

Korean High School English Learners' Knowledge of Collocations: Focusing on Delexical Verbs: *make, get, and take*

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This study examined the high-frequency delexical verbs in seven Korean high school English II textbooks and Korean high school learners' knowledge of collocations focusing on delexical verbs. 209 second-year Korean high school students of learning English participated in the study. In order to analyze the frequency of the verbs in the textbooks, the Natural Language Processing (NPL) Tools program was utilized. A collocation test consisting of 55 collocation items of delexical verbs was taken to measure the Korean high school students' collocational competence, and a survey of participants' perception towards the test was carried out. The frequency analysis results displayed that the verbs *make, get, and take* were most frequently used delexical verbs across the seven textbooks and the collocation test results revealed that the students' knowledge of collocations regarding the delexical verbs was low, showing the rate of correct answers is 38 percent. The participants initially felt that they knew the verbs well but, in effect, their knowledge of the verbs was far from thorough. This study suggests a necessity of teaching delexical verb collocations to L2 learners explicitly and depth of vocabulary knowledge being a part of organizing principles in L2 instruction.

Keywords: delexical verbs, collocations, frequency

1. Introduction

English education in Korea accentuated four skills mainly focusing on reading and grammar (E Ryu 2012, H Yang 2008). However, the trend of English education has been gradually changed over the past a couple of decades, with teachers starting to focus on listening and,

recently, speaking, writing, and vocabulary (Brown 2007, Y Kim and JH Ma 2012). The reason is that a general consensus among second language (L2) researchers and educators has been formed that the ultimate goal of L2 learning is to develop effective communication ability and well-balanced education could be one of the best ways of achieving it (Brown 2007, Doughty and Long 2003, Gass and Selinker 2008, Y Kim and JH Ma 2012). With the recent trend of English education, there has been a growing awareness of the significance of collocations in L2 learning as the use of collocation knowledge could improve L2 learners' communicative competence (H Choi and JH Ma 2012, Hyland 2008, Lewis 2000, Nation and Webb 2011, Pei 2008, Pishghadam, Khodaday, and Rad 2011, Wray 2002). Lewis (2000: 14) insists that developing L2 learners' knowledge of collocations be the way of enhancing target language ability, saying "The reason so many students are not making any perceived progress is simply because they have not been trained to notice which words go with which. They may know a lot of individual words which they struggle to use, along with their grammatical knowledge, but they lack the ability to use those words in a range of collocations which pack more meaning into what they say or write".

Despite the importance of collocation knowledge, many L2 learners have difficulty in acquiring and using collocations, often displaying lack of knowledge of them (Howarth 1998, Y Kim and JH Ma 2011, J-k Lee 2005, HG Lim 2011, Nesselhauf 2003). This is partly because L2 learners, in many cases, have memorized individual word meaning without considering the constraints on the correct use of words and partly because they have had few opportunities to receive instruction raising awareness of collocation knowledge and aiming at developing it. Learners of English may struggle even more in the case of delexical verb collocations since L2 learners often focus on acquiring lexical meaning of each word (Boers et al. 2006, Y Kim and JH Ma 2011, H Kim and H Yoon 2008, Nesselhauf 2003) and delexical verbs are the ones whose meanings are very weak themselves but transferred by combining words (e.g., *make*, *put*, *keep*, *get*, *have*, *set*, *take*, *give*, and so forth).

Verb-noun collocations are one of the most frequently used types of collocations in language production and they tend to form the core of utterances in which the most crucial information of communication is

placed (Altenberg 1993). Among the verb-noun collocations, delexical verb collocations are tricky to acquire for L2 learners since they have diverse meanings and usages in texts depending on their combining words (mainly their objects). Delexical verbs are high-frequency ones and collocate with many words in all texts and L2 learners need to acquire collocations of delexical verbs to improve their linguistic competence and performance (Allan 1998, Hill 2000, N-B Kim 2004, Lewis 1993). Therefore, considering the importance of acquiring delexical verb collocations, this study aims to explore what high-frequency delexical verbs are in Korean high school English II textbooks and how well Korean high school students know collocations of the msince textbooks are one of the major English input sources for Korean EFL learners. The purpose is not only to better understand Korean high school students' ability to collocate with delexical verbs but to provide pedagogical suggestions for English teachers at the chalkface. For the purport of this research, the following two research questions were formulated:

1. What are the high-frequency delexical verbs in Korean high school English II textbooks?
2. How well do Korean high school students know collocations of the high-frequency delexical verbs?

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Importance of High-frequency Words

For the genuine development of target language ability, language learners basically need to improve their vocabulary knowledge. Wilkins (1972: 111) stressed the importance of vocabulary, stating "While without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed." In recent years, research on L2 vocabulary has been carried out actively in Korea as well as over the world, showing an increasing interest in L2 vocabulary acquisition (Y Kim and JH Ma 2011, Laufer 2003, Nation 2001). This is in line with the recent tendency that more than 30 percent of studies on L1 and L2 vocabulary learning in the last 120 years have been conducted over the last couple of decades with the help of advanced technologies (Haastrup

and Henriksen 2001, Nation 2001).

