Vocabulary Acquisition according to Task Types*

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I. Introduction

Learning vocabulary is acknowledged as the basis of language acquisition (David, 2008; Krashen, 1989; Nation, 2001; Stuehr, 2008) and Krashen (1989) claims that lack of vocabulary knowledge can contribute to difficulties in L2 learning. As vocabulary acquisition can be key to success in English learning, numerous prior studies (Choi & Park, 2008; Kim & Lee, 2008; Lee, 2008; Pigada & Schmitt, 2006) have tried to identify effective methods for vocabulary memorization and to suggest how to facilitate vocabulary acquisition. Among these methods are vocabulary acquisition from extensive reading (Pigada & Schmitt, 2006); using antonym sets in order to promote deeper level processing (Lee, 2008); effective semantic-mapping strategies and personal schema in vocabulary learning (Choi & Park, 2008); effective task-based approach (Kim & Lee, 2008).

Though much of the previous research have advocated the importance of

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vocabulary acquisition, Lee (2008) claims that Korean learners have low self-confidence with respect to vocabulary proficiency regardless of their overall English proficiency. Surprisingly, Korean learners acknowledge that rote memorization is ineffective but adopt the vocabulary memorization anyway since they are not aware of an appropriate alternative. Stehr (2008) reports that the size of low-level EFL learners' receptive vocabulary is strongly correlated with their reading and writing abilities. Therefore, areas adjacent to vocabulary acquisition among Korean learners of English need to be explored more thoroughly in order to foster better learning strategies among students and a better understanding of learning processes among teachers and researchers. The participants in this study memorized vocabulary used in listening, reading, and vocabulary lists. Memorizing words absent context has been proved ineffective in using words productively in writing or speech. Therefore this study explores effective ways to enhance vocabulary acquisition as well as factors that contribute to overall successful vocabulary acquisition.

II. Literature Review

Nation (2001) divided vocabulary knowledge into two categories: receptive knowledge and productive knowledge. Similarly, Laufer (1998) identifies understanding vocabulary (passive vocabulary) as knowledge which can be used in order to understand or read, whereas expressive vocabulary (active vocabulary) is knowledge which can be used productively in speech or writing. Further, Park and Yoon (2009) claim that learning receptive vocabulary is easier than learning productive vocabulary.

Nation (2001) argues that vocabulary acquisition comprises a knowledge of form, meaning and use. A knowledge of form implies a knowledge of pronunciation and spelling. Knowing meaning is knowing concepts and references of the word.