

Learning Strategies and Vocabulary Knowledge of EFL Sixth and Ninth Grade Learners*

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Lexical knowledge is an important predictor of second language learning. The present study focuses on aspects of lexical knowledge of Korean elementary (6th grade) and middle school learners (9th grade) in connection to learning strategies, that is, with regard to vocabulary learning and by investigating the learners' preferred English medium of interest. The learners were asked to complete questionnaires for information on vocabulary learning strategies, and were tested with receptive and productive vocabulary levels test to assess their vocabulary knowledge. One-way ANOVA was conducted to note differences between the different vocabulary learning strategy groups, and multiple regression was employed to select predictors of learners' receptive and vocabulary knowledge. While the learners did not favor public education (school lessons), private lessons indicated to be the dominant means of learning English among the 6th graders with larger vocabulary sizes; the use of the vocabulary workbook indicated to be a useful resource for the 9th graders. Although movies were popularly viewed by most of the learners, it was the learners who had been reading books in English that seemed to have obtained larger vocabulary sizes. The findings provide guidelines for vocabulary instruction in Korean elementary and middle school contexts.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Knowledge of vocabulary without doubt has been noted to be an essential part of the second or foreign language learning process. Within the Korean context, there is tension as to what may be the most effective ways of acquiring English as a foreign language where vocabulary is an important component. Stakeholders, including teachers, parents, specialist, and administrators within the area of EFL in Korea have assumptions and predictions about the different learning styles or strategies that may contribute to expanding learners' vocabulary knowledge, however, often without the empirical data to prove the efficacy of learning strategies for vocabulary learning. Strategies-based instruction has already been widely advocated in many contexts (e.g., Chon & Kim, 2011; Hudson, 2007; Pressley & Harris, 2006; Zhang & Goh, 2006), but there is lack of research in trying explain the relationship between the learning strategies or styles and the outcome of learners' vocabulary knowledge. Also, the task of learning new vocabulary items is often relegated to be completed by the learner alone so that we may need to question how efficiently the teachers have been able to facilitate our learners in terms of any meaning-focused vocabulary input (Nation, 2009). Based on these preliminary recognitions, the present study focused on assessing the vocabulary size of elementary and middle school learners with respect to the different learning strategies, which includes an explanation of vocabulary strategies they used. The findings are expected to help in the selection of teaching methods and setting contexts for optimal vocabulary learning.

II. BACKGROUND

1. Learning Strategies

In the last few decades, substantial amount of research has been produced on learning styles (e.g., Oxford, 1993; Oxford & Anderson, 1995), on learning strategies (e.g., Anderson, 2005; Cohen, 1998; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford & Ehrman, 1995) and on the relationship between learning styles and strategies (e.g., Carson & Longhini, 2002; Ehrman, Leaver & Oxford, 2003). In these studies, learning styles and strategies have been defined in various ways. "Styles" is the more general term, being "an individual's natural, habitual, and preferred way of absorbing, processing, and retaining new information and skills" (Kinsella, 1995, p. 171). Christison (2003) distinguishes between cognitive style (field dependent versus field independent, analytic versus global, reflective versus impulsive); sensory style (visual versus auditory versus tactile versus

kinesthetic) and personality styles (tolerance of ambiguity, right brain versus left brain dominance).

Learning strategies, on the other hand, are the specific mental and communicative procedures that learners employ in order to learn and use language (Chamot, 2005; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). Brown (2007) has also stated that if styles are the general characteristics that differentiate one from another, then strategies are those specific "attacks" that we make on a given problem, and that they vary considerably within each individual. They are moment-by-moment techniques that we employ to solve "problems" posed by second language input and output (p. 132). One of the hypotheses being tested by learning strategy researchers is that awareness and deployment of strategies will lead to more effective language acquisition (Macaro, 2001). As such, in accordance with the current interest in learning strategies, we asked Korean EFL elementary and middle school learners to identify their vocabulary learning strategies that have been deployed in connection to vocabulary learning.

2. Vocabulary Learning Strategies and Vocabulary Knowledge

Due to our interest in learning strategies in relation to vocabulary knowledge of elementary and middle school learners, we review the studies relating to the learners' vocabulary learning styles and strategies across both abroad and domestic contexts. Although not common, a number of studies on vocabulary learning strategies and lexical knowledge have been conducted with young learners (Collins, 2010), elementary school learners (Jeon & Shin, 2011; Kang, 1995; Kim & Hong, 2009; Kim & Lee, 2008; Verhallen & Schoonen, 1998), middle school learners (Jo, 2006; Hwang & Min, 2010; Huh, 2009; Kim & Choi, 2007), or both elementary and middle school learners (Scholfield & Gitsaki, 1996).

Collin's study (2010), conducted on English language learning (ELL) preschoolers, provides some insight on the effects of vocabulary learning practices on vocabulary learning. The study investigated the effects of rich explanation, baseline vocabulary, and home reading practices on ELL preschoolers' sophisticated vocabulary learning from storybook reading. In the results, rich explanation, initial L2 vocabulary, and frequency of home reading made significant contributions to sophisticated word learning from storyreading. In our study, we asked learners to identify the type of English medium of interest that they liked to view or read. Verhallen and Schoonen (1998) focuses on aspects of the lexical knowledge of bilingual children in both their LI and L2. While the participants were 40 bilingual Turkish-Dutch children (9 and 11-year-olds) living in the Netherlands, the children were asked to explain the meaning of some common Dutch and Turkish nouns in an extended word definition task. The findings confirmed that the

L2 knowledge of bilingual Turkish children lags behind that of monolingual Dutch children. The implication of the study was that L1 knowledge of the bilingual children cannot counterbalance their poor lexical knowledge in L2. The study illustrates that learning of L2 vocabulary needs separate attention in language learning.