High-frequency words need to be acquired preferably and thoroughly in L2 vocabulary learning as L2 learners would encounter them in all the different contexts from the initial point of their learning. In effect, Nation and Waring (1997) set 3000 words as the number of high-frequency words which must be acquired by learners of English. Decarrico (2001) introduced 2000 high-frequency words which are widely used in written and spoken texts, and emphasized that learners of English need to acquire them from the very beginning. Nation (2001) presented the criteria of high- and low-frequency words and divided English vocabulary into high- and low-frequency words. Then, he added that the former plays a pivotal role in English and learners should devote a great deal of time to mastering them. In general, delexical verbs are among the high-frequency words and they collocate with many words in diverse contexts, representing different meanings and usages depending on their combining words (Allan 1998, Hill 2000, Lewis 1993).

In Korea, the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MEST)¹⁾ bases the number of English words that students should acquire on the students' school year and textbook developers must follow the criteria and include the words (MEST 2009). In most cases, delexical verbs belong to the word lists and Korean students of learning English are expected to acquire them in exact detail for successful English development. However, it seems that many Korean students have struggled with acquiring and using delexical verbs after receiving English instruction in their middle and high-school years. E-K Kim (2004) and HJ Lee (2005) investigated how well Korean college students are familiar with two high-frequency delexical verbs, *make* and *get*, using the students' English compositions. In both of the studies, the researchers discovered that Korean college learners displayed lack of knowledge of the two verbs and, in many cases, differently used the words from English native speakers. J-E Oh (2005) examined collocation usages of high-frequency delexical verbs: *take*, *make*, and *get*. The results showed that the usages of delexical verb collocations were not various but partial and suggested that teachers should explicitly present different usages of delexical verbs to Korean students of learning English. In general, even though delexical verbs are high-

1) This is written based on a book published by the MEST in 2009, titled *Oygyukewa Kyoyukgwajong* (1).

frequency ones and Korean students are supposed to acquire them successfully, it seems rather demanding for Korean learners to master the different meanings and usages of delexical verbs.

2.2. Collocations of Delexical Verbs

Collocation means a continuum of word items that habitually co-occur together (Cowie 1998, Cruse 1986, James 1998). Nattinger and Decarrico (1992: 36) define collocations as “strings of specific lexical items that happen together with a mutual anticipation greater than chance.” In line with the definitions given above, Lewis (2000) provides the widely accepted definition of collocations in the L2 field – combinations of words statistically far more likely to appear together than random chance suggests. In general, collocations mean word combinations consisting of at least two words frequently occur simultaneously. Much previous research suggests that better fluency, accuracy, and complexity of the target language, which are the features of advanced language learners, would be guaranteed with the help of good collocation knowledge (H Choi and JH Ma 2012, Hyland 2008, Lewis 2000, Nation and Webb 2011).

Delexical verbs have drawn substantial attention from researchers in the linguistic and L2 fields and there has been an increasing amount of research on the verbs and their collocations in recent years (Allan 1998, S Choi 2012, N-B Kim 2004). Delexical verbs, which are sometimes called as light verbs, are ones whose meaning is very weak itself, but whose meaning is transferred by their objects (Altenberg and Granger 2001). For instance, in the phrase *make a mistake*, the meaning of *make* is weakened, but the meaning of *mistake* is powerfully revealed. Lewis (1993) insisted that delexical verbs look simple but suggest deeper meanings through combination of other lexical words, and should be treated and acquired lexically. Similarly, Hill (2000) pointed out that L2 learners need to improve their collocational competence of delexical verbs for developing general proficiency of target language.

As delexical verbs (e.g., *make, put, get, turn, do, run, and take*) are high-frequency ones, L2 learners may feel familiar with them. However, delexical verbs are demanding to acquire partly because of their inherent characteristics that they have various meanings collocating with many words and partly because L2 learners, in many cases,

focus on acquiring lexical meaning of each individual word in an isolated way. Due to the importance and difficulty of acquiring delexical verbs and their collocations, quite a few studies of them have been carried out by L2 researchers in Korea including theses and dissertations. HJ Kim (2008) studied the use of collocations of the three high-frequency delexical verbs – *get*, *make*, and *take* – by Korean learners of English focusing on predictability of learners' first language (L1). The results of HJ Kim's study (2008) showed that the rate of correct answers in a collocation test was approximately 50 percent, implying the learners lack sufficient knowledge of collocations regarding the three high-frequency delexical verbs. H Choi and JH Ma (2012: 2) considered the heavy reliance on L1 as one of the major stumbling blocks of target language collocation acquisition, by saying "learners tend to refer to their first language (L1) corresponding word sense when they process L2 word combinations".

