

Focus on Form in English Discussion Class: The Benefits of a Vocabulary Reflection Activity

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ABSTRACT

English Discussion Course (EDC), a compulsory course for all first-year students at Rikkyo University in Tokyo, aims at developing students' communication skills in the context of academic discussions. Hence, feedback given in this program focuses primarily on the students' use of discussion and communication skills taught in class. However, there are also times when students may benefit from a brief treatment of accuracy. *Focus on form* outlines a language teaching approach with regard to how occasional and appropriate attention to form in meaning-focused lessons can facilitate a learner's language acquisition. In this project, a vocabulary reflection activity for an English discussion course was designed based on focus on form. This paper first reviews the principle of focus on form and explains how the principle is applicable at EDC. Then the subsequent section will describe the designed activity including materials, procedures, and ideas for variation, followed by evaluation of the activity, analyzing survey data and teaching notes kept based on my in-class observations.

INTRODUCTION

Focus on form is a language teaching approach that "overtly draws students' attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication" (Long, 1991, p. 45-46). This principle is rooted in the belief that language acquisition can be facilitated by (or in a stronger term, requires) a learner's attention on form when they are engaged in communication (Ellis & Shintani, 2014). In contrast to *focus on forms*, a traditional approach that gives direct instruction on preselected linguistic rules in each class based on a structured syllabus (Long & Robinson 1998, as cited in Nassaji, 2010), *focus on form* does not require a syllabus as diverse linguistic aspects are treated more spontaneously according to learners' needs arising in meaning-focused activities (Ellis et al., 2001; Loewen, 2004). Therefore, with focus on form, teachers can provide learners with tailored language support, taking their needs and learning process into consideration (Ellis & Shintani, 2014).

English Discussion Course (EDC) is a two-semester mandatory course that meets once a week for 90 minutes and 14 weeks in total per semester. In each class, students construct extended discussions (10-16 minutes) in small groups of three to five without any teacher intervention with the use of target discussion and communication skill phrases taught in class. Focus on form instruction can be applicable in the context of EDC, considering the course goals, lesson structures, and students' problems observed in class. One of the main goals at EDC is to develop students' speaking fluency and communicative ability (Hurling, 2012), which corresponds with the description of focus on form. During the extended discussions, EDC students focus on meaning through exchanging their ideas on a given topic, but occasionally pay attention to form to prevent or fix a communication breakdown, negotiating meaning with communication skills introduced in class such as confirmation checks (e.g. *Do you mean...?*), clarification requests (e.g. *What does X mean?*), and comprehension checks (e.g. *Do you understand?*) (Schaefer, 2018). However, students sometimes fail to obtain effective expressions when they attempt negotiation of meaning with their peers during the discussions. Even when they successfully gain expressions from their peers, they do not have much opportunity to review them, which could impede their acquisition of the expressions. In addition, the structure of the lessons at EDC lends itself well to focus on form. At EDC, almost all assessment is formative, which focuses more on the acquisition process

than the end-product, with the aim of facilitating learners' continuous development (Abeywickrama & Brown, 2010). This formative assessment enables EDC students to discuss the same topic several times both within one lesson and across lessons so that the students can take in feedback and continue to improve their discussion skills. This means that if students have a chance to learn vocabulary to express their ideas more effectively, they will have repeated opportunities to try out the vocabulary at later stages of a lesson or in other lessons.

In order to gain an insight of the students' needs, a short survey was conducted in the second lesson in the fall semester of 2018, in which 85 students participated. Those 85 students provided responses to the following three items:

1. I do not share my true opinions in discussion because I do not know how to express them in English,
2. I could not express my ideas in discussions today,
3. In your first language, please write down ideas you could not express today.

The survey questions employed a four-point Likert scale with the choices of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. The option of "neither agree nor disagree" was not included to ensure students did not remain noncommittal (Dörnyei & Taniguchi, 2010). The students were asked to select the answer that best described their experience. The results of the survey seem to illustrate their perception towards their lack of vocabulary, as well as listing the vocabulary they could not retrieve or use in their discussions.

