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I. Introduction

Vocabulary acquisition has for years been neglected in second language acquisition (SLA) research. Not until the mid 1990s has it attracted much attention, but since then research in learning and teaching vocabulary has grown rapidly (e.g., Nation, 1990, 2001; Coady & Huckin, 1997; Schmitt, 2000). However, a misunderstanding of the importance of vocabulary and how it should be taught and learned has persisted. These "misbeliefs" have been addressed in Folse (2004). Folse identifies eight false beliefs that he considers to be widely held concerning vocabulary in the teaching and learning of a foreign language and supports his views with research findings.

To ascertain how widely held these eight false beliefs are in Korea, a survey of university both students and university English instructors was conducted. University students were also questioned on the methods they most commonly use in learning vocabulary, and instructors were queried on the methods they most often advise their students to use in vocabulary study.

II. Student Beliefs on Vocabulary Learning

A. Method

1. Participants

This first part of the study consisted of 164 university students enrolled in English skills courses of various kinds at a university in Gwangju. The study group included freshmen through seniors, most of whom were English Language, English Language and Literature, or English Education majors. The participants were surveyed during the second semester of 2007.

2. Materials and Procedures

All eight of the Folse (2004) myths were selected for the student survey. The eight statements were translated into Korean and the participants instructed to mark each statement as true or false. These eight statements were:

1. In learning another language, vocabulary is not as important as grammar or other areas.

2. Teachers, textbooks and curricula cover second language vocabulary adequately.

3. Using word lists to learn second language vocabulary is unproductive.

4. Presenting new vocabulary in semantic sets (e.g., Colors, Animals, Emotions) facilitates learning.

5. The use of translations to learn new vocabulary should be discouraged.

6. Guessing words from context is an excellent strategy for learning second language vocabulary.

7. The best vocabulary learners make use of one or two really good specific vocabulary learning strategies.

8. The best dictionary for second language learners is a monolingual dictionary.

Also included in the survey was a list of nine possible vocabulary study methods compiled with student input. The survey participants were asked to select the three methods that they most commonly used in studying English vocabulary. Two blanks were provided to write in methods that did not appear in the list. The nine items on this list were:

A. Memorizing words from an English dictionary beginning with the first page.

B. Organizing a list of new words encountered while reading books (or articles).

C. Studying new words together with their pronunciation symbols.

D. Creating sentences using the new vocabulary words.

E. Writing new words repeatedly on notepads until memorized.

F. Repeating new words over and over orally.

G. Carrying a wordlist to study during any available spare time.

H. Studying new words along with their synonyms, antonyms, and homonyms.

I. Associating new words with their related prefixes and suffixes (pre , dis , re , ly⋯

The survey was presented at the beginning of regularly scheduled classes and the participants were given sufficient time to complete the survey, ranging between five and ten minutes. The participants were informed that the survey was for research purposes only.

3. Data Analysis

The surveys were collected, participants' responses to the eight true false belief statements were tabulated, and their percentages were calculated. For the nine study method items, rankings of first, second, and third were added together for each item and the percentage of total responses was calculated.

B. Results and Discussion

Student participant responses (N=164) to the eight vocabulary lated belief

statements in the survey are presented in Table 1.

Item	Statement	True (%)	False (%)
1	In learning another language, vocabulary is not as important as grammar or other areas.	13 (7.9)	151 (92.1)
2	Using word lists to learn second language vocabulary is unproductive.	111 **(67.7)**	53 (32.3)
3	Presenting new vocabulary in semantic sets facilitates learning.	39 (23.8)	125 (76.2)
4	The use of translations to learn new vocabulary should be discouraged.	141 **(86.0)**	23 (14.0)
5	Guessing words from context is an excellent strategy for learning second language vocabulary.	88 **(53.7)**	76 (46.3)
6	The best vocabulary learners make use of one or two really good specific vocabulary learning strategies.	152 **(92.7)**	12 (7.3)
7	The best dictionary for second language learners is a monolingual dictionary.	137 **(83.5)**	27 (16.5)
8	Teachers, textbooks, and curricula cover second language vocabulary adequately.	103 **(62.8)**	61 (37.2)

Table 1: Student Responses to Vocabulary-Related True-False Statements

N=164

   The percentage of true responses was over fifty percent for six of the eight belief statements. Participants had "true" response percentages of below fifty percent on only two items (Items 1 and 3). Only 7.9% of the participants thought that vocabulary was not as important as grammar and other language learning areas (Item 1), while 23.8% thought that presenting new vocabulary in semantic sets facilitates learning. Though teachers may have thought differently in recent decades, students have consistently complained of the lack of vocabulary as being the main reason for their lack of oral proficiency.