In a recent corpus-based study, B Kim (2012) compared the usages of four highly polysemous verbs – *take*, *make*, *get* and *keep* – within the framework of Lexical Network Theory (LNT) using Korean learners of English corpora and English native speakers' ones. The analyses indicated that the most frequent meanings of the three highly polysemous verbs, except for *get*, were not correspondent to the central meaning of the LNT models. Besides, the outputs of Korean participants were different from those of English natives speakers in terms of collocation usages. The researcher suggested a positive prospect that the difference would be narrowed, insisting that L2 learners of English can acquire the complicated meanings and usages of polysemous verbs by exposing themselves to authentic English corpora.

Another line of research on delexical verb collocations has also been performed using English textbooks (AR Seo 2011, EY Jang 2008, H-Y Kwon 2012, J Kim 2006, S Choi 2012, S Whi 2006, T-H Nam, 2011). EY Jang (2008) analyzed delexical verb collocations in the elementary English language teaching (ELT) reading textbooks. Her study focused on the verbs: *make*, *take*, *get*, *have*, and *do*. Through her research, she suggested the necessity of explicit teaching of collocations to L2 learners not letting them acquire the relevant rules and patterns of collocations for themselves. She also added that teachers should be aware of the importance of collocations, especially high-frequency ones, and encourage L2 learners to learn and use diverse

collocations in their learning process. S Choi (2012) analyzed collations – *make*, *have*, and *take* – used in EBS (Educational Broadcasting System) books²⁾ in her master's thesis. The findings revealed that delexical verb collocations were most frequent, and more frequently provided in written corpora than in colloquial ones. In addition, her analyses demonstrated that collocations of the three high-frequency verbs in EBS books tend to be limited to certain collocations and English textbooks should include more various collocations of those verbs so that L2 learners could raise their awareness of authenticity of high-frequency words and their collocations.

J Kim (2006) analyzed high-frequency verbs in middle and high school English textbooks, especially focusing on the meanings and collocations of three delexical verbs; *get*, *make*, and *take*. In her analysis, she discovered that examples of high-frequency verbs used in the textbooks are incorrectly used and presented a collocation list model of high frequency verbs. T-H Nam (2011) studied Korean English learners' use of five delexical verbs, *have*, *make*, *do*, *give*, and *take*, using corpus analysis. He examined the frequency of the verbs and the ranges of their meanings shown in middle school, high school and college students' learner corpora. Based on the analysis results, he suggested that Korean learners of English, in general, should be aware of the restrictions of delexical verb constructions in texts and focus on them in order to reach native-level of accuracy and fluency. Previous research on collocation focusing on delexical verbs generally indicates that collocations of delexical verbs are significant in English learning and it is essential for Korean learners of English to have the sufficient knowledge of them.

3. Research Design

3.1. Participants

The participants of this study were 209 second-year students (114

2) Korean high school students are expected to study six EBS books to prepare themselves for the College Scholastic Ability Test (CSAT), because the MEST announced that about 70 percent of the CSAT English test items would be applied from the six EBS books. These 6 books were published in 2011.

boys and 95 girls) of a high school located in Chonnam province, Korea. There are 287 second-year students (age = 16~17) at this school, and 78 students of them did not participate. All the students of this school are being taught two subjects – English and math through different level-based instruction. English class is divided into two levels: advanced and intermediate ones. In this research, 56 students in the advanced classes were excluded in order to enhance external validity having more homogeneous population. This school is a boarding high school and the mock tests scores taken nationwide are much higher than those of other high schools. We assumed that if the upper class students are excluded, the remaining students would represent English ability of general prep high school students in Korea. In total, 78 students out of the entire number of second-year students did not participate including 56 students in the advanced classes and 22 students in the intermediate classes who did not want to take part in the study.

3.2. Instruments

Three major instruments were utilized in the current study. The NLP Tools program (Y-H Lee 2007) specifically “frequency count” in the program, was used to examine the frequency of all the verbs in seven high school English II textbooks and obtain the number of them. Regardless of the history of textbook publishers, we randomly selected seven high school English II textbooks³⁾ for investigating frequency of (delexical) verbs in high school English textbooks and how knowledgeable Korean students of English are of collocations. First we assigned Arabic numbers to all English II textbooks and asked our college to select seven of them. It was expected that high school English II textbooks would be appropriate for this study because all the textbooks met the criteria that the MEST sets for textbook development and also because the English II textbooks were generally for second-year high school students and our participants,

3) High School English II textbooks co-authored by Kim, Duk Ki and seven others (Chunjae Education Inc.), by Kim, Kil Joong and five others (Jihaksa Publishing Co. Ltd), by Kim, Seong Kon and nine others (Doosan Dong-A Corporation), by Kwon, Oryang and six others (Kumsung Publishing Co. Ltd), by Lee, Chan Seung and seven others (Neungyule Education Inc.), by Lee, Jae Young and seven others (Chunjae Educaion Inc.), by Shin, Jeong-Hyun and five others (YBM Sisa).

second-year students at the time of data collection, had few chance to encounter the sentences in the seven high school English II textbooks chosen.

