Myths about Teaching and Learning Second Language Vocabulary: What Recent Research Says

Keith S. Folse
University of Central Florida, USA

Introduction

Learning a language entails learning numerous aspects about that language, including its pronunciation, writing system, syntax, pragmatics, rhetorical modes for reading and composition, culture, and spelling, but the most important aspect is vocabulary. Recent second language (L2) research reflects this importance, as seen in the abundance of articles during this last decade. This research has looked at methods of vocabulary instruction (e.g., natural context or direct instruction) (Laufer & Shmueli, 1997; Zimmerman, 1997), learners' vocabulary learning strategies (Gu, 1994; Lessard-Clouston, 1994; Sanaoui, 1995; Nassaji, 2003), the development of L2 learners' vocabularies (Laufer, 1998; Schmitt, 1998; Nesselhauf, 2003), the use of L1 or L2 for initial word presentation (Prince, 1995; Grace, 1998), the effect of different practice activities on learning (Joe, 1995, 1998; Folse, 1999), the number of words L2 learners need to know (Hazenberg & Hulstijn, 1996), and which words students need to know (Coxhead, 2000; Liu, 2003).

The findings of these studies cast doubt on common myths about L2 vocabulary teaching and learning (Folse, 2004b). This paper focuses on the following eight myths: (1) Vocabulary is not as important in learning a foreign language as grammar or other areas. (2) It is not good to use lists of words when learning vocabulary. (3) Vocabulary should be presented in semantic sets. (4) The use of translations is a poor way to learn new vocabulary. (5) Guessing words from context is as productive for foreign language learners as it is for first language learners. (6) The best vocabulary learners make use of only one or two effective specific vocabulary learning strategies. (7) Foreign language learners should use a monolingual dictionary. (8) Vocabulary is sufficiently covered in our curricula and courses. In this article, I will present research findings to reject each of these myths.

Myth 1

Vocabulary is Not as Important in Learning a Foreign Language as Grammar or Other Areas

Comprehensible input helps learners figure out how a language works. If the language that a learner is hearing or reading has many unknown words, then that language is not comprehensible and therefore cannot be input. In other words, without vocabulary, comprehensible input is neither comprehensible nor input. Adult ESL learners are keenly aware of their "vocabulary plight." Learners *need* vocabulary and see acquisition of vocabulary as their greatest challenge (Green & Meara, 1995; Meara, 1980).

Two of the most important skills for academic-bound ESL students are reading and writing. The relationship between L2 vocabulary knowledge and L2 reading ability is clear (Haynes, 1993; James, 1996). Huckin & Bloch (1993) point out, "Research has shown that second-language readers rely heavily on vocabulary knowledge, and that a lack of vocabulary knowledge is the largest obstacle for second-language readers to overcome" (p. 154). Haynes and Baker (1993) found the main obstacle for L2 readers not to be a lack of reading strategies but rather insufficient vocabulary knowledge in English. Laufer & Sim (1985) list these areas in order of decreasing importance in reading ability in L2: knowledge of vocabulary, subject matter, discourse markers, and syntactic structure. In sum, Laufer and Sim find that vocabulary is most important, syntax least important.

Paralleling its role in L2 reading, a large L2 vocabulary base can have a significant effect on learners' writing skills (Laufer, 1998) and in listening and speaking tasks (Joe, 1995). Though correlation does not imply causality, empirical studies have shown that good L2 readers, writers, speakers, and listeners know much more vocabulary.

For far too long, the emphasis in ESL has mistakenly been on grammar. Learners can express themselves with poor grammar; in fact, much to the chagrin of ESL teachers, they do this quite frequently. However, with poor vocabulary, communication is constrained considerably. You can get by without grammar; you cannot get by without vocabulary.

As a foreign language learner in Latin America, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, and Japan, I managed quite well with limited grammar; however, my worst and (in hindsight) sometimes funniest communication breakdown experiences were when I did not know the appropriate vocabulary. On one occasion, I spent a long and trying hour in a small store in Japan trying to purchase flour without knowing the word for *flour* in Japanese. I couldn't draw it. I couldn't explain it. At one point, I even tried saying "pre-bread," but that just produced more looks of confusion. In the end, I left

the store without the flour. I had mastered beginning level polite forms for "Excuse me, where is the _____?" but I did not know the Japanese word for *flour* to fill in that key blank space. Lack of grammar knowledge can limit conversation; lack of vocabulary knowledge can stop conversation.

