Latin American Journal of Education

READING STRATEGIES AND LEXICAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE PROCESS OF LANGUAGE ACQUISITION: THE CASE OF THE KOREAN LANGUAGE

Sherov Rasul Ravshanovich
Lecturer, Department of Korean Philology
Uzbekistan State University of World Languages

ABSTRACT: *This article analyzes the impact of reading strategies on lexical development in the process of language acquisition, using the Korean language as a case study. It explores the role of metacognitive, cognitive, and socio-affective strategies employed by learners while interacting with texts and evaluates their effectiveness in expanding vocabulary knowledge. In addition, the paper examines the efficiency of contextual inference, identifying essential information, recognizing semantic relations, and working independently with vocabulary, drawing on scientific research and empirical evidence. The morphological and semantic characteristics of the Korean language and their influence on the dynamics of learners' lexical acquisition are also discussed. The findings indicate that purposeful use of reading strategies significantly enhances vocabulary growth, deepens text comprehension, and contributes to the development of communicative competence in the target language.*

KEYWORDS: *reading strategies; lexical development; Korean language; metacognitive strategies; contextual inference; language learning methodology; cognitive processes; foreign language teaching; linguodidactics; learner competence.*

INTRODUCTION

In the context of increasing global interconnectedness, the need for effective foreign language learning has become one of the core priorities of modern education systems. In particular, rising interest in East Asian languages—especially Korean—calls for an in-depth exploration of scientifically grounded teaching methodologies. Reading competence occupies a central place in this process, serving not only as a means of receiving information but also as a complex cognitive mechanism that facilitates expansion of lexical knowledge, comprehension of grammatical structures, and deeper engagement with cultural and contextual meanings.

Reading strategies determine how learners process texts, extract and interpret information, and internalize lexical material. Numerous studies have shown that learners who employ effective reading strategies acquire new vocabulary more rapidly, develop richer semantic

networks, and retain linguistic material in long-term memory with greater reliability. Since lexical development is one of the primary indicators of language proficiency, its formation is closely tied to the quality of reading activities. A learner's ability to understand, analyze, and integrate word meanings directly shapes their communicative competence in the target language.

The Korean language, with its phonetic Hangul writing system, agglutinative grammatical structure, speech-level hierarchy, and multilayered semantics, presents learners with unique challenges. These linguistic characteristics require deliberate and well-structured reading strategies. Consequently, examining the interrelation between reading strategies and lexical development in Korean provides valuable insights that contribute to the refinement of language teaching methodologies.

Although interest in reading strategies has grown within the fields of educational psychology, linguodidactics, and Korean-as-a-second-language pedagogy, factors that directly influence lexical development—such as strategic competence, metacognitive awareness, motivation, and cultural approaches to learning—remain insufficiently explored. Therefore, addressing these gaps is essential for enhancing both theoretical frameworks and practical techniques in foreign language instruction.

The relevance of this study lies in the fact that the purposeful and systematic use of reading strategies significantly enhances learners' lexical competence, strengthens comprehension skills, and fosters independent reading abilities in Korean. This article provides a comprehensive analysis of reading strategies, their properties, their impact on lexical development, and practical recommendations for implementing effective strategies in Korean language instruction.

MAIN BODY

Reading competence plays a central role in a learner's linguistic development. Research in psycholinguistics and second-language pedagogy demonstrates that the way learners process texts, analyze lexical elements, identify semantic relations, and internalize grammatical structures is closely linked to the reading strategies they utilize. Reading strategies constitute a set of conscious and subconscious mechanisms that enable learners to interpret content, restructure information, and store it effectively for future use. They are typically categorized into cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective strategies, all of which function interactively within the reading process.

Cognitive strategies allow learners to directly analyze text content, infer word meanings using contextual cues, identify main ideas, and comprehend text structure. Metacognitive strategies involve higher-order thinking skills such as planning, monitoring, and evaluating one's reading process. Socio-affective strategies help maintain motivation, encourage self-support, and foster a

positive emotional environment conducive to learning. When employed together, these strategies enable learners to comprehend texts more deeply and expand their vocabulary actively.