   Participants' responses were "true" for 53.7 92.7 percent of each of the remaining six belief statements. They will be presented in order of percentage of "true" responses. Over half of the respondents (53.7%) thought that guessing words from context is an excellent strategy for learning second language vocabulary (Item 5). This is surprising considering that so many university students reach for the their dictionary as soon as they encounter a new word in writing or aurally. Nearly two thirds of the respondents (62.8%) believed that teachers, textbooks, and curricula cover second language vocabulary adequately (Item 8). This is not surprising since teachers in Korea have long been revered and textbooks have been thought of as being bibles of truth. Slightly more than two thirds of the respondents (67.7%) thought that using w   lists to learn second language vocabulary is unproductive (Item 2). It is surprising that this

percentage is so high considering that this is the method that most secondary school students seem to use most often in learning vocabulary for their English tests.

Of the responses to Item 7, the best dictionary for second language learners is a monolingual dictionary, over three fourths were "true." This response is quite surprising, considering that among those students who use a dictionary in class, almost all of them use an English Korean dictionary almost all of the time. Almost seven eighths of the respondents (86.0%) thought that the us translations to learn new vocabulary should be discouraged (Item 4). The statement that the highest percentage of the respondents thought was true was Item 6, the best vocabulary learners make use of one or two really good specific vocabulary learning strategies (92.7%). Students routinely search for "the" best way to learn English, learn grammar, to speak well, to improve their listening proficiency, etc. Of particular interest is that for three of the top four items for which the respondents answered "true," the method that they appear to use most often is actually opposite that which they indicate is a very good or the best method to use in their responses. This would seem to indicate that they to not think that the methods that they are using are the most effective methods available.

The participants' responses to the vocabulary learning methods that they most prefer appear in Table 2.

Method	1st Preference	2nd Preference	3rd Preference	Total	Percentage
A	1	0	1	2	00.4
B	44	25	36	105	21.3
C	17	17	14	48	09.8
D	10	22	16	48	09.8
E	22	18	20	60	12.2
F	44	43	26	113	23.0
G	10	12	16	38	07.7
H	7	17	23	47	09.6
I	9	9	11	29	05.9
Other	0	1	1	2	00.4
Total	164	164	164	492	—

Table 2. Student Preferences for Vocabulary Learning Methods.

N=164

The method of learning vocabulary most often selected as the participants first, second, or third preference was Method F, repeating new words over and over

orally (23.0%). This was followed by Method B, organizing a list of new words encountered while reading books or articles (21.3%), and Method E, writing new words repeatedly on notepads until memorized (12.2%). It is questionable as to whether respondents actually repeat new words "orally" (Method F), but it is common to see students memorizing written lists of words by writing them repeatedly and possibly mouthing their pronunciations or repeating their pronunciations in their heads.

At just under ten percent were Method C, studying new words together with their pronunciation symbols (9.8%), Method D, creating sentences using the new vocabulary words (9.8%), and Method H, studying new words along with their synonyms, antonyms, and homonyms (9.6%). When students look up a new word in a dictionary, they tend to try to remember everything appearing in the entry for that word, including all the different, unrelated meanings that are listed.

The least commonly selected methods were Method G, carrying a wordlist to study during any available spare time (7.75); Method I, associating new words with their related prefixes and suffixes (5.9%); and Method A, memorizing words from an English dictionary beginning with the first page (0.4%). Also at 0.4% is "Other," consisting of two separate methods each recorded only once. That Method G received such a low preference percentage is somewhat surprising, as it is common to see students studying from wordlists, many being self created wordlists. The included condition, "during any available spare time," may have caused respondents to not select it more often, thinking that they don't study their wordlists as often as they could.

