced and information technology has progressed rapidly, there has been a strong demand worldwide to acquire communication abilities in English as a world language. David Graddol [1] of the British Council introduced the estimate that almost a third of the world's population would all be trying to learn English at the same time around 2010. In addition, he suggested that the need for face-to face international communication and a role for global English were growing by citing data derived from World Tourism Organization. In conjunction with this trend, Globish has drawn attention as a communication tool in business and tourism the world over.

The term Globish is created by combining "global" and "English". Although the term is used in various contexts, this paper deals with Globish formalized by Jean-Paul Nerriere. Nerriere, a retired French-speaking businessman, noticed through his work experiences abroad that non-native English speakers communicate better with each other than they do with native speakers. He discovered it was because non-Anglophones have the same limitations in using English. He, then, developed Globish, which is a codification of limited English as used by non-natives.

Nerriere & Hon [2] summarized how Globish is different from English. The main characteristics of Globish are: (a) Globish has 1,500 words, (b) Globish uses mostly active voice, (c) Globish recommends short sentences (15 words or fewer), and (d) Globish speakers are very careful about humor, idioms and examples, etc. They regard Globish as just a communication tool for non-native speakers as well as native speakers of English. They insist that both non-native English speakers and native English

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speakers have to get one step closer to communicate with each other. As a natural consequence, in Globish, the vocabulary is limited, simple sentence structures are employed, and idioms and jokes that depend on cultural background knowledge should be avoided. Globish is correct English without the different cultural influences of English-speaking countries.

Nerriere & Hon [2] demonstrated the feasibility and usefulness of Globish by writing their book in Globish. In their book, the translation of U.S. President Barack Obama's Inaugural Address into Globish is listed. Writing a book that contains somewhat difficult ideas and concepts and translating a complicated speech dealing with politics using a limited vocabulary seem to be rather complex challenges.

The purpose of this study, then, is to evaluate the difficulty level of the Basic 1500 Globish Words by comparing the Globish word list with those commonly used in Japan. Vocabulary lists to be used in this study are the Hokkaido University English Vocabulary List, the JACET List of 8000 Basic Words, and the Standard Vocabulary List 12000.

Materials

The list of Basic 1500 Globish Words is compared with those commonly used in Japan. The Hokkaido University English Vocabulary List, the JACET List of 8000 Basic Words, and the Standard Vocabulary List 12000 were chosen as criteria lists because these vocabulary lists are claimed to be reliable and widely used in Japan. Each of these three lists has several levels to categorize words by their level of difficulty. In this study, these levels are used to help assess the vocabulary levels of the Basic 1500 Globish Words.

Basic 1500 Globish Words (Globish1500)

Globish1500 is a list of 1,500 words created by Nerriere & Hon [2]. The list is contained in their book, and the list service is provided for a price on the web as well (For more information, see http://www.globish.com/courses). Several lists of the most frequently used English words were consulted in selecting the vocabulary of Globish1500. Among the lists, their list is most similar to the VOA Special

English Word Book [3]. VOA broadcasts the Special English programs with the aim of communicating with people whose native language is not English, using clear and simple English. The vocabulary of Word Book is also limited to about 1,500 words.

Hokkaido University English Vocabulary List (HUEVL)

HUEVL is a list of 7,454 words designed as a lexical guideline of English study for Hokkaido University students. It was developed by those involved in teaching English at Hokkaido University, and its second version [4] is available for free on the web . Its words are classified into five levels: Level 1 (786 words), Level 2 (1,778 words), Level 3 (2,096 words), Level 4 (1,520 words), and Level 5 (1,274 words). In the process of making the list, the selection of the vocabulary was made in two ways. One was a thorough vocabulary analysis using 12 million words from current and scientific English textbooks. The other was a comparative discussion of the list with 12 published vocabulary lists. As HUEVL is a lemma list, it excludes inflected words. Idioms, collocations, proper nouns, and technical terms are also excluded from HUEVL.

Standard Vocabulary List 12000 (SVL12000)

SVL12000 [5] is a list of 12,000 words created for English learners in Japan by the publisher ALC. Its 12,000 words are presented in 12 levels, each of which contains 1,000 words, and they are available for free on the web. According to ALC, the basis of the word selection depends on how frequently the vocabulary is used by native speakers of English. Its vocabulary's usefulness and importance to Japanese learners of English is also taken into consideration. Although SVL12000 is a lemma list, it contains some proper nouns and numerals.

The JACET List of 8000 Basic Words (JACET8000)

JACET8000 [6] was published both in paper and electronic format by the Committee of Revising the JACET List of Basic Words in 2003. It was developed specifically for Japanese learners of English. It covers 8,000 words and has eight levels of 1,000 words. In addition, it also covers 250 introductory

words designated as the "plus250." The list is based not only on the British National Corpus (BNC) (For more information, see http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/) but also on the original Subcorpus created by the committee members. BNC is one of the largest corpora collecting approximately 100 million sample words of both written (90%) and spoken (10%) British English. Subcorpus is made up of a wide range of sources including sample words of written and spoken American English and sample words from English textbooks used in Japan and various English tests conducted in Japan. JACET8000 is also a lemma list with frequency order on each entry word.