As for Question 1, about 75% ($n = 64$) of the students indicated that they sometimes avoided sharing certain ideas in discussions due to their lack of linguistic knowledge, while the remaining 25% ($n = 21$) did not feel difficulty. In responding to Question 2, 81% ($n = 69$) of the participants admitted they could not fully express their ideas in class, while 19% ($n = 16$) of them did not communicate the same issue. In Question 3, students wrote down a variety of Japanese words such as *jyoshiki* (common sense), *tanni* (credit), and *hanabi* (fireworks) that they could not translate into English even after they attempted negotiation of meaning with their peers.

My own in-class observations aligned with their perception, which led me to the conclusion that students may benefit from a quick focus on form instruction in the discussion class. For example, when students tried to find English equivalents for *hanabi* (fireworks), and *kousaten* (a crossing), they translated those words to "sky flower" and "scramble spot". The students did not seem convinced that those words were the most effective expressions though they were able to continue their communication with their peers. These cases often made me question how intelligible those words were to other English speakers when the students interacted with them outside the classroom, and wonder if and how I could help students in class.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Why Focus on Form?

The concept of focus on form emerged from a debate on the efficacy of form-focused instruction and meaning-focused instruction. In form-focused instruction, as briefly explained in the introduction, learners receive direct instruction on preselected linguistic features one by one (Ellis & Shintani, 2014; Ellis, Basturkmen, & Loewen, 2001). Researchers such as Krashen (1981, as cited in Ellis et al., 2001) criticize form-focused instruction, arguing that grammatical instruction alone is not enough, and successful language acquisition requires meaning-focused instruction, which naturally develops a learner's proficiency with comprehensible input and output (Ellis et al., 2001). Although there has been a consensus among researchers about the importance of meaning-focused instruction, their recent view forms that, in order to achieve high language proficiency, meaning-focused instruction should be complemented with occasional attention to form, which is known as Long's (1991) focus on form. According to those researchers, focus on

form is effective because “it addresses linguistic problems that individual learners are actually experiencing” (Ellis et al., 2001, p. 410). Schmidt’s (1990) Noticing Hypothesis also provides rationale for focus on form, maintaining that conscious attention on form in a meaning-focused activity helps learners notice the gap between their current skills and goals, which in turn can facilitate their interlanguage acquisition.

What is Form?

Form is often mistakenly considered exclusive to grammatical features, but it includes all levels of language such as lexical, grammatical, phonological, and pragmalinguistic aspects, though the amount of attention each linguistic feature receives depends on each class (Ellis et al., 2001). It is important to note in this paper that, at a glance, some focus on form instruction on vocabulary such as checking the meaning of a word may seem to be purely meaning-focused, but this type of instruction can be still considered focus on form. In this interaction, the central goal remains meaning, that is, understanding and conveying messages. Then, participants leave the meaning-focused activity for a moment to learn about the meaning of the lexical forms. This “explicit attention to the meanings of specific lexical forms in the context of meaning-focused activity constitutes focus on form” (Ellis et al., 2001, p. 415).

When and How to Achieve Focus on Form?

Though efficacy of focus on form is widely accepted, the question remains when and how this can be achieved (Ellis et al., 2001). As for when to incorporate focus on form in a meaning-focused context, first of all, it is important to bear in mind that focus on form does not necessarily occur in every class (Seedhouse, 1997). In other words, if teachers judge that their students’ language acquisition is best facilitated without focus on form in a lesson, the lesson can focus entirely on meaning. When teachers do decide to employ focus on form, Long (1991) recommends that it can be effectively incorporated when learners experience communication problems and negotiate meaning because this is when their language acquisition is accelerated (Long, 1983) through noticing the gap between what they are capable of doing and what they are trying to achieve (Ellis et al., 2001). The use of communication strategies such as recasts and clarification requests help learners and interlocutors fix communication problems as well as making connections between meaning and form (Pica, 1998, as cited in Ellis & Shintani, 2014). Lyster (2001) goes a step further than Long (1991), stating that, occasionally, focus on form can happen even without any communication breakdown. In his view, teachers have an option to incorporate focus on form even when they understand their students’ utterance perfectly if it meets the students’ needs.