One of the atypical studies that we found with the efficacy of private and public education was conducted by Scholfield and Gitsaki (1996). They found that differences between language teaching in private and public institutions in the same country may be usefully illuminated through focused classroom research. Learners, who ranged from 11–15 years, reported about how they were taught and how they learnt new English vocabulary to examine the difference between the two prevailing pedagogical environments in Greece (i.e., private institutes of foreign languages and government schools). Contrary to the expectation that the private schools would evidence clearly different and better practices, a complex picture emerged. Some marked weaknesses in the methodology of vocabulary teaching, with a consequent reflection in the way vocabulary is learnt by students, were detected in both. The conclusion was reached that the success of the private institutions was not due to the differential quality of their pedagogical contribution but more to the extra quantity of instruction that they provided. In our study, private lessons and public education (school lessons) were used as some of the choices for identifying learning strategies.

Studies in the Korean context have been conducted in an effort to find out ways to enhance second language vocabulary knowledge. Kang (1995) examined the relative effectiveness of four instructional approaches: the Paper and Pencil (P&P), the Computer-based Word-for-word (CW), the Computer-based word-for-word plus Picture (CP), and the Computer-based Context (CC). English vocabulary was chosen as the target of instruction. The results of the study as a whole strongly suggested that the context-embedded approach to second language vocabulary learning was most effective in promoting long-term recall of vocabulary definitions. In our study, instead of conditioning learners to a particular condition, we asked them about the language skill that was most difficult for them (i.e., existing conditions) so that the relationship between the learners' vocabulary knowledge could be identified.

Huh (2009) investigated vocabulary learning strategies used by EFL middle school learners in Korea and examined the relationship between learners' vocabulary learning strategy (VLS) use and their vocabulary proficiency. One hundred and forty-one students in a public middle school participated in the study and the data for this study were collected from a vocabulary learning strategy questionnaire and a vocabulary proficiency test. The overall findings of the study revealed that the participants used cognitive strategies most frequently and social strategies least frequently. The most frequently used individual strategies were "using a bilingual dictionary", "studying the

sound of a word” and “practicing words through verbal repetition.” The least frequently used ones were ‘interacting with native speakers’ and ‘studying or practicing the meaning of a word in a group.’ In our study, we also asked learners to identify some vocabulary learning strategies (e.g., use of a vocabulary workbook) and select an English medium of interest (e.g., movies, reading) that they often utilized, which can potentially lead to incidental vocabulary learning.

The aforementioned studies provide insights on the types of learning strategies that have been considered to examine effects on vocabulary learning. However, the studies rarely seem to make systematic assessment of vocabulary knowledge of learners in connection to the learning strategies. Based on the previous findings, we propose the following research questions:

Q1: What is the receptive and productive vocabulary size of Korean elementary and middle school EFL learners?

Q2: Which of the vocabulary learning strategy variables were significant predictors of elementary and middle school EFL learners’ vocabulary sizes?

III. METHODS

1. Participants and Background

For our study on the measurement of L2 learners’ vocabulary size, a total of 347 learners, consisting of 131 elementary and 216 middle school learners, were recruited. Information on the learners’ background is presented in Table 1. Our choice of school was random, and based on consultation with the teachers on school rankings, the sample of learners could be regarded as representing the general EFL elementary and middle school learners in the municipal areas of the country.

TABLE 1
Background Information on Participants

School Type	Gender		Total	Experience Abroad		Total
	Male	Female		No	Yes	
Elementary Sch. (Seoul)	64 (48.9%)	55 (42.0%)	119	87	37	124*
Girl's Middle Sch. (Seoul)	0	80 (100%)	80	185	20	205
Co-ed Middle Sch. (Bucheon)	70 (51.5%)	52 (38.2)	122	272 (78.4%)	57 (16.4%)	329
Total	134 (38.6%)	187 (53.9%)	321			

*Note: Numbers are presented after excluding missing responses

The elementary school learners were in their 6th grades, and the middle school learners were all in their 9th grades. We felt that the learners were cognitively mature enough to respond to the questionnaires and respond to the vocabulary levels test. In total, there were 134 male and 187 female students in the study. To our interest, there were 57 learners (16.4%) with abroad experience ranging from a few months to a few years, however, not necessarily all in English-speaking countries.

2. Instruments

1) Questionnaire on Vocabulary Learning

In line with our interest in examining vocabulary learning styles or strategies of our elementary and middle school learners, we asked the learners which of the language skills (i.e., listening, speaking, reading, writing) they found most difficult during their experience of learning English, their vocabulary learning strategies, and the kinds of English medium of interest they usually enjoyed. The language skill found most difficult was investigated in order to ascertain any relationship it may have to the learners' vocabulary size, which is an area not investigated in any previous studies. For vocabulary learning strategies, we asked the learners how they had usually studied vocabulary, and the options provided to them were 1) Through lessons at school, 2) With a separate vocabulary work book, 3) Through Private lessons (private tutoring, Online lectures, *hagwon*, etc.), 4) Miscellaneous, and 5) I don't separately study vocabulary. In the context of the present study, the vocabulary work book refers to materials that learners or teachers use to supplement learners' vocabulary learning, which may come in the form of presenting list of words with example sentences, and a check-up exercise.

For the “Miscellaneous” category, the learners were also offered spaces for them to write extra responses. In addition, the different types of English medium of interest provided as options to the learners were 1) Movies, 2) English books, 3) Internet, 4) Miscellaneous, and 5) Not particularly interested.

2) Vocabulary Levels Test

Accompanied by the questions on learner background and learning strategies, we also presented a vocabulary levels test to assess the elementary and middle school learners’ vocabulary size. There were two forms of the test, that is, for assessing the learners’ receptive vocabulary size and productive vocabulary size. Nation’s (2010) bilingualized version of the vocabulary levels test (which can be downloaded from <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/staff/paul-nation.aspxcan>) exists originally only for the receptive version. An adapted form of the test was utilized in our study. The test is designed to measure learner’s vocabulary size by selecting word items at each band (i.e., a single band contains 10 items) from the 1st to the 14th 1,000 word families based on the development of the fourteen 1,000 BNC wordlists (Nation & Beglar, 2007). Having tested EFL university learners in a previous study (Chon & Shin, 2012) on the 1st to the 10th 1,000 word bands, we considered it appropriate to test the middle and elementary school learners respectively at the 1st ~ 7th 1,000 and 1st ~ 5th 1,000 word bands. A procedure was also involved to see that culture-specific words were not included in the items. For the words that needed substitution, we randomly re-selected words with *Random Item Generator* v.1 available at *Compleat Lexical Tutor* (<http://www.lex tutor.ca/>) for each frequency band. Also, to reduce the possibility of test-takers guessing, we included the option ⑤ “잘 모르겠음” (i.e., Do not know) so as to improve the validity of the items. The following is one of the items of the receptive test:

45. constrain : He **constrained** her to go.