Secondly, a collocation test consisting of 55 items was developed mainly based on the results of frequency analysis. After getting the frequency analysis results of verbs in the textbooks, we selected three most common delexical verbs in the books. Then, with the help of the NPL program again, a collocation test of the three delexical verbs was constructed (see Appendix 1). All the items, including distracters, were extracted from the textbooks and each test item was scored one point, with a total score of 55 points. In addition, a survey consisting of four questions was devised to better know the participants' perception towards the test (see Appendix 2) and to back-up the quantitative test results. The survey asked the participants' general perception about the test, difficulty (or easiness) of the test items and the potential reasons, and the ways to improve their ability as to the test items.

3.3. Procedures

For the first research question, all the texts of seven high school English II textbooks were downloaded from the website of each publishing company and then only the reading texts were copied and stored into our database for examining the frequency of all the verbs in the textbooks. Today, textbook publishing companies provide all the texts, listening scripts, extra materials and so forth so that students and teachers could access them freely. Then, we ran the NLP Tools program and analyzed the frequency of verbs in the books. More specifically, the "frequency count" in the program was utilized for this analysis.

After the frequency analysis, we selected three most common delexical verbs to answer the second research question among a number of high-frequency verbs in the seven high school English II textbooks using the following criteria. First of all, we considered the number of frequency as a matter of highest priority in that an important criterion of teaching and learning words was the practical frequency of them (Decarrico 2001, Nation 2001, Nation and Warring 1997) and Korean high school students were naturally expected to know the high-frequency words in their textbooks thoroughly. In addition, we consi-

dered high-frequency verbs of a renowned BNC corpus and three other studies (Biber et al. 1999, Mindt 1996, Svartvik and Ekedahl 1995)⁴) and compared them with the 30 highest-frequency verbs in the textbooks. Then, we ruled out *be*, *have*, and *do* since these verbs have the same forms of main verbs and auxiliary ones. Through this process three high-frequency delexical verbs were finally chosen for the current study.

As for the next step, a collocation test for gauging the students' ability to collocate using the three selected delexical verbs was designed. The test was made up of 55 items and all of them were extracted from the seven English II textbooks. By using the NLP Tools program, we searched for all the sentences containing the three verbs, from which, in turn, only the sentences not including inflectional words were chosen. First, 70 test items were selected among the sentences, and excluded all the items potentially having more than two possible answers. In this process, we collaborated with a female English native speaker teacher at the high school. She is a Fulbright grantee and has taught English at the school for one and half years and at another high school for one year in Korea. Finally, we completed a collocation test consisting of 55 target items along with distracters.

Prior to administering the test, four students who belonged to an advanced class took the test to figure out the appropriate amount of time that the participants would need for the test. The four students finished it within 20 minutes. Then, the test was conducted to the 209 students in intermediate classes during their regular English class time on the same day and 25 minutes was allotted to the test. Even though the test was not a performance-based test, the test was performed on the same day in order to guarantee the security of the test items. The test was supervised and proctored by four English teachers in charge of second-year English classes at the high school. Right after the test, the students were asked to answer a simple survey with four questions, all of which were open-ended, to find out their

4) As for the 10 most high-frequency verbs, *say*, *go*, *get*, *make*, *see*, *know*, *take*, *think*, *come* and *give* are listed in BNC (<http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/bncfreq/flists.html>, 2013), *know*, *think*, *get*, *go*, *say*, *see*, *come*, *make*, *take* and *look* are listed by Svartvik and Ekedahl (1995), *say*, *make*, *go*, *take*, *come*, *see*, *know*, *get*, *give*, and *find* are listed by Mindt (1996), and *say*, *get*, *go*, *know*, *think*, *see*, *make*, *come*, *take* and *want* are listed by Biber and the four others (1999).

opinions and feelings towards the test. SPSS Statistics 17.0 for Windows was used for the quantitative data analyses setting the significance level at $\alpha < .05$, nondirectional and the participants' survey responses were also analyzed and illustrated.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Frequency Analysis

The high-frequency verbs in the seven high school English II textbooks were examined by running the NLP program. Table 1 illustrates the 30 highest-frequency verbs used in each textbook and some of these verbs could be used as other non-verb parts of speech. One of the findings is that *be* and *have* are two highest-frequency verbs across all the seven textbooks and *do* also is ranked high in the textbooks. Although *be*, *have*, and *do* were excluded in the collocation-based test since they have the same forms of main and auxiliary verbs, this result still tells that the three verbs are fundamental for English language and need to be learned preferably and completely.