When teachers decide to provide focus on form instruction, they have several options of how to incorporate the instruction: (1) reactive vs preemptive, (2) immediate vs delayed, and (3) explicit vs implicit. One aspect to consider is whether teachers provide reactive or preemptive focus on form. Reactive focus on form utilizes students’ utterances after teachers monitor their performance, highlighting actual or perceived errors to discuss form. Preemptive focus on form, on the other hand, is provided prior to students’ performance based on the teachers’ assumption on a gap in students’ knowledge (Ellis et al., 2001). For example, if teachers assume that their students would not know a certain word, the teachers draw their attention to the word before the actual interaction happens. However, in preemptive focus on form, the predicted gap in students’ knowledge may not always reflect the students’ actual knowledge (Ellis et al., 2001). Another decision to make is whether reactive focus on form is addressed through immediate or delayed feedback. Though both are effective (Ellis & Shintani, 2014), according to VanPatten’s (1990) research, “attention to form in the input competes with attention to meaning” (p. 296). To reduce learners’ cognitive load, Ellis et al. (2001) suggests that teachers prepare specific activities where

students can focus mainly on form with less emphasis on meanings. Finally, teachers need to make a choice of providing explicit or implicit instructions depending on learner differences (Ellis & Shintani, 2014). Teachers can either directly point out problems or errors and give linguistic instruction, or indirectly address forms with strategies such as recasts and clarification requests.

Application of the Theory to Designing the Activity for EDC

Having considered the goals and lesson structure, reactive, explicit, and delayed focus on form seemed the best fit for the EDC context. As students were expected to carry out extended discussions without teacher intervention to practice fixing communication problems on their own first, in the designed activity, instead of preemptive focus on form, a vocabulary reflection activity and a vocabulary instruction was given explicitly post-discussion. Taking Long's (1983) advice, when I chose vocabulary items to address as a whole group, I especially focused on expressions that caused my students communication problems in their negotiations of meaning. Occasionally, as Lyster (2001) suggested, I addressed some vocabulary items even when there was no communication breakdown among the students because I anticipated that their choice of words might cause communication issues if they interacted with non-Japanese English speakers. The activity also employed delayed focus on form, following VanPatten's (1990) suggestion that learners have difficulty focusing both on meaning and form at once.

MATERIALS AND PREPARATION

Materials required in the activity are (1) a reflection sheet, (2) a vocabulary log, and (3) a vocabulary list. Before each class, teachers prepare reflection questions with regard to form, and include them on a reflection sheet. For instance, in my class, questions to reflect on vocabulary such as (1) *Did you learn any expressions from your group members during the discussion*, and (2) *Was there anything your group didn't know how to say in English during the discussion* were asked. As for the vocabulary log, it is effective if teachers explain and exemplify how to use it from an earlier stage in the semester. Teachers can either choose what to include in the vocabulary log or let their students choose according to their learning styles. Some content to consider including in the vocabulary log are dates, words, translations, English definitions, sources, and a check box to keep a record of the students' attempts to use the vocabulary (see Appendix). In lessons to review vocabulary, a vocabulary list based on the students' vocabulary logs needs be prepared. Teachers collect their students' vocabulary logs, select words according to frequency, criticality, and learnability, and put those words together in a vocabulary list.