- ① 강요하다 ② 막다 ③ 전화하다 ④ 충고하다 ⑤ 잘 모르겠음
(to force) (to block) (to make a call) (to advice) (do not know)

An adapted productive vocabulary level test was also developed for the 1st ~ 7th 1,000 and 1st ~ 5th 1,000 word bands. Originally based on the format of Laufer and Nation’s (1999) productive vocabulary test, a similar procedure was employed as in the receptive vocabulary test to select the target word items. In our version, however, we added L1 sentence equivalents to L2 sentences, which would enable learners to more easily retrieve the L2 target word by referring to the accompanying L1 translation. The following is one of the items of the productive test:

46. 해가 막 **지평선** 위로 떠오르고 있었다.

☛ The sun was just peeking over the ho_____.

3. Procedures

The learning strategy questionnaire and the vocabulary levels test (VLT) presented in a single questionnaire were administered in each of the elementary and middle school classrooms by the teachers at a time of the semester when the learners were not burdened with their usual lessons. The learning strategy questionnaire and VLT were administered during the Winter of 2011. The learners were provided adequate time for completion. The responses from the questionnaire and VLT were coded to analyze with SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) 17.0. One-way ANOVA was conducted to note differences between the learning strategy groups. Later, in order to find any relations between the background variables, learning styles, and vocabulary sizes, multiple regression with the enter method was conducted. Also, the scores produced for each of the receptive and productive versions of the test had to be multiplied by 100 to roughly estimate the learners' total vocabulary size since the 10 words at each band are, in fact, samples from the 100 words at each band level (Nation & Beglar, 2007).

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Vocabulary Knowledge of Elementary and Middle School Learners

In this section, before investigating learning strategies in connection to learners' vocabulary size, there was need to obtain an assessment of learners' receptive vocabulary size (RVS) and productive vocabulary size (PVS). As seen in Table 2, the learners' RVS scores recorded a total of 23.69 (i.e., in effect approximately 2,369 words when multiplied by 100; see *Methods* for how to calculate vocabulary size) for elementary school learners and 28.29 for middle school learners. This illustrates how the learners are beyond the vocabulary level stipulated for learning in the 2009 Revised National Curriculum: For grade 6, the minimum number of words is 520 words, and for middle school, the minimum is 1,290 words). However, examination of scores particularly at the 1st to 3rd 1,000 word bands, which can be considered high-frequency words (Nation, 2001), indicated that the learners may not easily be able to deal with general reading and writing of English. For instance, the middle school learners obtained percentage of correct answers (PCA) as follows in the 1st 1,000 word band: *appear* (77.78%), *clean* (94.44%), *economy* (57.41%) *grow* (76.85%), *imagine* (67.59%), *listen*

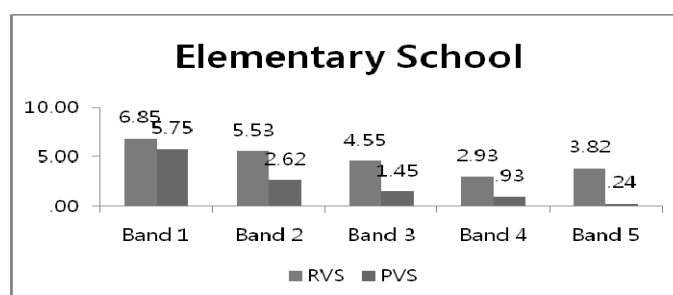
(90.28%), *new* (88.89%), *pay* (85.65%), *recognize* (45.37%), and *similar* (49.07%). We could have expected the middle school learners to have a fuller coverage of the words, such as, for *recognize* and *similar*. At the 1st 1,000 word band, the middle school learners recorded RVS of 7.33/10, and PVS of 5.99/10. The results compare to how Korean university learners had noticeably larger RVS and PVS at the 1st 1,000 word band in a previous study (i.e., RVS: 9.87/10, PVS: 9.44/10, PVS/RVS (%): 95.65/100%; Chon & Shin, 2012). What was also noticeable was the way the middle school learners' score for PVS/RVS rose at the 6th 1,000 level to 34.01. When the words for PVS were scrutinized, we realized that this had been due to the loanword *melody*, which in the native-speaker corpus has not been classified as a high-frequency word.

TABLE 2
Receptive and Productive Vocabulary Sizes of Elementary and Middle Sch Learners

Word Level	Elementary Sch. (N= 131)			Middle Sch. (N=216)		
	RVS	PVS	PVS/RVS ratio	RVS	PVS	PVS/RVS ratio
1 st 1000	6.85 (2.88)	5.75 (3.21)	81.38 (39.90)	7.33 (2.39)	5.99 (2.96)	80.13 (37.98)
2 nd 1000	5.53 (2.92)	2.62 (2.36)	39.12 (30.72)	6.12 (2.60)	2.31 (2.34)	31.65 (27.14)
3 rd 1000	4.55 (2.80)	1.45 (1.74)	28.68 (28.71)	4.09 (2.60)	1.40 (1.78)	33.42 (39.48)
4 th 1000	2.93 (2.49)	.93 (1.20)	31.16 (37.79)	3.15 (2.13)	.58 (1.05)	15.10 (24.76)
5 th 1000	3.82 (2.39)	.24 (.65)	4.27 (10.52)	3.31 (2.02)	.38 (.83)	10.48 (23.05)
6 th 1000	n/a	n/a	n/a	2.85 (2.16)	.91 (1.22)	34.01 (48.83)
7 th 1000				1.43 (1.51)	.15 (.44)	8.82 (23.52)
Total	23.69 (12.12)	10.99 (8.04)	42.32 (23.35)	28.29 (13.02)	11.71 (8.85)	38.67 (21.75)