III. Instructor Beliefs on Vocabulary Teaching and Learning

A. Method

1. Participants

The second part of this study consisted of 34 participants who returned responses to a survey. The participants were all native English speaking instructors at tertiary educational institutions in Korea and members of various Korean ELT associations. They were surveyed during the second semester of 2007.

2. Materials and Procedures

The survey consisted of the same Folse myths used in the university student survey described above. These eight statements were presented in English, and the participants were instructed to mark each statement as true or false. The

survey also asked the participants to describe the three study methods they suggest most often, second most often, and the third most often to their English students. The surveys were emailed as file attachments to the participants, and the participants' responses were emailed back to the author.

3. Data Analysis

The surveys the were returned within 72 hours of being sent were used in this study, the participants' responses to the eight true false belief statements were tabulated, and the percentages of "true" responses were calculated. The suggestions that instructors made on vocabulary to their students were also tabulated according to most, second most, and third most frequently made.

B. Results and Discussion

Instructor participant responses (N=36) to the eight vocabulary   ted belief statements in the survey are presented in Table 3.

Item	Statement	% True	% False
1	In learning another language, vocabulary is not as important as grammar or other areas.	11.1	88.9
2	Using word lists to learn second language vocabulary is unproductive.	52.9	47.1
3	Presenting new vocabulary in semantic sets facilitates learning.	88.2	11.8
4	The use of translations to learn new vocabulary should be discouraged.	22.2	77.8
5	Guessing words from context is an excellent strategy for learning second language vocabulary.	83.3	16.7
6	The best vocabulary learners make use of one or two really good specific vocabulary learning strategies.	55.6	44.4
7	The best dictionary for second language learners is a monolingual dictionary.	35.3	64.7
8	Teachers, textbooks, and curricula cover second language vocabulary adequately.	29.4	70.6

Table 3: Instructor Responses to Vocabulary-Related True-False Statements
N=36

For four of the belief statements, the participants answered "true" less than forty percent of the time; for the other four statements, they answered "true" over fifty percent of the time. The lowest percentage of true responses (11.1%) was received by Item 1, in learning another language, vocabulary is not as important as grammar or other areas. This was followed by Item 4, the use of translations to learn new vocabulary should be discouraged, with 22.2% "true" responses. Third was Item 8, teachers, textbooks, and curricula cover second language vocabulary adequately (29.4%). Item 7, the best dictionary for second language learners is a monolingual dictionary, received the fifth highest percentage of "true" responses.

Slightly more than half of the respondents (52.9%) believed that Item 2, using

word lists to learn second language vocabulary is unproductive, was true. Slightly more (55.6%) marked Item 6, the best vocabulary learners make use of one or two really good specific vocabulary learning strategies, as true. Item 5, guessing words from context is an excellent strategy for learning second language vocabulary, was marked true by 83.3 % of the respondents, while Item 3 was considered to be true by a high 88.2% of the respondents. Over one third of the respondents chose "true" for five of the eight items (Items 2, 3, 5, 6, 7). If the correct response to each of the eight items is "false," it seems that the participants exhibit a high degree of misunderstanding toward vocabulary learning and teaching.

The five most frequently suggested study methods described on the survey by the participating instructors appear in Table 4.

Frequency			Total Picks	Suggested Vocabulary Study Method
1st	2nd	3rd		
12	2	4	18	Associate new words with context to discover meaning.
2	4	6	12	Do extensive reading.
4	3	1	8	Use wordlists or flashcards to learn new words.
4	2	2	8	Use new words as frequently as possible.
3	1	4	8	Keep a vocabulary notebook.

Table 4. Most Frequently Instructor-Suggested Vocabulary Study Methods

The most frequently suggested vocabulary method, and by far the study method most frequently suggested as being the best is associating new words with their context to discover their meaning. It should be remembered, however, that this is among Folse's eight vocabulary myths. The remainder of the top five most frequently suggested study methods were: 2nd) do extensive reading, (3rd) use wordlists or flashcards to learn new words, (4th) use new words as frequently as possible, and (5th) keep a vocabulary notebook.