PROCEDURE

The basic structure of the designed activity holds the following five steps: (1) participating in communication activities, (2) reflecting on form, (3) recording new expressions in a vocabulary log, (4) trying out new expressions, and (5) reviewing form. These five steps can be applied in a variety of courses, but the following section shows an example application to an English discussion course. The table below includes procedure, example materials, goals and rationale, and ideas for possible variations at each stage of the activity.

Table 1. Process of the focus on form activity

Stage 1: Communication activities among students		
Procedure	Goals/ Rationale	Ideas for variations
<p>1. Students carry out an extended discussion (10 to 16 minutes) on a given topic in small groups of three to five without any teacher intervention, using discussion skills introduced in class.</p> <p>2. If students encounter communication problems, they attempt negotiation of meaning with clarification requests, paraphrasing, and checking understanding.</p>	<p>Students notice the gap between what they can and cannot express.</p> <p>Students practice using their existing knowledge of communication skills first.</p> <p>While teachers monitor discussions, they document instances when negotiation of meaning occurs to select which vocabulary to share to the whole class.</p>	<p>Any communication activities will work at this stage, such as target language practice activities or discussion preparation activities. If the gap is noticed at earlier stages of a lesson, students may have more opportunity to practice forms addressed in class.</p>
Stage 2: Reflection on form		
<p>Example reflection sheet for elementary level students</p> <p>If you finish questions 1 & 2, discuss the questions below!</p> <p>A: Did you learn any expressions(表現) from your group members during the discussion? YES → B: Yes, I learned the word _____. A: What does _____ mean? B: It's in other words, _____.</p> <p>A: Was there anything your group didn't know how to say in English in the discussion? YES → B: Yes. Do you know how to say _____ in English? A: I think it's _____.</p>		

<p>Procedure</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. After the discussion, ideally in pairs (if not in small groups), students discuss reflection questions on a reflection sheet. *In my class, the reflection needed three to five minutes. 2. Teachers monitor students' reflection and select a few critical words to address as a whole class, taking into account frequency, criticality, and learnability. 3. If necessary, teachers write down effective expressions on the board (see below for example board work), and give quick feedback on forms. <table border="1" data-bbox="181 865 518 973"> <tr> <td>Useful expressions</td> </tr> <tr> <td>花火 fireworks</td> </tr> <tr> <td>交差点 a crossing</td> </tr> </table>	Useful expressions	花火 fireworks	交差点 a crossing	<p>Goals/ Rationale</p> <p>Students can notice the gap they experienced during the discussion with a lighter cognitive load.</p> <p>The reflection activity may facilitate better memory on expressions shared by their peers, which otherwise could be forgotten easily.</p> <p>When students reflect on forms within the original discussion group, they can have a chance to confirm what they wanted to say.</p> <p>In contrast, if students reflect on forms with peers in other groups, they may learn forms that they could not obtain during the discussions.</p>	<p>Ideas for variations</p> <p>Scaffolding such as sentence starters or patterns may help students with lower proficiency (see example above).</p> <p>Students can be paired up within the original discussion group or across groups depending on purposes.</p> <p>The reflection questions can be optional, should pairs need time to reflect on the skills regarding to the main course goals.</p> <p>If there is a time constraint, students could individually reflect on and write down ideas they could not express in discussions.</p>
Useful expressions					
花火 fireworks					
交差点 a crossing					

Stage 3: Recording new expressions
Example of a vocabulary log:

Vocabulary Log				
Name:				
Date	Expressions	Where did you learn the word?	Notes	Used in...
1/8	Self-defense	Shoko	正当防衛	
	Petty	Textbook p. 86	Non-serious Small	
	Reflect on Feel guilty	Shoko	反省する	

<p>Procedure</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teachers remind students to keep vocabulary logs until it becomes a routine. 2. Students add words to the vocabulary log (see above). 	<p>Goals/ Rationale</p> <p>Students can refer to the vocabulary log to revisit vocabulary, which may facilitate their acquisition of forms.</p>	<p>Ideas for variations</p> <p>The vocabulary log can be used at any stage of the lesson or as homework.</p>
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Stage 4: Trying out new expressions (Optional)