Note: () = Standard deviations

FIGURE 1
Receptive and Productive Vocabulary Sizes of
Elementary Sch. Learners: 1st 1,000 to 5th 1,000 Word Bands

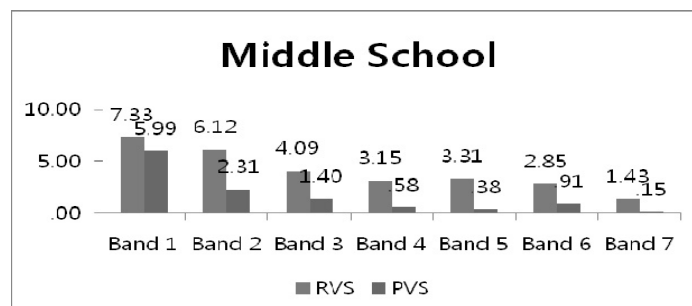


Note: Band 1 ~ Band 5 = 1st 1,000 ~ 5th 1,000 word bands;

RVS = receptive vocabulary size, PVS = productive vocabulary size

As a whole, the scores of the vocabulary levels tests indicated steady decreases in RVS and PVS across bands 1 to 5 or 7. These are expected results since total RVS is normally larger than PVS with the difference between RVS and PVS increasing at the lower frequency ends. The PVS/RVS ratios also indicate how the learners' development of PVS lags behind RVS. These results are in accordance with previous studies (e.g., Chon & Shin, 2012; Laufer & Paribakht, 1998; Morgan & Oberdeck, 1930; Shin, Chon, & Kim, 2011; Waring, 1997). However, the sudden rise of RVS at the 5th word band was noticeable. When we examined the type of words at the relevant bands, we noticed that words such as *dragon* and *frog* had respectively reached PCAs as high as 71.76% and 82.44%. Although words of the vocabulary levels test were randomly selected according to list of BNC, the results reveal how Korean elementary school learners may be exposed to certain words markedly more than native speaker children. Slight rises of RVS scores were also noted for the middle school learners recording PCAs of 68.06% and 78.24% respectively for *dragon* and *frog*. *Frog* is in fact listed as one of the basic words in the current National Curriculum of English so that the learners would have been exposed to the word via their curriculum-based textbooks.

FIGURE 2
Receptive and Productive Vocabulary Sizes of
Middle Sch. Learners: 1st 1,000 to 10th 1,000 Word Bands



Note: Band 1 ~ Band 5 = 1st 1,000 ~ 10th 1,000 word bands;
 RVS = receptive vocabulary size, PVS = productive vocabulary size

2. Learning Strategies and Vocabulary Knowledge

As mentioned previously, we conducted one-way ANOVA to analyze learners' vocabulary scores according to different learning strategy groups. Here the identification of different learning strategies was operationalized by asking the learners to respond to which of the (1) language skills (i.e., speaking, writing, reading, listening) they regarded the most difficult, (2) vocabulary learning strategies they employed, and (3) English medium of interest most viewed or read.

1) Language Skills Reported as Difficult

The learners were asked which of the language skills they found most difficult among listening, speaking, reading, and writing as a way to analyze how this relates to their vocabulary knowledge. For the elementary school learners ($n = 131$), the learners found the skills most difficult in the order of writing ($n = 60$, 45.8%), listening ($n = 25$, 19.1%), speaking ($n = 25$, 19.1%), and reading ($n = 21$, 16%). Similarly, the middle school learners ($n = 216$) found the skills difficult in the order of writing ($n = 111$, 51.4%), listening ($n = 52$, 24.1%), speaking ($n = 35$, 16.2%), and reading ($n = 14$, 6.5%). Although not surprising, the results indicates how writing is most difficult for the learners.

With one-way ANOVA, there was no significant difference between groups among the elementary school learners. This may have occurred due to how elementary school learners are still in their developmental stage of English learning so that they may have lacked the metacognitive awareness to be able to report on the skills they found most

difficult. In comparison, the middle school learners differed significantly among groups for the sum of RVS according to how they found the language skills to be difficult ($F_{(3,208)} = 2.706, p = .046$), but not for PVS ($F_{(3,208)} = 2.403, p = .069$). Employing the Bonferroni post-hoc test, a significant difference was noted between speaking and writing ($p = .03$) for RVS as seen in Table 3.

TABLE 3
Post-hoc Test for Middle Sch. Learners (Total Score, Receptive Vocabulary)

	Difficult Skills		I-J	Std. Error	Sig.
	I	J			
	sumRVS	L			
	L	R	.88	3.84	1.00
		W	2.55	2.14	1.00
	S	R	5.29	4.03	1.00
		W	6.96	2.47	.03*
	W	R	-1.67	3.62	1.00

Note: sumRVS = Sum of Total Receptive Vocabulary Size; R = Reading, L = Listening, S = Speaking, W = Writing

The differences indicate that learners who reported having difficulties in writing had a smaller RVS than those learners who had difficulties in speaking. Although speaking and writing are both productive skills, this indicates how vocabulary may be a critical aspect of L2 writing, which is likely to require the retrieval of words at a higher lexical sophistication level with increased accuracy. Research has shown that vocabulary is one of the most important features that determine writing quality (Raimes, 1985; Uzawa & Cumming, 1989).

2) Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Results of the vocabulary learning strategy questionnaire indicated that the elementary school learners had relied most on “private instruction”, followed by “school lessons”, *Do not separately study vocabulary*, “miscellaneous”, and “vocabulary workbook” (See Table 4). The middle school learners had studied vocabulary by means of “school lessons”, followed by “private lessons”, *Do not separately study vocabulary*, “vocabulary workbook”, and “miscellaneous.” Table 4 also indicates the mean vocabulary size scores according to vocabulary learning strategies.