Another interesting finding is that some verbs are ranked in the 30 highest-frequency verbs across the seven textbooks. These include *make*, *get*, *take*, *go*, *come*, and *say*. This suggests that these verbs are widely used in Korean high school English textbooks and students should study these verbs in depth. That is, Korean students of learning English should put their time and energy into acquiring not merely knowledge of form and meaning but also associations, grammatical functions, constraints on use, and collocations of these verbs to obtain the depth of knowledge (Nation and Webb 2011, Read 2004). The six words mentioned above may seem to be fairly easy and many L2 learners of English feel familiar with them. However, in effect, these verbs could be tough for English learners to fully understand and acquire as they have a lot of different meanings, usages, and idiomatic expressions in different contexts. Besides, they very often collocate with other words weakening their own lexical meanings. The diverse usages of the above-mentioned verbs often make English learners confused and use them in somewhat awkward way.

Table 1. 30 Highest-frequency verbs in 7 high school English II textbooks

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	be						
2	have						
3	do	buy	do	make	do	use	do
4	make	make	use	live	say	like	say
5	get	use	say	do	go	do	mean
6	work	do	make	plant	like	make	make
7	take	know	go	use	come	work	like
8	go	see	think	know	thank	live	ask
9	think	say	like	go	take	take	give
10	help	rip	get	become	look	know	take
11	find	come	become	say	make	speak	start
12	look	like	see	take	tell	say	know
13	give	take	know	find	live	love	think
14	need	live	drink	come	find	look	live
15	eat	get	call	want	use	go	find
16	know	find	want	like	see	get	come
17	come	think	thank	help	get	think	get
18	buy	walk	play	think	mean	develop	go
19	use	look	mean	keep	walk	come	wok
20	like	begin	love	try	grow	read	use
21	see	write	come	tell	feel	want	remember
22	say	work	take	rescue	seem	thank	come
23	mean	mean	learn	love	learn	stop	want
24	learn	give	give	get	call	start	seem
25	create	build	write	follow	become	please	call
26	ask	understand	show	give	start	become	tell
27	track	learn	help	write	know	try	leave
28	tell	go	find	work	cause	see	help
29	show	create	believe	return	carry	help	answer
30	require	change	talk	leave	survive	feel	spend

* Three boldface words that we chose for this study exist in all 7 high school English II textbooks, even if their frequency is somewhat different.

Considering the frequency analysis results of the textbooks, the BNC corpus, and the other three studies, three delexical verbs – *make*, *take*, and *get* – were chosen for creating a collocation test to answer the second research question of the current study.

4.2. Facility (or Easiness) of the Three Delexical Verbs: *make*, *get*, and *take*

To investigate how well high school students know collocations of high-frequency delexical verbs – *make*, *take*, and *get* – in high school English II textbooks, a collocation test consisting of 55 items was developed. Among the 55 test items, 23 items were made up using *make*, 18 items using *get*, and 14 items using *take*. The value of Cronbach's α of the test was .756, indicating an appropriate level of reliability.

Table 2 displays the results of a collocation test. The mean scores were generally low, 8.50 for *make* items, 6.97 for *get* items, and 5.41 for *take* items. Since the number of test items was different depending on the three verbs, the mean score might not deliver much information. Therefore, we calculated percentage of correct answers and added the results in Table 2. The numerically highest percentage score was *get* items, followed by *take* and *make*. The overall mean score of the test was 20.88 out of 55, which is equivalent to 38 percent.

Table 2. General description of the collocation test results

	<i>N</i>	Number of items	Mean*	Std. Deviation	% of correct answers
make	209	23	8.50	3.568	36.957
get	209	18	6.97	2.832	38.722
take	209	14	5.41	2.187	38.643
TOTAL	209	55	20.88	7.094	37.964

* The full marks of 'make', 'get', and 'take'-item tests are 23, 18, and 14 respectively.

The test scores were lower than those of HJ Kim's (2008) and Y-K Lee's (2008) studies. In the current study, the rate of correct answers was approximately 38 percent while the proportion of correct answers in HJ Kim's research (2008) was about 50 percent. It may not be desirable to compare the test results directly because each study

utilized different collocation tests with different participants. Still, the test results were worse than we expected and several reasons would be behind them. Korean high school students tend to combine words according to their individual meaning alone not much considering the constraints on the correct use of words which involve collocation knowledge. Besides, high schools in Korea usually focus on teaching reading and listening components since English test of the College Scholastic Ability Test (CSAT) mainly is composed of reading and listening sections. Y-K Lee (2008) pointed out that Korean learners may have a problem of studying English vocabulary as the participants of her research were not fully aware of collocations frequently used by native English speakers and extremely often appearing in various corpora. She also mentioned that Korean learners seem to memorize individual words not considering the associations of 'verbs' in context or in collocations. In our study, the participants seemed to have had the same experience as those of Y-K Lee (2008)'s study. Simply speaking, our participants have neither practiced collocations nor received instructions of the min their English learning process. Therefore, the orientation of their vocabulary study has focused on mere size, not depth of knowledge.