<p>Procedure</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 3-2-1 fluency development activity (Maurice, 1983), 	<p>Goals/ Rationale</p> <p>Opportunity to repeat using new expressions may assist</p>	<p>Ideas for variations</p> <p>Ideally, students should have an opportunity to</p>
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<p>typically done at the beginning of EDC lessons, can be introduced at the end of the class for a potential opportunity to practice forms.</p>	<p>automaticity. Teachers can monitor their use and check if further explanation is needed.</p>	<p>practice new expressions, but this stage can be omitted depending on time and curriculum constraints.</p>																																					
<p>Stage 5: Reviewing forms (Optional)</p>																																							
<p>Examples of a review sheet and a provided pattern to review vocabulary</p>																																							
<table border="1"> <tr><td>✓</td><td>Reflect on</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>✓</td><td>Feel guilty</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>✓</td><td>Self-defense</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>✓</td><td>Become a habit</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>✓</td><td>Routine</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>✓</td><td>Policy</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>✓</td><td>Standard</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>✓</td><td>Politics</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>Woodblock prints</td><td>木版</td></tr> <tr><td>✓</td><td>Benefit</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>✓</td><td>Wear a costume</td><td></td></tr> </table>	✓	Reflect on		✓	Feel guilty		✓	Self-defense		✓	Become a habit		✓	Routine		✓	Policy		✓	Standard		✓	Politics			Woodblock prints	木版	✓	Benefit		✓	Wear a costume		<table border="1"> <tr><td>A: Do you remember what X means?</td></tr> <tr><td>B: Yes → It's, in other words, Do you understand?</td></tr> <tr><td>No → I'm sorry, can you explain?</td></tr> <tr><td>A: Yes → Sure. It means Do you understand?</td></tr> <tr><td>No → Let's ask another person.</td></tr> </table>	A: Do you remember what X means?	B: Yes → It's, in other words, Do you understand?	No → I'm sorry, can you explain?	A: Yes → Sure. It means Do you understand?	No → Let's ask another person.
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<p>Procedure</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> In lessons to review vocabulary, students receive a list of vocabulary made based on their vocabulary logs (see above). In pairs, students check word meanings, following a pattern on the board (see above). 	<p>Goals/ Rationale</p> <p>Multiple encounters of forms may facilitate automaticity.</p> <p>Students review vocabulary while practicing target communication skills.</p>	<p>Ideas for variation</p> <p>Different scaffoldings can be provided for each level. Elementary level students could utilize a pattern shown above while advanced students could review vocabulary more freely.</p>																																					

VARIATIONS

1. Introduction of Preemptive Focus on Form

Though a reactive focus on form was employed in this activity, elementary level students may also benefit from a preemptive focus on form. In some of my classes, focusing on both meaning and form required a larger cognitive load, and students often struggled to provide English equivalents when they reflected on form due to the lack of linguistic knowledge. Providing a short list of useful expressions prior to their discussions and allowing them to refer to the list may support their learning. An alternative way is to check vocabulary while generating ideas for discussions so that students can successfully express their ideas in the discussion itself. Another option is to have students review useful expressions from the textbook. For example, in my lessons, some students started using the terms “petty crime” or “retirement age” embedded in a discussion question in the textbook. Instead of focusing on the negative evidence, a gap in students’ knowledge, focusing on positive evidence may be more effective for elementary level students.

2. Vocabulary Log for Curriculum Development

A list of items from students’ vocabulary logs may help curriculum developers modify articles in textbooks or add a glossary section based on anticipated students’ needs. Although a wide range of vocabulary was addressed in different levels, there were some commonly attended vocabulary items across levels. These terms could be introduced in textbooks.