IV. Folse's Vocabulary Myths: Debunking and Demarcating

In this section, the eight vocabulary myths described in Folse (2004) will be discussed, a major piece of research offered by Folse in debunking the myth will be presented, as will his suggestions for positively dealing with the matter.

A. Myth: In learning another language, vocabulary is not as important as grammar or other areas.

Most second language learners are painfully aware of their lack of vocabulary to easily express what they want to say or write. Green and Meara (1995) and Meara (1980) show that adult learners view the acquisition of vocabulary as their biggest

problem. To alleviate students' vocabulary problems, instructors need to (a) understand exactly how much of their students' ability to understand them is impacted by vocabulary issues; (b) become more aware of the problem of vocabulary for their students; (c) choose materials that emphasize vocabulary; and (d) include vocabulary on quizzes and tests.

B. Myth: Using word lists to learn second language vocabulary is unproductive.

Work by Clipperton (1994) and Laufer and Shmueli (1997) suggest that when new words are first presented, it is best to present them out of context. Accordingly, the instructor (a) should not hesitate to use vocabulary lists, (b) should not, however, rely too heavily on word list, and (c) should include students' likes and dislikes as well as their classroom expectations in their lessons.

C. Myth: Presenting new vocabulary in semantic sets facilitates learning.

Tinkham (1993) shows that ESL learners were able to learn semantically unrelated vocabulary items more quickly than they could learn semantically related ones. From this finding, it follows that instructors (a) should not present words initially in semantic sets, (b) should use thematic presentations of new words when possible, (c) should teach the most frequent words first, and then cover other items within that semantic set, and (d) use exercises and activities that include semantic set members for reviewing items, not for initial learning.

D. Myth: The use of translations to learn new vocabulary should be discouraged.

The research of Nation (1982) concludes that for many learners the learning of vocabulary is faster if the meaning of the word being taught is first given through a native language translation. Accordingly, instructors (a) should not stop a student who is jotting down a translation of a new English word, (b) should let a more knowledgeable student help another student in their shared mother tongue, and (c) should learn as much of their students' native language as possible.

E. Myth: Guessing words from context is an excellent strategy for learning second language vocabulary.

Experimental studies conducted by Margosein, Pascarella, and Pfaum (1982) revealed that inferring meanings from context is less effective than more intensive or explicit forms of instruction. Instructors should, therefore, (a) teach the use of context clues as a good reading strategy, but recognize that learners cannot rely on this compensatory strategy for vocabulary growth, (b) choose context clues,

exercises, and activities that match the proficiency level of their students, (c) do exercises that ask students to guess word meanings from context in class so that the instructor can give immediate feedback, or have students do these exercises on a computer based program that gives immediate feedback, and (d) duct reading as a conduit for vocabulary growth, especially when done with vocabulary exercises.

F. Myth: The best vocabulary learners make use of one or two really good specific vocabulary learning strategies.

In an Ahmed (1989) survey of 300 Sudanese EFL learners, it was found that the good learners used vocabulary learning strategies more than poor learners did. Instructors should realize (a) that there is no one strategy or training that is better than another, that (b) some students are totally ignorant of strategy use; others use only a few strategies, and instructors should (c) teach learners how to keep a vocabulary notebook, and keep it in such a way that it actually promotes student retrieval practice.

G. Myth: The best dictionary for second language learners is a monolingual dictionary.

There is little research available on this subject, but there is no empirical evidence showing that bilingual dictionaries do anything but aid comprehension and contribute to vocabulary acquisition (Folse, 2004). Therefore, instructors (a) should continue to teach context clues, understanding the critical limitations of context clues, but not teach context clues in lieu of explicit teaching of vocabulary, (b) should be aware that the real value of teaching context clues may not necessarily be in the learning of using context clues per se, but rather in better overall English proficiency, (c) realizing that relatively few words are learned through incidental acquisition, should draw learners' attention to words to enhance vocabulary retention, (d) should stop emphasizing that the goal of English learners is to move toward the use of a monolingual dictionary as quickly as possible, and (e) should teach students how to deal with polysemous words.