Myth 2

It is Not Good to Use Lists of Words When Learning Vocabulary

Using lists may be boring for some learners, but there is no evidence to show that learners do not fare well with lists, nor is there empirical evidence that students without lists fare better than those with lists. In fact, some learners prefer rote learning to communicative methods. This preference could be due to their educational background which relies heavily on rote learning, or it could also be due to individual learner differences. Regardless of the reason, students *can* learn from lists.

Using simple vocabulary lists can yield better vocabulary retention than relying on lists with more information, e.g., example sentences. In a study of Hebrew speakers studying EFL, Laufer and Shmueli (1997) compared four modes of presentation, including lists: (1) words presented in isolation, (2) words in minimal context, i.e., in one meaningful sentence, (3) words in text context, and (4) words in elaborated text context. Results showed that less information was better. Retention scores for word recognition were superior when less information or limited context was given about the word (as in modes 1 and 2) and inferior when more information or extended context was given (as in modes 3 and 4).

In another study on the use of lists in learning L2 vocabulary, Prince (1995) examined the role of learners' L2 proficiency and mode of presentation, i.e., L1 translations or L2 context (in a series of L2 sentences). Prince found that less proficient students were able to recall more items when they had learned the words in the translation condition rather than in the context condition. Therefore, this research showed that some students perform better when they were given only a list of L2 words and their translations.

Just because a list can be effective does not mean that teachers should hand a list to students and ask them to learn the list. The content of the list is the target, and it is up to the teacher to come up with ways to present sections of the list to students in interesting, meaningful ways and then provide relevant oral and written practice activities.

Many good lists exist for different types of learners. Very young learners might benefit from the Dolch list, which is a list of 220 sight words, so called because these high frequency words do not follow the basic rules of English phonics and must therefore be recognized by sight, not by sounding them out. The list was prepared in

1936 but is still relevant; it includes mostly function words and is especially useful for kindergarten to middle elementary level students.

Two promising lists for adult learners are the University Word List (UWL) and the Academic Word List (AWL). Published in 1984, the UWL consists of 808 words that occur frequently in academic text materials. The AWL, published in 1998, consists of 570 word families (e.g., *concentrate* also includes *concentrated*, *concentrates*, *concentrating*, and *concentration*) that occur in a wide variety of types of academic text materials. (Both lists can be obtained on the Internet through a simple search.)

Myth 3

Vocabulary Should be Presented in Semantic Sets

Research does not tell us what the best way to organize new vocabulary is, but it certainly speaks to what a bad way is: The commonly used organization of words into semantic groups is not a good technique. In fact, it actually confuses learners and can hinder vocabulary retention. Organization by semantic sets continues, however, because it is much easier for textbook writers and teachers to present vocabulary in semantic sets such as family members, animals, or days of the week than design creative vignettes to accommodate all of the words in a vocabulary list. The bottom line, though, is that research shows that learners remember vocabulary more easily when the vocabulary is presented in thematic sets such as a trip to the beach or my cousin's birthday party.

Here is a simple example of how words from the semantic sets of family members, animals, and days of the week could be distributed into the thematic set of a trip to the beach: *Last Saturday I went to the beach with my brother and cousin. My brother wanted to take his pet bird with us, but my cousin and I talked him out of such a crazy idea. My cousin called his parents to make sure it was all right for him to go with us. Of course they said yes. We had a great time at the beach. We saw lots of people and lots of fish. When we got home Saturday night, we talked about going to the beach again on Sunday. We we really tired, so we decided to get up late on Sunday morning.*

In this very brief passage, which would have follow-up questions that would also promote frequency of vocabulary retrieval for the learners, two days of the week are mentioned (*Saturday*, *Sunday*), two animals are mentioned (*cat*, *fish*), and three family members are mentioned (*brother*, *cousin*, *parents*). This presentation may also be superior because the items presented are higher frequency than other semantic set members (Saturday and Sunday are more frequent than Wednesday and Thursday) and because they are in frequent collocations (*Saturday and Sunday*, *Saturday night*, *Sunday morning*).