3. Focus on Form and Teachers’ Knowledge on a Learner’s First Language

The designed activity required teachers to have a certain knowledge of students’ first language. One potential adaptation is to allow students to use a dictionary or smartphone, and to check in with their teacher to make sure that the expressions would work. Also, sharing vocabulary lists

among teachers may help them gain an insight on potential form to focus on in class.

DISCUSSION

Impact of the Activity on Students' Learning

The results of the post-activity survey seem to demonstrate a positive impact of the activity on many students' learning. 89 students responded to the first two items and 88 students answered item 3:

1. The vocabulary log activity has helped me express my true ideas in discussions,
2. The vocabulary log activity has helped me remember new expressions,
3. The vocabulary log activity has helped me use new expressions in discussions.

The same four-point Likert scale as the pre-survey was employed, and the students were asked to choose the answer that best described their experience from strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree.

As for the first item, 88% ($n = 78$) of the students agreed that the vocabulary log activity was helpful to express their true ideas in their discussions whereas the remaining 12% ($n = 11$) thought the activity was not helpful. For Item 2, 97% ($n = 87$) of the participants acknowledged the efficacy of the vocabulary log activity on remembering expressions, which left 3% ($n = 2$) of them disagreeing to its efficacy. In Item 3, 97% ($n = 85$) of the students felt that the vocabulary log activity assisted their use of new expressions in discussions, which meant 3% ($n = 3$) of them did not find it useful. These results can be interpreted that, for the majority of the students, the activity led them to express their ideas more effectively, remember useful expressions, and try out the expressions in later discussions. It is worth mentioning here, however, that a slightly lower number of the students agreed to Item 1 (*The vocabulary log activity helped me express my true ideas*) than Items 2 and 3. As students shared that they felt they needed more vocabulary to fully express their ideas in our informal conversations, this perception may be one of the reasons for this result.

Students' reactions documented in my informal teaching notes seem to endorse the survey results. The activity seems to have had some positive influence on (1) training students to notice the linguistic gap, (2) facilitating automaticity in their use of new expressions, and (3) developing their autonomous learning. At first, most students were not trained to notice the gap with regard to form. Many of them did not remember what they could not express in the first couple of lessons, often saying "*Nandakke* [What was the word]? I can't remember". After some lessons, however, students started to become more prepared to notice the gap and focus on form in the reflective activity. For instance, some students began to say either in Japanese or English, "I still don't know how to say *seisaku* [policy] in English" after a discussion.

The students' attempts to test their use of new expressions were also observed both within the same lesson and across the lessons. For instance, after learning the words "policy" and "full-timer," some students in a class used those words in sentences, "The government can make a better policy" and "When I work as a full-timer, I want to live alone" in the 3-2-1 fluency development activity at the end of the same lesson. Also, in a lesson with the topic of crime and punishment, they learned the terms "reflect on" and "victims". In the next test lesson, whereby students were formally assessed on the same topic of crime and punishment, in a practice activity, one student said, "*Hansei* [reflect on]... We learned this word in the last lesson" and checked her vocabulary log to continue her sentence "Criminals can *reflect on* their crime". During the actual discussion test, one student said "From killed-people's point of view," and another student paraphrased him, using a newly learned word, "Do you mean from the *victims*' point of view?" This example shows a successful case where students' attention on form actually facilitated their use of target communication skills, one of the primary goals at EDC. One common trait among the words

shared above is that students who asked for those words indicated that they had already seen the vocabulary before the class. From my informal in-class observations, the activity seemed to work well, especially in transforming their passive vocabulary to active vocabulary. When students already knew words, the activity often facilitated their retrieving process and their use of words more effectively, which could suggest that teachers could use the learners' linguistic knowledge as a guideline when they choose which vocabulary to address in class.

