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Abstract
The purpose of this study is to investigate the correlation between the vocabulary competence of senior high school first graders in Taiwan and their commercial English textbooks. 314 students and three teachers participated in this study. Student subjects were required to take two tests, including vocabulary size and vocabulary knowledge. In addition, six commercial English textbooks were collected and their vocabulary distribution in different word levels was analyzed with the use of computer software NationRange12. On the other hand, this study interviewed three teachers in order to generalize their opinions in terms of vocabulary teaching. The major findings of the study are described as follows:
1. Only 8.9% of the participants passed the first 1,000-word level, which was seen as threshold for junior high school graduate, and the result of their vocabulary knowledge test indicated that, although most of the participants were able to recognize 80% of the test vocabulary, they could use 40% of the target words to compose sentences.
2. The vocabulary distribution in six commercial English textbooks (Volume I) for senior high school in this study is 84.4% in first 1,000-word level, 7% in the second 2,000-word level, and vocabulary belonging to the first, the second, and the third 1,000- word level make up of 92% of the textbook.
3. Teachers express that the vocabulary in English textbook should be in accordance with students' competence. As for the gap, they explain that to some students the gap exists, but not to others, because students vary greatly. On the other hand, teachers agree that explicit vocabulary teaching is extremely important to students, such as learning of word structure and extensive reading.
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