TABLE 4
Descriptives of RVS and PVS by Vocabulary Learning Strategies

		N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
<u>Elementary School</u>						
sumRVS	Sch Lssns	21	17.62	11.48	.00	42.00
	Vocab Wrkbk	6	16.50	11.69	3.00	31.00
	Prvt Lssns	80	27.29	10.88	5.00	46.00
	Miscellaneous	8	26.63	14.93	5.00	46.00
	Don't study	13	12.31	7.15	4.00	28.00
	Total	128	23.63	12.14	.00	46.00
sumPVS	Sch Lssns	21	7.48	6.08	.00	22.00
	Vocab Wrkbk	6	5.00	4.52	.00	12.00
	Prvt Lssns	80	13.36	7.45	.00	30.00
	Miscellaneous	8	13.13	13.47	.00	35.00
	Don't study	13	4.00	4.45	.00	14.00
	Total	128	11.04	8.10	.00	35.00
<u>Middle School</u>						
sumRVS	Sch Lssns	104	27.79	11.83	4.00	55.00
	Vocab Wrkbk	14	37.93	15.04	.00	57.00
	Prvt Lssns	53	32.98	12.26	8.00	56.00
	Miscellaneous	2	38.00	5.66	34.00	42.00
	Don't study	39	19.92	11.34	.00	50.00
	Total	212	28.41	12.97	.00	57.00
sumPVS	Sch Lssns	104	11.21	7.57	.00	33.00
	Vocab Wrkbk	14	17.29	13.40	.00	35.00
	Prvt Lssns	53	14.77	9.10	.00	34.00
	Miscellaneous	2	20.50	6.36	16.00	25.00
	Don't study	39	6.97	7.39	.00	31.00
	Total	212	11.81	8.88	.00	35.00

Note: Sch Lssns = School lessons, Vocab Wrkbk = Vocabulary workbooks, Prvt Lssns= Private lessons, Mscllns = Miscellaneous, Don't study = Do not separately study vocabulary

For elementary school learners, “private lessons” and “miscellaneous” means of learning produced the highest mean scores. The middle school learners who had used “vocabulary workbook” or relied on other “miscellaneous” categories seemed to perform best on the vocabulary levels test (See later for “miscellaneous” categories).

Analysis with one-way ANOVA found both the elementary and middle school learners' RVS and PVS to differ significantly according to the different vocabulary learning strategies (Elementary Sch. RVS: $F_{(4,123)} = 8.02, p < .05$, PVS: $F_{(4,123)} = 7.29, p < .05$; Middle Sch. RVS: $F_{(4,207)} = 9.30, p < .05$, PVS: $F_{(4,207)} = 7.01, p < .05$). For elementary school students, the Bonferroni post-hoc tests indicated the “private lessons” group to have larger receptive and productive vocabularies in comparison to the “school

lesson” learner group (see Table 5). For RVS, the difference between the groups was 9.67, which in effect can be interpreted as RVS of approximately 967 words. Similarly, the “private lessons” group outperformed the “school education” group by a difference of 5.87 (i.e., 587 words) for PVS. As expected, learners who had not taken separate interest in studying vocabulary demonstrated smaller vocabulary sizes than those learners who had relied on “private lessons” or other “miscellaneous” resources of vocabulary learning.

TABLE 5
Post-hoc Test for Elementary School by Vocabulary Learning Strategies

	I	J	I-J	Std. Error	Sig.
sumRVS	Sch Lssns	Vocab Wrkbk	1.12	5.09	1.00
		Don't study	5.31	3.88	1.00
	Vocab Wrkbk	Prvt Lssns	-10.79	4.65	.22
		Don't study	4.19	5.42	1.00
	Prvt Lssns	Sch Lssns	9.67	2.69	.00*
		Msclln	.66	4.07	1.00
	Mscllns	Sch Lssns	9.01	4.56	.51
		Vocab Wrkbk	10.13	5.93	.90
	Don't study	Prvt Lssns	-14.98	3.29	.00*
		Msclln	-14.32	4.94	.04*
sumPVS	Sch Lssns	Vocab Wrkbk	2.48	3.43	1.00
		Don't study	3.48	2.61	1.00
	Vocab Wrkbk	Prvt Lssns	-8.36	3.13	.09
		Don't study	1.00	3.65	1.00
	Prvt Lssns	Sch Lssns	5.87	1.81	.02*
		Mscllns	.24	2.74	1.00
	Mscllns	Sch Lssns	5.65	3.07	.69
		Vocab Wrkbk	8.12	4.00	.44
	Don't study	Prvt Lssns	-9.36	2.21	.00*
		Mscllns	-9.13	3.33	.07

Note: sumRVS = Sum of Total Receptive Vocabulary Size, sumPVS= Sum of Total Productive Vocabulary Size; Sch Lssns = School lessons, Vocab Wrkbk = vocabulary workbooks, Prvt Lssns = Private lessons, Mscllns = Miscellaneous, Don't study = Do not separately study vocabulary

Results from the middle school learners indicated the use of “vocabulary workbooks” to be more effective for obtaining larger RVS (see Table 6). The “vocabulary workbook” group outperformed the “school lesson” group by a mean difference of 10.14 (i.e., 1,014 words) for RVS. Not surprisingly, those learners who had studied via “vocabulary workbooks” or “private lessons” scored significantly higher on their RVS in comparison to those who reported not spending time to separately study vocabulary, respectively showing a difference of 18.01 (i.e., 1,801 words) and 13.06 (i.e., 1,306 words). Similarly, significant differences in PVS were noted between those learners who had used “vocabulary workbooks” and those who had not spent time to separately study

vocabulary, showing a difference of 10.31 (i.e., 1,031 words).