H. Myth: Teachers, textbooks, and curricula cover second language vocabulary adequately.

Folse (2004) discusses how vocabulary is not dealt with sufficiently in textbooks and curricula. He suggests that the instructor should (a) do something with vocabulary in every lesson taught, (b) test vocabulary once it is taught, (c) do vocabulary practice, keeping in mind that more important than the form of the exercise is the number of "forced retrievals" of a word or its meaning, and (d)

make use of the vocabulary software as well as vocabulary resources on the Internet.

V. Conclusions

The surveys in this study reveal that English learning university students at one Korean university and native English speaking instructors teaching at the university level throughout Korea, both have considerable misconceptions about the learning and teaching of vocabulary for second language acquisition. It can be assumed that similar results could be obtained for university students throughout Korea and for non native speaking instructors throughout Korea. To rei e these misconceptions, teaching institutions should initiate in house in service training programs that address these misconceptions concerning vocabulary, and Office of Education in service training programs for primary and secondary school teachers should also address these misconceptions concerning vocabulary, so that they can pass on informed information to their students, thereby making the teaching and learning of English vocabulary a much more effective process.

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Teaching and learning polysemes and homonyms:
A case study with Korean university students

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This paper reports on the results of a case study conducted to assess the value of teaching strategies for encountering polysemes, particularly for known words using unknown meanings. Imagine, for instance, a learner familiar with only the 'power cell' meaning of battery encountering any one of the following English sentences:

- Next week, all students must complete a battery of tests.
- He was arrested for assault and battery.
- The general decided to capture to battery.
- Battery farming is strongly discouraged. (British English)
- The battery of the rain on the window was her only companion.
- John performs in the battery section in the orchestra.

Would the student be able to understand any of these sentences? Would she attempt to apply the known meaning of 'power cell'? If so, would she recognise the result as nonsense and discard it? If she did, would she be able to trace the source of confusion to that one word and figure that there must be another meaning? And if she does, is the new meaning then learnt? Does it get 'tacked on' to the known meaning?

To address these questions, a case study was performed with three student volunteers. The students were second year English Education majors at Jeonju University. All three were enrolled in an advanced English conversation class. All Jeonju Unversity students are required to take conversation for their first two years, but there is no test to separate advanced students from others, meaning that these students have opted for the more challenging class. All three are female are fairly fluent in English; noticeable gaps in their production are rare and they seldom have trouble understanding me. Two are in my class while the third is in the same class with another teacher. Their major prepares them to be middle school teachers, specialising in English.

Our weekly sessions began with a diagnostic test which presented them with

sixteen test items, twelve of which are sentences containing either a homonym or a polyseme (in which it was presumed that the students would know the word but not the meaning employed in the sentence) while the other four are nonsense sentences (using a fake polyseme/homonym, but still a known word). For each test item, there were four options in which they indicate if they think the sentence is complete nonsense, if they think it might be well-formed but can't quite understand it, if they think they understand it (and provide a translation in Korean) or they are sure they understand it (and again provide a translation). Upon completion, they had felt nine sentences were untranslatable and were told that only four were nonsense and were asked to mark the four of the nine that they felt the most sure must be distractors. No translation was requested for these.

The students knew that body parts are often polysemous (foot of the mountain, head of the family, heart of the matter, leg of the journey, eye of the storm, as well as to hand in, to foot the bill, to be unable to stomach something, to toe the line to name only a few), so it's not surprising that anatomy-related polysemes were recognised as such, even though the students did not understand the meaning; thus temple and corn (the latter not, strictly speaking, a body part, but the sentence implies it is attached to the body). Further, two sentences began with 'The soldier'one entailing him fighting his way to the battery, the other seeing him load a new magazine into his gunthus cluing the students into specialised vocabulary. These were all reassigned from nonsense to possibly legitimate.