The research findings here are quite clear. Tinkham (1993) found that learners had more difficulty learning new words presented to them in semantic clusters than they did learning semantically unrelated words. In a replication using only Japanese learners, Waring (1997) found that learners needed about 50% more time to learn related word pairs than unrelated pairs. Tinkham (1997) found that semantic grouping actually had a negative effect on vocabulary learning while thematic clustering facilitated learning. Similarly, Olsen (1999) found that Norwegian EFL learners were more easily confused when difficult pairs such as *sea* and *see* or *want* and *won't* were presented at the same time.

Myth 4

The Use of Translations is a Poor Way to Learn New Vocabulary

Let me be clear: I am not advocating a return to the translation method. Without a doubt, teachers need to encourage the use of the target language in the classroom for all the obvious reasons. However, when learners first encounter a new word, it is normal for them to translate the word in their head or in their notebook.

The myth is that students must learn new English words in English, as if establishing a mental link with the L1 translation were somehow harmful. Research shows that translation is not only what learners prefer but also more effective than English glosses. Numerous empirical studies have shown the value of L1 translations in vocabulary-learning activities (Hulstijn, 1992; Knight, 1994; Prince, 1995; Chun & Plass, 1996; Laufer & Shmueli, 1997; Grace, 1998; Laufer & Hulstijn, 1998).

Vocabulary expert Paul Nation (1982) concludes that learning vocabulary is faster for many learners if the meaning of the word is given through an L1 translation first. Hulstijn, Hollander, and Greidanus (1996) found that marginal gloss translations of French vocabulary resulted in better vocabulary learning. In a study of Dutch university students of Italian, Lotto and de Groot (1998) found that word retention scores were significantly higher for the students who worked with translations than for those who had pictures. In a study of English speakers learning French, Grace (1998) found that translation is a viable if not preferable option for many L2 learners at the beginning level. Her results showed that students who had access to a glossary in their L1 were more successful at retaining new vocabulary, probably because they had the opportunity to confirm the correct meanings. In an EFL study, Laufer and Shmueli (1997) found that words glossed in the L1 were always retained better than words glossed in English regardless of presentation mode. Finally, Prince (1995) found that less proficient students were able to recall more items when they had learned the words in the translation condition rather than in the context condition. Thus, this research

showed that some students perform better when they were given only a list of L2 words and their translations.

Research is clear: Translations are not bad; translations are in fact a helpful tool in learning new foreign language vocabulary. Our focus now should be on questions such as when (proficiency level) translations are most effective, whether translations work better with certain kinds of vocabulary (e.g., verbs or idioms), and whether translations work better at the initial presentation stage or subsequent review stages.

Myth 5

Guessing Words From Context is as Productive For Foreign Language Learners as it is For First Language Learners

For a native speaker, there may be only one unknown word in a passage, and all of the other words present the native speaker with a context consisting of 100% known words. The L2 learner with the same reading passage, on the other hand, most likely faces *multiple* unknown words that serve as nonclues or misleading clues (Folse, 2002; Folse, 2004b). In spite of their lexical knowledge, native English speakers are not very successful at guessing word meanings from real contexts because helpful context clues are rare in real language excerpts (Schatz & Baldwin, 1986). Therefore, it is unclear why we expect L2 learners, who lack the linguistic luxuries possessed by native speakers, to be successful at this when native speakers are in fact not so good at it.

Of all the myths, perhaps this one causes the most debate. This myth, like many of the others, has its root in the false assumption that learning a second language is a very similar process to learning our first language. These two processes are in fact quite different. In our L1, we did not explicitly learn most of our vocabulary; we acquired our vocabulary through seeing and hearing the words numerous times in many contexts. In contrast, an L2 learner does not have the luxury of encountering a word numerous times. Most adult learners have a very short time to achieve a certain degree of fluency in the L2. They do not have the luxury of the time needed to do the extensive amount of reading necessary to meet academic vocabulary multiple times in natural language.

