

The Role of Vocabulary in Reading Comprehension

Authors : Engku Haliza Engku Ibrahim, Isarji Sarudin, Ainon Jariah Muhamad

Abstract : It is generally agreed that many factors contribute to one's reading comprehension and there is consensus that vocabulary size one of the main factors. This study explores the relationship between second language learners' vocabulary size and their reading comprehension scores. 130 Malay pre-university students of a public university participated in this study. They were students of an intensive English language programme doing preparatory English courses to pursue bachelors degree in English. A quantitative research method was employed based on the Vocabulary Levels Test by Nation (1990) and the reading comprehension score of the in-house English Proficiency Test. A review of the literature indicates that a somewhat positive correlation is to be expected though findings of this study can only be explicated once the final analysis has been carried out. This is an ongoing study and it is anticipated that results of this research will be finalized in the near future. The findings will help provide beneficial implications for the prediction of reading comprehension performance. It also has implications for the teaching of vocabulary in the ESL context. A better understanding of the relationship between vocabulary size and reading comprehension scores will enhance teachers' and students' awareness of the importance of vocabulary acquisition in the L2 classroom.

Keywords : vocabulary size, vocabulary learning, reading comprehension, ESL

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