The individual item facility (IF) analysis was performed to figure out the facility or easiness of the three delexical verbs in a little more detail (see Table 3). The IF analysis shows that only 11 items among 55 items reached more than 50 percent of correct answers but 19 items did not even reach 30 percent. In the case of *make*-items, 39 percent (9 items) did not reach 30 percent of IF and only 17 percent (4 items) reached over 50 percent of IF. As for *get*-items, 28 percent (5 items) did not get to 30 percent of IF and about 22 percent (4 items) reached over 50 percent of IF. Lastly, in the *take*-items, 36 percent (5 items) did not get to 30 percent of IF and 29 percent (4 items) reached over 50 percent of IF. A few items such as item number 25 (IF = .057), including items 12, 13, 26, 28, 34, and 46, showed low item facility (IF \leq .2). Most of the items reached more than 50 percent of correct answers were rather idiomatic expressions that Korean learners were supposed to memorize as a chunk in their initial stages of English learning (e.g., item number 20: *take* some aspirin (*take* pills, *take* medicine), item number 23: *make* sense). Overall, it can be said that the students' collocation ability related to delexical

verbs are low. Y Kim and JH Ma (2011) stated that Korean high school learners of English tended to underestimate the importance of vocabulary including collocations in L2 acquisition partly because they think the CSAT in Korea is more related to listening, grammar, and reading but not vocabulary. Even though the participants of their study acknowledged that collocation-based learning would help them to improve their English to a great extent, they also felt that collocation learning was not urgent since they were not closely related to the CSAT. Based on the findings, they suggested, “collocation-based instructions should include more awareness raising activities specifically aiming at the notion of integrative language learning in order to re-conceptualize learners’ biased perception of focusing only listening

Table 3. IF distribution of each item

Make-item no.	IF	Get-item no.	IF	Take-item no.	IF
2	.397	1	.545	3	.407
4	.435	6	.526	5	.512
7	.397	8	.593	10	.373
9	.220	11	.211	15	.225
13	.191	12	.196	20	.689
14	.474	16	.526	21	.675
17	.608	19	.378	27	.239
18	.282	22	.488	28	.148
23	.679	24	.445	30	.297
25	.057	31	.421	35	.316
26	.191	32	.230	37	.622
29	.512	34	.191	38	.325
33	.397	36	.316	46	.158
41	.383	39	.464	54	.426
42	.306	40	.459		
45	.239	43	.292		
47	.282	44	.306		
48	.464	51	.378		
49	.268				
50	.263				
52	.493				
53	.368				
55	.589				

and reading” (p. 155). The results of the current study seemed to be in line with those of Y Kim and JH Ma (2011), and the results may imply that concepts and importance of collocations need to be taught more explicitly to Korean learners of English in school settings. Add to this, the MEST (2009) has announced that the portion of reading would be decreased from a current 67 points to 50 points, starting on the 2014 CSAT, and speaking and writing sections would be included from the 2016 CSAT. Since the CSAT has a great effect on high school education, we might expect that students’ collocation competence would be better improved through more balanced and integrative ways of teaching and learning.

4.3. Survey Responses

A survey consisting of four open-ended questions was devised to better know the participants’ perception towards the collocation test. While answering the survey, the students were informed that they could use either Korean or English and write down their ideas and feelings freely. Both of the test results and the students’ survey responses clearly show that the collocation test of delexical verbs was somewhat difficult for the participants. When we look through the answers, the most commonly appeared responses were “It was too difficult” and “I thought I knew these verbs very well but it turned out I did not”. Some students actually spoke aloud in front of their teachers and classmates, “What on earth is this test?” or “Wow! What is this? I’m very shocked now!”

For the first question asking their general feelings about the test, most of the participants responded in a similar way and listed below are some of the responses. The responses are only a few but they clearly demonstrate the students’ feelings towards the test. Seemingly, the students thought the verbs were very basic ones and felt competent in using them before taking the test. However, their thoughts were suddenly changed after taking the test and they realized that they did not fully understand the different meanings and usages of the verbs.

Student A: I thought I knew these words very well, but it proved not to be true.

Student B: I realized that I don’t know the exact meaning of the basic

words even though I see them in English books almost every day. Now I feel very confused.

Student C: These verbs, I think, are very basic. But now I am in a mental breakdown.

Student D: The words that I thought I had mastered already make me embarrassed.

For the next two questions in the survey asking which verbs are easy or difficult, none of the respondents mentioned specific verbs as easy ones. As can be expected, most of the students expressed the difficulty of test once again and a few of them said they were confused and felt frustrated since all the verbs in the box have a lot of meanings and different usages. In general, the students answered that most of the verbs were difficult and some of the students specifically stated verbs that they thought more difficult.