The activity also fostered some students' autonomous learning. Some students voluntarily wrote down expressions from the textbook when they read articles for homework. Vocabulary in the textbook such as "contribute," "life expectancy," and "multicultural" was found in the students' vocabulary log. This could go one step further and students could check how the words are used in context in the textbook. Some vocabulary logs also included extra vocabulary they had looked up before or after class such as "comfort women". Another example for their increased autonomy is when a student was overheard after a lesson saying to her friend, "*Kyouha* 'capitalism' *oboete kaerou* [I'll make sure to remember the word 'Capitalism' today]".

Although the students' overall experience with the activity seems positive, it should be noted that the activity did not work for all the students. Some students lost their vocabulary logs, while others did not care much about writing down expressions. Each student has a different learning style and their motivation level varies (Ellis & Shintani, 2014). As such, the activity may have not been perceived useful for some students. In addition, in a few classes, I did not focus on form, prioritizing the achievement of course goals and treatment of classroom management issues. Some students seemed to need more support on their use of target discussion skill phrases than vocabulary, so more time was allocated to practicing discussion skills. Some students needed constant reminder to pay attention to directions, which reduced time for focus on form.

CONCLUSION

As described above, the designed activity had some positive influence on some students' learning. The students' enriched content was observed in their second or third attempt to discuss the same topic. From the survey data, students themselves also seemed to acknowledge their improvement in their discussion.

Reflecting on carrying out the activity, one advantage of the activity was its flexibility. The reflection activity can be adopted at different stages of a lesson in accordance with various factors such as students' needs, curriculum, and time. It was also relatively easy to adjust to different levels of students by balancing the amount of scaffolding or the number of forms addressed in class. Some students also took advantage of the vocabulary log when they finished pair activities. They reviewed expressions and added vocabulary while they were waiting for other pairs to finish an activity. This flexibility may allow teachers to keep the activity as a contingency plan or to provide extra tasks with advanced level students. Moreover, at Rikkyo University, from the academic year 2019, the lesson time will be extended from 90 to 100 minutes. The extra time could be utilized for focus on form to help students better express their ideas in discussions.

While the activity can be useful, one of the challenges was making decisions in order to balance achieving the course goals and providing an optimal amount of focus on form instruction. First of all, depending on the students' level, learning styles, interest, and time, if and when to incorporate this activity has to be decided. Once the students attend to form, teachers need to decide how much information to share or when to stop. Even just within the category of vocabulary, vocabulary proficiency involves a number of aspects such as knowledge, size, depth, and speed (Koizumi & In'nami, 2013). When students misspell, mispronounce, or incorrectly use vocabulary, teachers will need to make decisions on whether they will address the issue or prioritize meaning.

Finally, there were some limitations in this study. Although some students' reactions from

the teacher notes were shared, positive instances were probably more noticeable than missed opportunities in class. In addition, this project did not focus on the influence of the activity on the students' long-term learning. Considering those difficulties and limitations, future studies can investigate teachers' reflections on the decision-making process to create a clearer guideline on when and how to provide focus on form instruction. Formal data collection, including recording students' actual utterances in class, interviewing students, and a longitudinal study, is also needed to accurately evaluate the efficacy of focus on form activities.

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APPENDIX – Vocabulary Log (A Student’s Example)

Date	Words Expressions	Where did you find it?	Notes	Used in...
	Worldwide	Textbook (p. 5)	= extended throughout or involving the entire world e.g. Judo became popular worldwide	D1
	Cram school	D2 (Lesson 2)	塾	
	Credit/ unit	EDC website	単位 I want to get credits.	
10/2	advertise	D2 (Lesson 2)	宣伝	D2
10/9	again and again	D3	トウクニ 何度も	D3
	= over and over	D3	何度も	D3
10/16	poverty	D4	貧困	D4
10/23	too lazy to ~	DT	面倒	DT
10/23	freshman sophomore	Teacher	1年生 } 大学 2年生 }	D5
	junior senior	"	3年生 } 4年生 }	D5
		D5	意欲的	D5
10/30		D6	不特定多数的	D6