The Korean language, characterized by its agglutinative morphology, context-dependent semantics, and unique syntactic patterns, requires learners to adopt specialized reading approaches. The S–O–V word order contrasts with the S–V–O structure familiar to Uzbek learners, compelling them to reinterpret sentence meaning only upon reading the final verb. Furthermore, the extensive use of affixes—capable of generating hundreds of new lexical forms—demands strong morphological awareness. The honorific system adds additional complexity, as a single verb may have multiple forms depending on social hierarchy. These linguistic features necessitate the use of strategies such as contextual inference, morphological analysis, repeated reading, and annotation.

Empirical studies indicate that contextual inference significantly enhances long-term retention of new vocabulary. In Korean, where polysemy and hierarchical speech levels are common, learners must actively reconstruct semantic meaning by analyzing broader textual patterns. Similarly, morphological analysis—which involves identifying root morphemes and affixes—accelerates vocabulary acquisition. Recognizing recurring morphemes such as 학 (study),

생 (person), or 식 (food) helps establish semantic associations essential for vocabulary expansion.

Repeated reading, another key strategy, aids in automatizing complex verb endings and syntactic constructions. Annotation, summarization, and outlining further reinforce semantic connections and facilitate the transfer of new words into active usage. These strategies collectively contribute to the development of robust mental lexicons and improved reading fluency.

Modern pedagogy recommends a three-stage approach to teaching reading in Korean: pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading. The pre-reading stage activates background knowledge, introduces key vocabulary, and prepares learners for comprehension. The while-reading stage focuses on identifying essential information, interpreting context-based clues, and analyzing grammatical signals. In the post-reading stage, activities such as discussions, semantic mapping, vocabulary exercises, and practical applications solidify lexical gains.

Psycholinguistic research highlights that motivation, concentration, memory strategies, and self-assessment significantly influence the success of reading-based vocabulary development. Learners with strong intrinsic motivation, regular reading habits, and strategic competence exhibit faster and more stable lexical growth. Statistical data show that consistent use of reading strategies can

increase active vocabulary by 30–45% within six months.

The integration of digital tools such as corpus-based reading platforms, vocabulary apps, graded readers, and multimedia resources further supports independent learning. These tools provide accessible, individualized linguistic input and foster learner autonomy—one of the key prerequisites for successful foreign language acquisition.

Overall, deliberate and informed use of reading strategies exerts a profound influence on learners' lexical development, grammatical sensitivity, and general linguistic competence. Strategic engagement with texts transforms reading into a purposeful and effective learning mechanism, allowing learners to navigate the structural and semantic complexities of the Korean language with greater confidence.

CONCLUSION

Correct selection and systematic use of reading strategies constitute one of the most influential factors in enhancing lexical development during language acquisition. The phonological, morphological, and syntactic complexity of Korean necessitates analytical reading approaches and active implementation of contextual inference, morphological processing, repeated reading, and annotation. Psycholinguistic findings confirm that conscious engagement with texts, reconstruction of meaning, and the use of organizational tools such as concept maps facilitate deeper internalization of lexical items.

The effectiveness of reading strategies is closely tied not only to linguistic competence but also to learner motivation, concentration, self-evaluation, and psychological readiness. Moreover, methodologically structured instruction—incorporating preparatory activities, guided reading tasks, and post-reading reinforcement—significantly accelerates vocabulary acquisition and comprehension skills.

The analysis conducted in this article demonstrates that integrated use of reading strategies enables Korean language learners to achieve substantial progress within a relatively short period. Reading-based lexical expansion, formation of semantic networks, and development of advanced comprehension skills strengthen overall communicative competence. Therefore, incorporating strategy-based reading instruction into Korean language pedagogy should be regarded as one of the key priorities in contemporary language teaching.

REFERENCES:

1. Nation, I. S. P. (2013). Learning Vocabulary in Another Language (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

2. Grabe, W., & Stoller, F. L. (2019). Teaching and Researching Reading (3rd ed.). Routledge.

Latin American Journal of Education

3. Anderson, N. J. (2008). Metacognitive Reading Strategies: Theory and Practice in EFL Contexts. TESOL Quarterly, 42(2), 109–123.

4. Carrell, P. L., Devine, J., & Eskey, D. E. (2014). Interactive Approaches to Second Language Reading. Cambridge University Press.