TABLE 6
Post-hoc Test for Middle School by Vocabulary Learning Strategies

	I	J	I-J	Std. Error	Sig.
sumRVS	Sch Lssns	Vocab Wrkbk	-10.14	3.43	.04*
		Don't study	7.87	2.26	.01*
	Vocab Wrkbk	Prvt Lssns	4.95	3.62	1.00
		Don't study	18.01	3.76	.00*
	Prvt Lssns	Sch Lssns	5.19	2.03	.11
		Mscllns L	-5.02	8.68	1.00
	Mscllns L	Sch Lssns	10.21	8.60	1.00
		Vocab Wrkbk	.07	9.11	1.00
	Don't study	Prvt Lssns	-13.06	2.54	.00*
		Mscllns L	-18.08	8.74	.40
sumPVS	Sch Lssns	Vocab Wrkbk	-6.07	2.40	.12
		Don't study	4.24	1.58	.08
	Vocab Wrkbk	Prvt Lssns	2.51	2.53	1.00
		Don't study	10.31	2.62	.00*
	Prvt Lssns	Sch Lssns	3.56	1.42	.13
		Mscllns L	-5.73	6.06	1.00
	Mscllns L	Sch Lssns	9.29	6.01	1.00
		Vocab Wrkbk	3.21	6.36	1.00
	Don't study	Prvt Lssns	-7.80	1.78	.00*
		Mscllns L	-13.53	6.10	.28

Note: sumRVS = Sum of Total Receptive Vocabulary Size, sumPVS= Sum of Total Productive Vocabulary Size; Sch Lssns = School lessons, Vocab Wrkbk = vocabulary workbooks, Prvt Lssns = Private lessons, Mscllns L = Miscellaneous learning methods, Don't study = Do not separately study vocabulary

In comparison to the elementary school learners, differences found among the middle school learners indicate that the use of a “vocabulary workbook” is an important aspect of vocabulary learning for expanding learners’ vocabulary size. Previously, we saw how the elementary school learners’ vocabulary sizes were more affected by whether they were recipients of “private lessons.” It seems that the middle school learners were cognitively and affectively prepared to take charge of their own learning (i.e., self-directed learning) whereas many of the elementary school learners had to rely on other-initiated means of learning, such as private lessons.

3) English Medium of Interest

We were interested in the different types of English medium that the learners liked to utilize in their daily lives, which can potentially be sources of language learning. As seen in Table 7, the elementary school learners most frequently watched “movies/animation”, and this was followed by *Not particularly interested*, the “Internet”, “miscellaneous”, and “English books.” The middle school learners similarly preferred to watch “movies/animation”, followed by *Not particularly interested*, “miscellaneous”, the “Internet”, and “English books.”

TABLE 7
Descriptives of RVS and PVS by English Medium of Interest

		N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
<u>Elementary School</u>						
sumRVS	Mvs	67	24.67	11.88	.00	46.00
	Eng bks	8	37.38	6.72	28.00	46.00
	Intrnt	10	25.20	11.55	5.00	39.00
	Mscllns I	10	24.00	11.79	7.00	41.00
	Not intrstd	35	18.26	11.36	.00	40.00
	Total	130	23.72	12.16	.00	46.00
sumPVS	Mvs	67	11.50	7.75	.00	35.00
	Eng bks	8	20.00	8.25	8.00	30.00
	Intrnt	10	9.00	8.81	.00	25.00
	Mscllns I	10	12.10	7.31	1.00	19.00
	Not intrstd	35	8.30	7.27	.00	25.00
	Total	130	11.01	8.06	.00	35.00
<u>Middle School</u>						
sumRVS	Mvs	114	29.63	12.74	.00	56.00
	Eng bks	5	42.40	7.83	33.00	51.00
	Intrnt	6	24.67	11.72	10.00	40.00
	Mscllns I	10	33.50	13.45	11.00	57.00
	Not intrstd	79	25.53	12.68	.00	53.00
	Total	214	28.46	12.93	.00	57.00
sumPVS	Mvs	114	11.40	8.84	.00	35.00
	Eng bks	5	27.20	6.38	19.00	35.00
	Intrnt	6	9.17	7.96	.00	21.00
	Mscllns I	10	17.00	9.21	9.00	33.00
	Not intrstd	79	10.92	8.02	.00	29.00
	Total	214	11.79	8.85	.00	35.00

Note: Mvs = Movies, Eng bks = English books, Intrnt = Internet, Mscllns I = Miscellaneous interests, Not intrstd = Not particularly interested

Analysis with one-way ANOVA found both the elementary and middle school learners' RVS and PVS to differ significantly according to the different English medium of interest (Elementary Sch. RVS: $F_{(4,125)} = 4.98, p < .05$, PVS: $F_{(4,125)} = 4.11, p < .05$; Middle Sch. RVS: $F_{(4,209)} = 3.35, p = .01$, PVS: $F_{(4,209)} = 5.46, p < .05$). The Bonferroni post-hoc tests as indicated in Table 8 demonstrate that the elementary "English book" group outperformed the "movie" group for both RVS and PVS (RVS: Mean difference = 12.69; PVS: Mean difference = 8.51). Although we found a majority of the elementary school learners (51.1%) watching movies in English, the results indicate that it may not have worked to the learners' advantage in providing "comprehensible input" (Krashen, 1982) for language learning. The results seem logical since watching movies would not always necessitate learners to pay attention to the linguistic input; learners could have easily understood the main idea of a movie without having to understand the words mentioned. We now also know that many of the movies are accompanied by L1 subtitles. On the other hand, reading in English seems to have provided a more effective learning context for vocabulary learning, ultimately where the learners would have been offered chances for incidental vocabulary learning (Day & Bramford, 1988).