The learners' first language, Korean, may influence their decisions. It was clear from their discussion that the students were unfamiliar with the metaphoric reading of *flavour*, seen in 'This paragraph should give you the flavour of the book.' The corresponding Korean word, however, is similarly polysemous for both the sense of taste and for vague characteristics (of books for example). Likewise, the adjective *loud* for describing neck ties has the same two meanings in Korean as it does in English.

When discussing their choices later, they mentioned not really considering that the use of *culture* employed on the test (relating to cell culture) would be different than the sense they knew because the word was overly familiar to them. They encounter it daily in their classroom and reading assignments without ever coming across a clue that there was another meaning.

Our next session discussed the concepts of relatedness (polysemy) and unrelatedness (homonym) as well as monosemy. These were understood, and the

students could generally come up with examples of their own after hearing mine. They were then given a list of polysemes and homonyms (with no context) and were asked to put them in the appropriate column. At times, they had trouble thinking of more than one meaning; in these cases (such as with *keyboard* where they could only recall the computer sense and not the musical one), I gave them a little nudge until they got the other sense. In all such instances, they knew both meanings but simply couldn't get passed the priming effect of the first meaning that occurred to them, a situation that happens with native speakers as well.

Perhaps the most significant, if hardly surprising, finding here was their tendency not to notice abstract relations between senses. Instances like *chest*('upper part of torso' and 'box for safekeeping') where both kinds store important things, *letter* ('missive' and 'writing character') where one is needed to compose the other, and *odd* ('uneven (number)' and 'unusual'the 'occasional' sense was not known to them) were considered completely unrelated although, afterwards, we discussed how there is a vague, underlying connection between these senses.

Our following session dealt with kinds of relatedness, especially metaphoric and metonymic. Metaphor was easily understood. I did not use the term metonym but, instead, part-for-whole. The terms metaphor and metonym are too similar and would likely cause confusion. They understood the concept of part-for-whole (using examples like *dish* meaning 'food') although it was not something they had been taught before.

Our session following this dealt with polysemes (again, known words with unknown meanings) in the larger context of the paragraph. Some of the words thrown into a parapgraph about Billie Holiday included *entertain (an idea), delivery* meaning (in this context) 'singing,' *pregnant (with irony), cultivate (a friendship)* and *yellow* meaning 'cowardly.' None of these, they told me later, were known beforehand, but only one, *yellow*, completely stumped them. Others, such as *entertain*, could be interpreted though the paraphrases they provided were contextually-boundthat is, they understood *She entertained the idea of recording*...as 'She thought about recording....,' but when I asked what would 'entertain the question' mean, they could not answer.

Finally, we looked at polysemes that cross POS-boundaries, for example nouns that become verbs but with a slight change or focusing of meaning, such *to corner the market, he cornered her, to doctor a photograph, to nurse a drink, to pocket the*

jewellery, to finger the suspect, to cup one's hands but also other parts-of-speech such as *sound judgements, minute analysis*. As in the previous session, the paraphrases they provided (when they were reasonably close to the intended meaning) demonstrated an understanding of the word in the specific context only and did not display a command of the new meaning's range.

Conclusion

From this case study data, it is evident that one encounter with a word form that is already known but with the meaning that is not does not entail an acquisition of the new sense. When encountering such words in context, learners are not likely to spend much time on them unless these words cause communication to break down, and this isn't always the case. The meaning of certain words can be unknown yet the sentence could still be intelligible. Further, the students in this case study are aware that polysemy is the topic of the investigation and so suspect it readily; other students would not be so actively embraced for the possibility of additional meanings.

In the end, the students were more aware of possible relationships between senses, that a word they encounter might be related to a sense they already know, but they ultimately did not seem to be better at guessing the new meaning. What our work did, however, accomplish, is that they were much more accepting of the possibility that an unknown meaning might be present, where in the past they might have forced the reading of the known meaning. This is not insignificant. They are now more ready to reach for a dictionary even when they know all the words. They are now able to understand why a sentence in which every word is known may still be incomprehensible or vague, and they know how to resolve the confusion, albeit by consulting an external authority.

It is worth remembering that these students are very advanced and understood the concepts so readily that it's likely these could be introduced much earlier. When is the best time for learners to be taught about polysemy and homonymy remains to be answered.

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