At the height of the emphasis on communication and "natural approach" techniques, instruction that included language components such as grammar, spelling, and vocabulary and teacher actions such as error correction was greatly frowned upon. Vocabulary was not explicitly or systematically taught; it was assumed that students would automatically acquire whatever material—including vocabulary—that was made available by the comprehensible input. Students (and teachers in training) were encouraged not to focus on unknown words but rather to focus on understanding the gist.

Ironically, a learner must have a large vocabulary to be able to guess the meaning of unknown words from surrounding context clues successfully. This puts lower proficiency students or students with less vocabulary at a distinct disadvantage. In research on the effect of type of written practice exercise (Folse, 1999), I found that learners who know more words are able to use those known words to learn even more words from context. Stanovich (1986) and James (1996) discuss this so-called "Matthew effect," the phenomenon by which the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. (The parable from which this is taken appears in Matthew 25:14-30, specifically verse 29.)

In a seminal study, Hulstijn (1992) concludes that using natural context to guess word meanings is a very complex and error-prone process for L2 learners. He found that while learners are more likely to remember the form and meaning of a word when they have inferred its meaning by themselves than when the meaning has been given to them, these same learners are more likely to infer an *incorrect* meaning of an unknown L2 word in an L2 text when no cue has been given to its meaning.

What ESL students need is *not* just exposure to reading materials; they need reading with explicit, planned vocabulary work. In a study of adult intermediate ESL students in a university (n = 38), Wesche and Paribakht (1994) compared a reading-only group with a reading-plus-treatment (i.e, with follow-up written practice exercises) group. While the reading-only group did have substantial gains in word knowledge, the gains were significantly larger in the reading-plus-treatment group and exhibited a greater depth of knowledge of the target words.

Myth 6

The Best Vocabulary Learners Make use of Only One or Two Effective Specific Vocabulary Learning Strategies

The existence of one specific "magical" strategy for learning foreign language vocabulary is a myth. The truth is that there are numerous good vocabulary learning strategies, and there are bad ones, too. What research shows is that good learners use a wide variety of vocabulary learning strategies; however, the good students have developed an individualized set of strategies that works best for their needs and personalities.

In a qualitative study of French-as-a-second-language learners in British Colombia, Sanaoui (1995) found that learners' proficiency level and type of instruction did not impact their vocabulary learning; what mattered was the individual learner's approach toward overall vocabulary learning: structured or unstructured. The good learners had a specific plan or strategy for learning English, including vocabulary, while the weaker students did not. In other words, it does not seem to

matter so much what students do with new vocabulary *provided that they do something and that they do this consistently.*

This finding is corroborated in studies of a wide array of learners, including Sudanese EFL learners (Ahmed, 1989), Canadian ESL as well as EFL learners (Kojic-Sabo & Lightbown, 1999), and Hong Kong EFL learners (Fan, 2003). Schmitt and Schmitt (1993) conducted a large-scale study of Japanese EFL learners' strategies. This line of research is practical because teachers can easily train learners to be better vocabulary learners.

In sum, two points should be stressed. First, no vocabulary learning strategy is a substitute for knowing vocabulary. Second, no single strategy is better than another. The most successful learners not only have more strategies at their command but also use them more extensively and more consistently.

Myth 7

Foreign Language Learners Should Use a Monolingual Dictionary.

Possibly due to our field's general aversion to translation, bilingual dictionaries have been frowned upon. ESL teachers often insist their students use an English-English dictionary as soon as possible. Many teachers discourage the use of dictionaries altogether, advising learners to guess at word meaning from context and to use dictionaries—bilingual or monolingual—as a last resort (Knight, 1994). In a survey of 75 teachers' preferences for student dictionaries (Folse, 2001), 37% of teacher respondents favor English-English dictionaries, 32% favor use of context clues, and only 5% allow students to use bilingual dictionaries. Clearly, teachers look down on bilingual dictionaries. Textbooks often reflect this, too. Haynes (1993) notes that ESL reading textbooks tend to promote guessing the meaning of an unknown word from the context over looking up the word in a dictionary. In addition, some textbooks in her survey went so far as to state that dictionary work should be banned from the classroom.