Method

Comparison of Globish1500 with the three vocabulary lists was made to assess the vocabulary levels of Globish1500. As for Globish1500, the commercial electronic form was downloaded and used. In individual comparisons of Globish1500 with the other vocabulary lists, a few problems arose. Although all of them are lemma lists, some entries are listed in different ways. The problems with the different styles of entry were related to singular or plural, tense, part of speech, and so on. Modifications concerning the problems were made by the authors of this study. In the comparison of Globish1500 with SVL12000, the Word Level Checker (For more information, see http://www.someya-net.com/wlc/) was used to confirm our calculations. In comparing Globish1500 with JACET8000, the JACET8000 LEVEL MARKER (For more information, see http://www.tcp-ip.or.jp/~shim/J8LevelMarker/j8lm. cgi) was used for the same purpose. As for 250 introductory words referred to as the "plus250" in JACET8000, they were included in Level 1 in this study.

Results and Discussion

This study aimed to evaluate the difficulty level of each Globish1500 word by comparing Globish1500 with HUEVL, SVL12000, and JACET8000. Table 1, Table 2, and Table 3 show how Globish1500 are classified into different levels of HUEVL, SVL12000, and JACET8000. In each table, the levels of the criterion list are on the left. The num-

ber of Globish words that are classified into each level and its percentage are in the middle. The descriptions of the difficulty level are listed on the right. Nation [7] states that "learners would need at least 95% coverage of the running words in the input in order to gain reasonable comprehension and to have reasonable success at guessing from context (p. 114)." In support for his assertion, the minimum threshold (i.e., 95% coverage) necessary for the adequate comprehension of Globish1500 is in bold print.

The comparison of Globish1500 with HUEVL is shown in Table 1. Table 1 indicates that almost 90% words of Globish1500 are included in Level 1 and Level 2. Most of the Globish words are within the range from Level 1 to Level 3. Actually, 97.6% words of Globish1500 are Level 3 and under. As discussed above, 95% coverage is often referred to as the threshold for adequate comprehension. In line with this assertion, those whose vocabulary level is high enough to be ready to pass university entrance examinations seem to be able to gain reasonable understanding and make reasonable guesses from context written in Globish. 1,464 Globish words out of 4,660 HUEVL words (31.42%) are matched within the range from Level 1 to Level 3. The Globish words that belong to Level 4, Level 5, and Over 5 are listed in Appendix A.

Table 2 shows the comparison of Globish1500 with SVL12000. According to ALC [5], its classification is as follows: Level 1 (beginner), Level 2 to Level 4 (elementary), Level 5 to Level 7 (intermediate), Level 8 to Level 10 (advanced), Level 10 and Level 11 (upper advanced). Table 2 indicates that 94.53% words of Globish1500 are under Level 4, which is regarded as elementary level. In level 5, the coverage percentage exceeds 95% coverage. Coincidently, the description of the difficulty level is similar to that of HUEVL. 1,451 Globish words out of 5,000 SVL words (29.02%) are identified within the range from Level to Level 5. The Globish words that are listed in Level 6 and over can be seen in Appendix B.

The comparison of Globish1500 with JACET8000 is shown in Table 3. Table 3 indicates that more than 90% words of Globish1500 are Level 3 or lower. The threshold lies in Level 4. Again, the description of the threshold resembles those of HUEVL and SVL12000. 1,427 Globish words out of

Table 1   Comparison of Globish1500 with HUEVL

HUEVL	Globish1500 Number of Words (%)	Level of difficulty (based on the definition on the web [4])
Level 1	634 (42.27)	Junior high school level (786 words)
Level 2	712 (47.47)	Senior high school level (1,778 words)
Level 3	120 (8.00)	University entrance examination level (2,096 words)
Level 4	13 (0.87)	Essential words for university level (1,520 words)
Level 5	4 (0.27)	Advanced words for university level (1,274 words)
Over 5	17 (1.13)	

Table 2   Comparison of Globish1500 with SVL12000

SVL 12000	Globish1500 Number of Words (%)	Level of difficulty (based on the definition on the web [5])
Level 1	698 (46.53)	Essential words
Level 2	422 (28.13)	Common words for daily conversation
Level 3	205 (13.67)	Words for lively conversation
Level 4	93 (6.20)	Basic words for reading comprehension
Level 5	33 (2.20)	Words for university entrance examination
Level 6	23 (1.53)	Words for certification test
Level 7	12 (0.80)	Words for rich expression
Level 8	5 (0.33)	Words for deeper reading comprehension
Level 9	2 (0.13)	Words for TOEIC high score
Level 10	4 (0.27)	Words for reading magazines
Level 11	1 (0.07)	Words for broader horizons
Level 12	1 (0.07)	Words for wider world view
Over 12	1 (0.07)	

Table 3   Comparison of Globish1500 with JACET8000

JACET 8000	Globish1500 Number of Words (%)	Level of difficulty (based on the wordbook [9])
Level 1	812 (54.13)	Junior high school level
Level 2	411 (27.40)	Introductory high school level
Level 3	146 (9.73)	High school level; DNC examinations level; Educated populace level
Level 4	58 (3.87)	University entrance examination level; Introductory university level
Level 5	29 (1.93)	Higher ranked university entrance examination level; Liberal arts level
Level 6	24 (1.60)	Words for non-English majors and ordinary business people
Level 7	6 (0.40)	Words for international business people
Level 8	2 (0.13)	Ultimate goal for Japanese learners of English
Over 8	12 (0.80)	

4,000 JACET words (35.68%) are identical. The Globish words that are in Level 5 and above are listed in Appendix C.