TABLE 8
Post-hoc Tests for Elementary School by English Medium of Interest

English Medium of Interest		I-J	Std. Error	Sig.		
I	J					
sumRVS	Mvs	Eng bks	-12.69	4.29	.04*	
		Intrnt	-.51	3.89	1.00	
	Eng bks	Mscllns I	13.38	5.44	.15	
		Intrnt	12.18	5.44	.27	
	Intrnt	Mscllns I	1.20	5.13	1.00	
		Not intrstd	6.94	4.12	.94	
	Mscllns I	Mvs	-.69	3.89	1.00	
		Not intrstd	5.74	4.12	1.00	
	Not intrstd	Mvs	-6.43	2.39	.08	
		Eng bks	-19.12	4.50	.00*	
	sumPVS	Mvs	Eng bks	-8.51	2.88	.04*
			Intrnt	2.49	2.61	1.00
Eng bks		Mscllns I	7.90	3.65	.33	
		Intrnt	11.00	3.65	.03*	
Intrnt		Mscllns I	-3.10	3.44	1.00	
		Not intrstd	.714	2.76	1.00	
Mscllns I		Mvs	.61	2.61	1.00	
		Not intrstd	3.81	2.76	1.00	
Not intrstd		Mvs	-3.21	1.61	.48	
		Eng bks	-11.71	3.02	.00*	

Note: sumRVS = Sum of Total Receptive Vocabulary Size, sumPVS= Sum of Total Productive Vocabulary Size; Mvs = Movies, Eng bks = English books, Intrnt = Internet surfing, Mscllns I= Miscellaneous interests, Not intrstd = Not particularly interested

Regarding middle school learners, apparent group difference for RVS occurred only between the “English book” group and those who were not interested in viewing or reading English material (Mean difference = 16.87) (See Table 9). This suggests that reading in English had a positive influence on the learners’ development of receptive lexical knowledge.

In the same vein, we noticed for PVS that learners who had been reading “English books” outperformed those who had enjoyed watching “movies” (Mean difference = 15.80), surf the “Internet” (Mean difference = 18.03), or those who were “not interested” in any particular medium of English (Mean difference = 16.28). As we saw with the elementary school learners, the results demonstrate how learning strategies regarding experience with literacy activities may have an influence on vocabulary size. Although resources such as movies and the Internet are commonly considered motivating means

of acquiring a second language in a communicative context, our results attest to how traditional literacy activities, as in reading books, may be the most reliable means of expanding particularly L2 productive vocabulary.

TABLE 9
Post-hoc Tests for Middle School by English Medium of Interest

	English Medium of Interest		I-J	Std. Error	Sig.	
	I	J				
sumRVS	Mvs	Eng bks	-12.77	5.78	.28	
		Intrnt	4.96	5.30	1.00	
	Eng bks	Mscllns I	8.90	6.93	1.00	
		Intrnt	17.73	7.66	.22	
	Intrnt	Mscllns I	-8.83	6.53	1.00	
		Not intrstd	-.87	5.36	1.00	
	Mscllns I	Mvs	3.87	4.17	1.00	
		Not intrstd	7.97	4.25	.62	
	Not intrstd	Mvs	-4.10	1.85	.28	
		Eng bks	-16.87	5.83	.04*	
	sumPVS	Mvs	Eng bks	-15.80	3.88	.00*
			Intrnt	2.24	3.56	1.00
Eng bks		Mscllns I	10.20	4.65	.30	
		Intrnt	18.03	5.15	.01*	
Intrnt		Mscllns I	-7.83	4.39	.76	
		Not intrstd	-1.76	3.60	1.00	
Mscllns I		Mvs	5.60	2.80	.47	
		Not intrstd	6.08	2.85	.34	
Not intrstd		Mvs	-.48	1.24	1.00	
		Eng bks	-16.28	3.92	.00*	

Note: sumRVS = Sum of Total Receptive Vocabulary Size, sumPVS = Sum of Total Productive Vocabulary Size; Mvs = Movies, Eng bks = English books, Intrnt = Internet, Mscllns I = Miscellaneous interests, Not intrstd = Not particularly interested

3. Background Variables, Learning Strategies and Vocabulary Knowledge

One of the interests of the study was also to analyze the individual contribution of the learning style variables (i.e., (1) language skills (i.e., speaking, writing, reading, listening), (2) vocabulary learning strategies, and (3) English medium of interest). However, other subject variables (i.e., (4) gender, (5) abroad experience) were also included to obtain a more comprehensive analysis of any significant predictors of the learners' receptive and productive vocabulary sizes. That is, the researchers were interested in seeing which of

the variables had the strongest explanatory power for illustrating the learners' vocabulary knowledge.

In order to examine the effect of the five independent variables on the students' receptive and productive vocabulary sizes, the regression model was applied to the data. For the analysis, nominal variables were dummy coded; that is, the reference groups were coded as 0 and the non-reference groups were coded as 1 (i.e., For each of the nominal variables, "male", "abroad experience", "listening", "school lesson", and "movies" were all coded as reference groups).

As presented in Table 10, results of regression analysis revealed that the significant variables for elementary school learners' RVS and PVS were "private lessons" ($B = 10.35$; $B = 6.896$), "miscellaneous learning methods" ($B = 10.26$; $B = 8.61$), and "English books" ($B = 12.15$; $B = 7.98$). In the learning strategy questionnaire, the 'miscellaneous learning methods' included responses such as "I study separately at home", "Studying with mother", "EBS (Educational Broadcasting System)", and "Monthly test problems." On the other hand, the regression coefficient of -5.815 for those not interested in any English medium indicated that learners would tend to have a smaller RVS than those who relied on movies (reference variable).

For RVS of middle school learners as presented in Table 10, "female" ($B = 8.21$), "vocabulary workbook" ($B = 8.95$), "private lessons" ($B = 6.84$), *Don't study vocabulary separately* ($B = -6.01$) indicated to be the significant predictors. Regression coefficient of -6.010 indicated that the learners who had not studied vocabulary as a separate skill tended to have a smaller vocabulary size equivalent to approximately 6 items (i.e., 600 words) on the vocabulary levels test in comparison to those learners utilizing school lessons. In a similar vein, "female" ($B = 4.65$), "writing" ($B = -3.63$), "private lessons" ($B = 4.05$), "English books" ($B = 12.15$), and "Miscellaneous Interests" ($B = 6.58$) resulted to be the significant predictors of learners' PVS. Here miscellaneous interests included pop songs, CD games, TV programs, games from the US, *Starcraft*, and *YouTube*. However, the regression coefficient of -3.631 that occurred for writing indicates how learners had smaller PVS in comparison to those learners reporting difficulties for listening.