In contrast to teacher preferences and textbook recommendations, research shows that learners who use a dictionary learn more vocabulary than those who rely on guessing from context and that learners who use a bilingual dictionary actually remember vocabulary better than those using a monolingual dictionary. In a study of 293 Japanese EFL students, Luppescu and Day (1993) found that the use of a bilingual dictionary can increase vocabulary learning. The researchers also note that though teachers have definite views on what kind of dictionaries should be used during reading, these views are not based on any empirical evidence. In a study of 105 learners of Spanish, Knight (1994) found that the use of a bilingual dictionary during a reading activity resulted in the learning of more words along with higher reading comprehension scores than relying on guessing from context clues.

Besides the monolingual-bilingual dichotomy, a third dictionary option now exists, especially in EFL markets, namely bilingualized dictionaries. This kind of dictionary is actually a semibilingual dictionary. The L2 entry is followed by an L2 definition, an L1 translation, and an L2 example sentence or phrase. Thus, a bilingualized dictionary provides what a good monolingual dictionary provides, that is, not only a definition but also a collocation, in addition to a translation. Research studies (Laufer & Hadar, 1997; Laufer & Kimmel, 1997) have shown positive results for this type of dictionary.

In sum, there is no research to support the myth that a bilingual dictionary is bad or that a monolingual dictionary is inherently better for ultimate word retention. ESL learners should use the type of dictionary that they feel most comfortable with when looking up the meaning of an unknown English word.

Myth 8

Vocabulary is Sufficiently Covered Enough in Our Curricula and Courses

A perusal of any ESL textbook will quickly reveal that chapters and therefore books are arranged by grammar points. Explicit attention to vocabulary is rare. There may be a grammar box, a pairwork activity, and a pronunciation activity as well as a few questions about the vocabulary in a reading passage, but specific instruction in vocabulary is scant. For instance, when vocabulary lists do exist, they are relegated to the back of the chapter.

So what is currently happening in ESL programs for adult learners? In Folse (2004a), I observed 50 hours of classes in an intensive academic ESL program. The purpose of this investigation was to get a clear picture of the extent of vocabulary instruction in the school's curriculum. Three findings emerged from this study. First, there was no overall plan of vocabulary instruction in the curriculum. Whereas grammar had been taken into account across all levels, words were taught as needed. Many daily class activities did not stretch students' language, and as a result, very little new vocabulary was introduced. Only a few teachers wrote new vocabulary on the board, and most teachers did very little with this vocabulary. Furthermore, there was almost no follow-up practice of the new vocabulary, i.e., little to no recycling. Second, the most common student language question to arise in *all* five daily classes—grammar, reading, writing, speaking, and TOEFL—was vocabulary. Interestingly, even in the grammar class, the most frequently asked language question was not about grammar but rather about vocabulary in the lesson. This finding is especially important because ESL grammar textbooks are almost always written so that the vocabulary is never problematic and that the grammar will stand out more and therefore be easier to learn.

Third, the class where vocabulary was covered most depended on the *instructor*, not the class subject.

Vocabulary is not systematically covered in most curricula. For this reason, ESL learners—even after completing an English course successfully—say in exit surveys that they need much more vocabulary practice and instruction (Flaitz, 1998; Henrichsen in James, 1996; Tan in James, 1996; James, 1996).

Conclusion

Perhaps the recent interest in second language vocabulary research will also mean a rethinking of the way we approach the teaching of vocabulary—including the necessity to teach vocabulary extensively—to our students. For too long, second language teaching has been dominated by an emphasis on communication, but accurate communication depends largely on an extensive knowledge of vocabulary. A good curriculum is based on student needs, and vocabulary knowledge is high on student priority lists. It is time to listen not only to the data from these studies but also to our students who are all too aware of their lack of L2 vocabulary knowledge.

References

Ahmed, M. O. (1989). Vocabulary learning strategies. In P. Meara (Ed.), *Beyond Words*. London: Centre for International Language Teaching and Research (CILT).

Chun, D., & Plass, J. (1996). Effects of multimedia annotations on vocabulary acquisition. *The Modern Language Journal, 80*, 183-199.