Judging from the results, the three vocabulary lists used as criteria showed that about 95% words of Globish1500 should have been learned before taking university entrance examinations. However, it is difficult to define the level of university entrance examinations. Chujo & Oghigian [8] explored how much vocabulary a leaner needs to know in order to be able to read and understand the TOEIC, TOEFL and EIKEN proficiency tests. In their study, SVL12000 was adopted as one of the three criteria lists. Their study revealed that a learner would need to know about 4,000 to 4,500 words to cover 95% of the TOEIC vocabulary. Suppose a leaner knows 5,000 words (Level 1 to Level 5) of SVL12000 perfectly, the learner should be able to understand a current TOEIC test. As for Grade Pre-1 of the EIKEN vocabulary, a learner should know approximately 5,000 to 6,000 words to maintain 95% coverage. When it comes to Grade 2 of the EIKEN vocabulary, about 2,500 to 2,800 words are needed for 95% coverage. It can be said that the difficulty level of vocabulary used in university entrance examinations is considered to be demanding according to the criteria found in the three lists.

Conclusion

The comparison of the three criteria lists with the Globish1500 list suggests that 95% coverage of Globish1500 is equivalent to the level necessary for understanding university examinations. It seems that the difficulty level of Globish1500 is not necessarily low. However, the number of words is limited to only 1,500 as is the case with VOA Special English.

As VOA Special English deals with a wide variety of issues and delivers them with limited vocabulary, Globish also manages to convey what it has to tell with limited vocabulary. Nerriere & Hon [2] provide four methods in order to increase learners' vocabulary based on Globish1500. They are: (a) putting words together, (b) adding prefixes of suffixes, (c) using the same word for different parts of speech, and (d) using phrasal verbs by using a preposition. Comparison was made by the authors to examine how similar Globish1500 and Word Book of VOA are to each other. The result showed that 1,240 words matched in both lists. It means that there is an 82.67% correlation between Globish1500 and Word Book. Although the vocabulary is limited, it is reasonable to say that Globish1500 is a feasible and useful communication tool for output.

However, Globish1500 can be criticized because the vocabulary is not large enough for non-native speakers to understand natural input from native speakers of English. For example, a report [10] says that Globish1500 covers only about 50 to 65% of words used in the listening section of the TOEIC test. After all, it seems that both non-native English speakers and native English speakers have to get one step closer to communicate with each other in Globish. The authors would like to continue studying how Globish will be used in the future.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Globish1500 in HUEVL

Level 4 (13 words): ban, bonus, criteria, disk, erase, evaporate, inject, leak, lone, mob, radiation, raid, rouge

Level 5 (4 words): denounce, deploy, ethnic, oust

Over 5 (17 words): ballot, boycott, cork, embassy, equate, hijack, hostage, insane, miscellaneous, quart, revolt, riot, snack, supervise, treason, veto, vicious

Appendix B: Globish1500 in SVL12000

Level 6 (23 words): ally, boycott, clash, congratulate, cooperate, cork, diplomat, execute, fluid, gallon, hostile, infect, jury, kit, leak, lone, pants, pint, pregnant, revolt, script, suppress, vicious

Level 7 (12 words): ballot, criteria, elastic, enforce, hijack, insane, oppress, quart, raid, riot, supervise, wreck

Level 8 (5 words): hostage, inject, mob, pollute, radiation

Level 9 (2 words): denounce, evaporate

Level 10 (4 words): deploy, oust, politics, veto

Level 11 (1 word): treason

Level 12 (1 word): miscellaneous

Over 12 (1 word): equate

Appendix C: Globish1500 in JACET8000

Level 5 (29 words): ballot, betray, bonus, crush, embassy, exit, fog, forbid, heal, hollow, inspect, invade, mercy, moderate, nail, offensive, parade, parcel, postpone, restrain, revolt, scare, shrink, supervise, suppress, theirs, tire, wheat, wreck

Level 6 (24 words): bleed, boycott, brake, congratulate, denounce, deploy, diplomat, dirt, gallon, hostage, inflect, inject, jewel, leak, lone, mob, noon, rob, rocket, rubber, spy, starve, veto, vicious

Level 7 (6 words): cork, fertile, ounce, pants, pollute, snack

Level 8 (2 words) erase, insane

Over 8 (12 words): cooperate, elastic, equate, evaporate, hijack, miscellaneous, oppress, oust, paste, quart, sneeze, treason