As such, across both RVS and PVS of middle school learners, we can see that being a female learner and a recipient of private of education contributed to having larger vocabulary sizes. However, a comparative interpretation could also be made of the two types of vocabulary. While the "vocabulary workbook" indicated to be a significant predictor for RVS, it was rather the reading of "English books" that contributed to the development of PVS. This makes sense since the development of productive vocabulary in speaking or writing requires more than simply studying a vocabulary workbook. Fluent levels of speaking and writing will require multiple number of exposures to target words in communicative contexts before being able retrieve them in production.

TABLE 10
Multiple Regression on Receptive and Productive Vocabulary Size:
Elementary and Middle School Learners

	Elementary Sch.				Middle Sch.			
	Receptive Vocab.		Productive Vocab.		Receptive Vocab.		Productive Vocab.	
	Unstandardized Coefficients				Unstandardized Coefficients			
	B	Std. Error	B	Std. Error	B	Std. Error	B	Std. Error
(Constant)	20.401	3.387	9.364	2.375	23.086	2.502	8.948	1.761
Female	-1.789	2.115	-1.656	1.483	8.206***	1.791	4.651***	1.261
No abroad experience	2.385	2.278	.707	1.598	4.946	2.772	3.500	1.952
Speaking	-2.996	3.370	-2.766	2.364	4.197	2.574	.125	1.812
Reading	-4.729	3.492	-2.040	2.449	-1.773	3.635	-1.187	2.559
Writing	-2.970	2.856	-2.048	2.003	-3.543	2.020	-3.631*	1.422
Vocabulary Workbook	1.096	5.321	-1.751	3.731	8.946*	3.851	1.785	2.711
Private lessons	10.350***	2.778	6.896***	1.948	6.839***	2.023	4.052**	1.424
Miscellaneous Learning Methods	10.255*	5.007	8.611*	3.512	11.487	8.040	8.900	5.660
Don't study separately	-3.919	3.980	-1.933	2.791	-6.010**	2.301	-2.632	1.620
English books	12.154**	4.147	7.976**	2.908	1.716	6.019	12.146**	4.238
Internet	2.852	3.712	-1.526	2.603	3.575	5.877	2.534	4.138
Miscellaneous Interests	-4.250	3.773	-2.148	2.646	3.145	3.942	6.581*	2.775
Not interested	-5.815*	2.625	-2.484	1.841	-3.008	1.763	-.184	1.241

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

V. CONCLUSION

In spite of the efforts of the Korean Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology to reduce spending on private lessons, evidence from our study overall suggested that this was still the prevalent means of learning vocabulary among the high scoring elementary school learners. There have been reports on how Korea's spending on private lessons may be dropping, but the drop has actually been attributed to the chronically low birth rate rather than approval of public education (http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2012/02/113_105091.html, "Private lessons spending drops in 2011," *Korea Times*, February 2012). We interpret that the elementary school learners, who may not yet be cognitively ready to become autonomous learners, needed an additional

means of learning, such as by attending private institutes, to obtain larger vocabulary sizes. On the other hand, we were able to gain positive results from the middle school learner population. We saw that the use of a vocabulary workbook was related to improving the middle school learners' vocabulary knowledge. Accordingly, we propose that this should be brought into the classrooms for teachers to use, however, more for the development of productive vocabulary knowledge, such as within speaking or writing tasks, and not limit the use of them for memorization of decontextualized vocabulary.

In order to make sure learners are obtaining a range of vocabulary activities for production, Nation (2003) elaborates on the principle for meaning-focused output. He proposes how written input for meaning-focused output should be carefully controlled to include the target words (e.g., enhanced for input via highlighting), and that activities should be extended to split information jobs and roles to make sure the learners are being offered chances to recycle the words in production. Another way to approach meaning-focused output particularly in writing would be to involve learners in a lot of writing for different kinds of genres and topics. Different genres (e.g., narratives, vs. recipe) use different writing conventions and draw on different language features (e.g., vocabulary) (Biber, 1989) or terms commonly used in certain topics or tasks. As such, for the improvement of productive lexical knowledge, learners need to be given ample opportunities to notice the target words and be able to use them for meaning-focused purposes.

Regarding the learners' English medium of interest, reading of books seemed to contribute most to the learners' vocabulary size in our study. Teachers within grammar-translation based classrooms may not find the leisure to incorporate extensive reading, but the results of our study attest to how reading should become a component of the vocabulary acquisition process. Concerning the relationship between L2 reading and vocabulary learning, Day and Bramford (1988) have documented evidence to show that reliance on extensive reading programs on large amounts of text with assumed multiple encounters with vocabulary items is seen as a basis for incidental vocabulary, through which words can become available for automatic recognition. In the same vein, Hulstijn (1992) notes how vocabulary intake can be more effective when readers read a text for comprehension of its content, and also when unknown words are inferred by the learners themselves than if the meaning of the word has been given to them. Zahar, Cobb, and Spada (2001) have further found that while L2 learners learn a modest number of words incidentally from reading, they found that frequency of occurrence is a more important factor than contextual support in learning new vocabulary. Researchers and practitioners have also mentioned how lexical knowledge can be expanded through pleasure reading (Beglar, Hunt, & Kite, 2011; Krashen, 2004). In comparison to what the research is telling us, however, we point out that chances for pleasure or extensive reading, through

which incidental vocabulary learning can occur, is neglected in Korean classrooms. We propose teachers to raise learners' awareness on the benefits of pleasure or extensive reading so that these activities can be extended at home, if not feasible in classrooms, for long-term vocabulary retention. We hope to let learners experience the "lost in the book" feeling that native speaker readers get when they cannot put a book down.

Last but not least, we realize in the present study that we were only able to investigate a limited number of vocabulary learning strategies. Further research will need to be conducted, for instance, via other types of learning strategies, or learners' everyday literacy activities with regard to vocabulary acquisition, which we believe will become the basis to second language learning.

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