Coxhead, A. (2000). A new academic word list. *TESOL Quarterly, 34*, 213-239.

Fan, M. (2003). Frequency of use, perceived usefulness, and the actual usefulness of second language vocabulary strategies: A study of Hong Kong learners. *Modern Language Journal, 87*(2), 222-241.

Flaitz, J. (1998, May). *Exit Survey of the English Language Institute at the University of South Florida.* Unpublished manuscript.

Folse, K. (1999). The effect of type of written practice activity on second language vocabulary retention (Doctoral dissertation, University of South Florida, 1999). *Dissertation Abstracts International, 61*, 115.

Folse, K. (2001). A survey of ESL/EFL teacher preferences regarding student dictionary use. Unpublished manuscript.

Folse, K. (2002). One Japanese ESL learner's use of context clues to complete an assignment. Unpublished manuscript.

Folse, K. (2004a). A case study of vocabulary teaching in two classes in an intensive program at a U.S. university. Unpublished manuscript.

Folse, K. (2004b). *Vocabulary Myths: Applying Second Language Research to Classroom Teaching*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Grace, C. (1998). Retention of word meanings inferred from context and sentence-level translations: Implications for the design of beginning-level CALL software. *The Modern Language Journal, 82*, 533-544.

Green, D., & Meara, P. (1995). Guest editorial. *Computer Assisted Language Learning, 8*(2-3), 97-101.

Gu, Y. (1994, March). *Vocabulary learning strategies of good and poor Chinese EFL learners.* Paper presented at annual meeting of the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), Baltimore, MD.

Haynes, M. (1993). Patterns and perils of guessing in second language reading. In T. Huckin, M. Haynes, & J. Coady (Eds.), *Second Language Reading and Vocabulary Learning* (pp. 46-64). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Haynes, M., & Baker, I. (1993). American and Chinese readers learning from lexical familiarizatiuon in English texts. In T. Huckin, M. Haynes, & J. Coady (Eds.), *Second Language Reading and Vocabulary Acquisition* (pp. 153-178). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Hazenberg, S., & Hulstijn, J. H. (1996). Defining a minimal receptive second-language vocabulary for non-native university students: An empirical investigation. *Applied Linguistics, 17*, 145-163.

Huckin, T., & Bloch, J. (1993). Strategies for inferring word meaning in context: A cognitive model. In T. Huckin, M. Haynes, & J. Coady (Eds.), *Second Language Reading and Vocabulary Acquisition* (pp. 153-178). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Hulstijn, J. (1992). Retention of inferred and given word meanings: Experiments in incidental vocabulary learning. In P. Arnaud & H. Bejoint (Eds.), *Vocabulary and Applied Linguistics* (pp.113-125). London: Macmillan Academic and Professional Limited.

Hulstijn, J., Hollander, M., & Greidanus, T. (1996). Incidental vocabulary learning by advanced foreign language students: The influence of marginal glosses, dictionary use, and reoccurrence of unknown words. *The Modern Language Journal, 80*, 327-339.

James, M. (1996). *Improving second language reading comprehension: A computer-assisted vocabulary development approach.* Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation: Manoa: University of Hawaii.

Joe, A. (1995). Task-based tasks and incidental vocabulary learning: A case study. *Second Language Research, 11*, 159-177.

Joe, A. (1998). What effect do text-based tasks promoting generation have on incidental vocabulary acquisition? *Applied Linguistics, 19*, 357-377.

Knight, S. (1994). Dictionary use while reading: The effects on comprehension and vocabulary acquisition for students of different verbal abilities. *The Modern Language Journal, 78*, 285-299.

Kojic-Sabo, I., & Lightbown, P. (1999). Students' approaches to vocabulary learning and their relationship to success. *Modern Language Journal, 83*, 176-192.

Laufer, B. (1998). The development of passive and active vocabulary in a second language: Same or different? *Applied Linguistics, 19*(2), 255-271.