Student E: None of these words were easy.

Student F: All the verbs were difficult. That is because, I guess, I did not know the exact meaning of each word completely.

Student G: These verbs are highly frequent and have a lot of meanings. However, when I read English texts, I didn't feel much difficulty. That's why I have neglected them, I guess.

*Student H: The words **take**, **make**, and **get** were really difficult.*

*Student I: For me, the words **make**, **get** and **take** are the hardest.*

*Student J: The words **make**, **get**, and **take** were the most difficult for me. They have many meanings and, frankly speaking, come to think of it, it seems that I do not know them much.*

*Student K: The word **take** was the most difficult, because I think it has many idiomatic expressions and also too many meanings. And the words **make**, **get**, **put** and **run** are also difficult.*

The students initially felt that they knew the verbs fairly well but the verbs were extremely difficult when the students tried to solve the questions in the test. The students' responses revealed that they have not studied these verbs deeply and the usages of them were far more various than they generally thought. The participants of our study knew lexical meaning of each verb as insisted in their survey responses but it seemed that they might not have proper knowledge of

collocations of the verbs. As Y-K Lee's (2008) pointed out that although L2 learners know the essential meanings of the verbs, they tend to use them differently from the native speakers and, in many cases, use them in a wrong way. As can be assumed from the students' responses and the test results, it seems that English education in institutional settings has not much focused on teaching the concepts and importance of collocations in their classrooms. However, the collocational knowledge of the verbs (*make*, *get*, and *take*), and these types of other verbs need to be taught to L2 learners (B Kim 2012, T-H Nam 2012) considering their importance and difficulty in English learning.

For the last question on the ways to enhance their knowledge of the verbs, most of the participants did not come up with concrete ways but some of them responded as the followings.

Student L: This is one of the negative effects of the CSAT on English education. I think, the test itself must be changed first to improve our knowledge of these basic words.

Student M: I would like to learn them from our school teachers.

Student N: I don't know. It is really hard for me to come up with good ways of learning them. I need more time to think about it. At any rate, we students should learn them thoroughly, I think.

Although the students could not provide definite methods of improving their knowledge of these types of words, most of them felt the need to learn it. Then, it is necessary to teach collocations to L2 learners in instructional settings rather than letting them acquire the knowledge for themselves (Fan 2009, Webb and Kagimoto 2009).

5. Conclusion

This study examined the highest-frequency delexical verbs in Korean high school English II textbooks and Korean high school English learners' ability to collocate with the verbs. The results demonstrated that *be*, and *have* were the two most frequently appearing verbs in the textbooks and *do* was also ranked high. Except for the three verbs – *be*, *have*, and *do* – having the same form of main and auxiliary verbs,

make, get, take, go, come, and say were frequently used across all the seven high school English II textbooks. Among the verbs, three delexical verbs, *make, get, and take*, were selected to gauge the collocational competence of the learners who took part in this study. The collocation test revealed that the students' ability to collocate with the verbs was quite low, showing the rate of correct answers is approximately 38 percent. Moreover, after taking the test, the students stated that the test was extremely difficult and that their knowledge of the verbs was far from perfect. At first glance, the verbs looked simple and easy and the students felt that they knew the verbs well enough. However, in reality, the students did not have in depth knowledge of the verbs and they struggled with acquiring and using collocations with the verbs in different contexts.

The overall findings of this study imply that there is a need of teaching delexical verb collocations to L2 learners. Pedagogically, it is necessary that depth of vocabulary knowledge including collocation knowledge should become a part of organizing principles in L2 vocabulary instruction so that L2 learners can apply them to their English learning process in more authentic ways. In order to develop L2 learner's knowledge of (delexical verb) collocations, teachers of English should introduce the concepts and importance of collocations in their classrooms and encourage students to focus on diverse meanings, meanings, and constraints of words, not just memorizing individual words in an isolated way (EY Jang 2008, Y Kim and JH Ma 2011, J-E Oh 2005). Drawing L2 learners' attention to collocations may seem trivial but it is, in effect, one of the easiest and most effective ways to improve learners' collocation competence (Boers et al. 2006).

Although many researchers claim that good collocational knowledge is essential for successful L2 development, research how to teach them effectively is far from being exhaustive. However, increasing amount of empirical research tells that teaching collocations explicitly rather than implicitly generally lead to better outcomes (Akinci 2009, H Choi and JH Ma 2012, Ördem 2005). In H Choi and JH Ma's (2012) study, the students who received explicit collocation instruction displayed better learning outcomes than the students who received implicit instruction, and the advantage was sustained. As B Kim (2012) insisted in his recent research, letting L2 learners expose themselves to authentic English corpora with the help of technology (e.g., concor-

dance programs) could also be a way of enhancing L2 learners' ability to collocate. From the long-term perspective, developing college entrance English test composed of diverse aspects of language, not just relying on reading and listening, would be ideal. Then, the orientation of Korean students' English study would be also changed gradually since college entrance English test has a great impact on middle and high school education.

