A Review on the Important Role of Vocabulary Knowledge in Reading Comprehension Performance

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- Language acquisition is an active procedure that requires learners to continually acquire vocabulary from the target language.
- The amount of familiar and unfamiliar vocabulary is one of the most significant elements in discerning a text's degree of complication.
- Ignorance of the differences between second language (L2) and foreign language can result in confusion in the practice of language learning, teaching, and research work.

Defining vocabulary knowledge

- Vocabulary knowledge refers to knowledge of the following: the spoken form of a word, the written form of a word, the parts in a word that have meaning, the link between a particular form and a meaning, the concepts a word may possess and the items to which it can refer, the vocabulary that is associated with a word, a word's grammatical functions, a word's collocations, and a word's register and frequency.
- Receptive/passive vocabulary knowledge is the language input that learners receive from others through listening or reading and try to understand it.
- Productive/active vocabulary knowledge is the language output that learners convey as messages to others through speaking or writing.
- Educated native-English speakers know approximately 20,000 word families and each year of their early life they learn (on average) 1,000 word families.
- Knowledge of the most frequent 5000 words should provide sufficient vocabulary to facilitate reading authentic texts.
- Depth of knowledge is a network of links between words; it refers to the way they associate and interact with each other, and may be restricted in use according to register and context.

Significance of vocabulary learning

- Vocabulary appears to be a sound indicator of language ability because learners regularly make use of dictionaries (rather than grammar books).
- A large number of words are required to become competent in a foreign language.
- Vocabulary knowledge breadth and depth correlate quite significantly (approximately .8) and are both capable of explaining a considerable portion (over 50%) of the variance in reading comprehension scores.
- Vocabulary knowledge is fundamental in reading comprehension because it functions in the same way as background knowledge in reading comprehension.



Summary

- Vocabulary knowledge is essential for reading comprehension.
- Both aspects of vocabulary knowledge-depth and breadth-are required.
- Depth of vocabulary, breadth of vocabulary knowledge, and reading comprehension are highly and positively correlated.