Laufer, B., & Hadar, L. (1997). Assessing the effectiveness of monolingual, bilingual, and "bilingualised" dictionaries in the comprehension and production of new words. *Modern Language Journal, 81*, 189-196

Laufer, B., & Hulstijn, J. (1998, March) *What Leads to Better Incidental Vocabulary Learning: Comprehensible Input or Comprehensible Output*? Paper presented at the Pacific Second Language Research Form (PacSLRF), Tokyo.

Laufer, B., & Kimmel, M. (1997). Bilingualised dictionaries: How learners really use them. *System, 25*, 361-369.

Laufer, B., & Shmueli, K. (1997). Memorizing new words: Does teaching have anything to do with it? *RELC Journal, 28*(1), 89-108.

Laufer, B., & Sim, D. (1985). Measuring and explaining the reading threshold needed for English for academic purposes texts. *Foreign Language Annals, 18*, 405-411.

Lessard-Clouston, M. (1994). Challenging student approaches to ESL vocabulary development. *TESL Canada Journal / Revue TESL du Canada, 12*(1), 69-80.

Liu, D. (2003). The most frequently used spoken American English idioms: A corpus analysis and its implications. *TESOL Quarterly, 37*, 671-700.

Lotto, L., & de Groot, A. (1998). Effects of learning method and word type on acquiring vocabulary in an unfamiliar language. *Language Learning, 48*, 31-69.

Luppescu, S., & Day, R. (1993). Reading, dictionaries, and vocabulary learning. *Language Learning, 43*, 263-287.

Meara, P. (1980). Vocabulary acquisition: A neglected aspect of language learning. *Language Teaching and Linguistics: Abstracts*, 221-246.

Nassaji, H. (2003). L2 vocabulary learning from context: Strategies, knowledge sources, and their relationship with success in L2 lexical inferencing. *TESOL Quarterly, 37*, 645-670.

Nation, I. S. P. (1982). Beginning to learn foreign vocabulary: A review of the research. *RELC Journal, 13*(1), 14-36.

Nesselhauf, N. (2003). The use of collocations by advanced learners of English and some implications for teaching. *Applied Linguistics, 24*, 223-242.

Olsen, S. (1999). Errors and compensatory strategies: A study of grammar and vocabulary in texts written by Norwegian learners of English. *System, 27*, 191-206.

Prince, P. (1995). Second language vocabulary learning: The role of context versus translations as a function of proficiency. *Modern Language Journal, 80*, 478-493.

Sanaoui, R. (1995). Adult learners' approaches to learning vocabulary in second languages. *Modern Language Journal, 79*, 15-28.

Schatz, E., & Baldwin, R. (1986). Context clues are unreliable predictors of word meanings. *Reading Research Quarterly, 21*, 439-453.

Schmitt, N. (1998). Measuring collocational knowledge: Key issues and an experimental assessment procedure. *I.T.L., 119-120*, 27-47.

Schmitt, N., & Schmitt, D. (1993). Identifying and assessing vocabulary learning strategies. *Thai TESOL Bulletin, 5*(4), 27-33.

Stanovich, K. (1986). Matthew effect in reading: Some consequences of individual differences in the acquisition of literacy. *Reading Research Quarterly, 21*, 360-407.

Tinkham, T. (1993). The effects of semantic clustering on the learning of second language vocabulary. *System, 21*, 371-380.

Tinkham, T. (1997). The effects of semantic and thematic clustering on the learning of second language vocabulary. *Second Language Research, 13*(2), 138-163.

Waring, R. (1997). The negative effects of learning words in semantic sets. *System, 25*, 261-274.

Wesche, M., & Paribakht, T. (1994, March). *Enhancing Vocabulary Acquisition Through Reading: A Hierarchy of Text-related Exercise Types.* Paper presented at the meeting of the American Association for Applied Linguistics (AAAL), Baltimore, MD.

Zimmerman, C. (1997). Do reading and interactive vocabulary instruction make a difference? An empirical study. *TESOL Quarterly, 31*, 121-140.

About the Author

Keith Folse is Assistant Professor and MATESOL Program Coordinator at the University of Central Florida. He is the author of numerous ESL books and a frequent conference presenter all over the world. This article is based on his most recent publication Vocabulary Myths *(University of Michigan Press).*