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Appendix 1

- Choose the one that best fits in the blanks.

make, put, get, turn, do, run, take

1. If just you and I drive sensibly, it takes us longer to _____ home.
2. _____ a cut along that line, and the cake will be split evenly.
3. Experts say that it would _____ over \$430 million and more than 20 years to repair the island.
4. _____ a point of telling companies that you'd be willing to pay more for the product if you could be assured that the workers were being treated fairly and getting paid a decent wage.
5. How long would it _____ to move Mount Fuji?
6. He screamed and screamed, but his colleagues had already gone home to _____ ready for the party.
7. These two points _____ a line.
8. Not only can young people leave school and _____ a job at 18, they can also get married.
9. They _____ the most of the present, and thereby improve their future.
10. If you don't believe it, _____ this test.
11. If a friend has a problem, he does not see it as an opportunity to _____ ahead, but instead shows care and concern.
12. We have breakfast together and then _____ busy doing what we have to do.
13. Yes, but if we get our husbands to join us, that will _____ six.
14. To _____ matters worse, none of the drivers passing to the left and the right would stop to let her pass through the intersection.
15. We'll _____ turns.
16. Unfortunately, every time she would let other cars pass through the intersection, the drivers behind her would _____ angry, honking their horns and flashing their headlights.
17. But if we band together, we can _____ a difference.
18. During the cold winter months, the residents _____ use of *Ondol*, the traditional Korean floor-heating system which sends heat from the kitchen stove through pathways under the floor.
19. Think about how far the product had to travel to _____ to you.
20. I would advise you to get more experience and _____ some aspirin.
21. The traditional coming-of-age ceremony, however, does sometimes _____ place in a simpler manner, with 20 year olds just wearing

- traditional Korean clothes.
22. It is very difficult to _____ fresh vegetables or milk because it takes too much time to transport them to the cities.
 23. I think the idea that text messaging in shorthand is not a “real” form of communication doesn’t _____ sense.
 24. If the body doesn’t _____ enough fat and carbohydrates, it can use protein for energy.
 25. Kate’s office was all the way on the other side of town, and every evening it would take her over two hours to _____ her way home.
 26. Miller: Well, they should ask themselves these questions: Can I _____ eye contact with the person I’m talking to?
 27. Let’s _____ biomass for example.
 28. Allowed to speak, he persuades the Roman populace to _____ his side.
 29. Those who can are the kind of people who _____ and keep friends easily and collaborate with others well.
 30. As you choose your course through life, you must _____ responsibility for your own meaning.
 31. A *Hanok* has two unique features that help people _____ through the hot summers and cold winters.
 32. Do what you really love to do and you will earn enough money to _____ by.
 33. To _____ a long story short, Rip was welcomed back to the village and his daughter took him home.
 34. Finally, in Aeolian Hall, it was time for 25-year-old George to _____ up on stage.
 35. Sunbok would _____ me about, carrying me on his back.
 36. When the earthquake actually hit, every single person was able to _____ out of the building in less than two minutes.
 37. They plan to assassinate him and they persuade Brutus, a close friend of Caesar’s, to _____ part in the scheme.
 38. My brother Sunbok never came home from school without running to me to _____ a close look at his dearest little thing.
 39. You describe social skills as being more than just the ability to _____ along with others.
 40. If you do not know it, you cannot _____ the information you need.
 41. I would like to _____ it clear that I do not blame my parents for their point of view.
 42. I’d always wanted to become a writer, but I was not brave enough to _____ that choice.
 43. Some plants that grow in swamps cannot _____ enough nitrogen from the ground.
 44. But no matter who wins, we _____ together and have fun.

45. If you're good at it, you can _____ a living, and with a little extra luck, you might even end up getting rich.
46. We have to _____ up the challenge to convert to alternative energy sources before it is too late.
47. They _____ up for this lack by devouring insects or small animals.
48. I want you to _____ a list of things that are good combinations of two parts.
49. The two sides could be two people, or two kids, who come together and decide to _____ up.
50. You _____ a good point, Mr. Kim.
51. If they become lawyers or doctors just to _____ rich, they will never be happy.
52. If I _____ a decision as a private person, it doesn't affect the whole society.
53. We must not _____ the same mistakes as in the first 40 years of Nauru's existence.
54. *Hanok* are oriented to _____ advantage of the prevailing winds.
55. We need to know about them in detail to _____ sure they are setting the right examples.

Appendix 2

■ Survey

- (1) How did you feel about the test?
- (2) Which verbs were difficult?
- (2-1) Why do you think they were difficult?
- (3) Which verbs were easy?
- (3-1) Why do you think they were easy?
- (4) What could you do to better know the usages of the verbs?

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