

# The Role of Vocabulary in Language Teaching: An Introduction to ESL Students

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Vocabulary is an essential component of language teaching. Without vocabulary, language learning is not possible in many ways. Good vocabulary is an indicator of command in a language. Native speakers' vocabulary size is much larger than that of ESL learner. Vocabulary should be presented in multiple contexts in an ESL classroom. Vocabulary is the total number of words in a language that a speaker understands and uses in various situations. Vocabulary learning is a complex phenomenon. It is incremental in nature. Incidental vocabulary learning is a beneficial way to master words with input provided by the teacher and other learners. Vocabulary knowledge can be used both productively and receptively. The receptive use of vocabulary is larger than its productive use in daily lives.

## The Importance of Vocabulary

Noted linguist David Wilkins thinks that vocabulary learning is of prime importance to language learners. He asserts that "without grammar, very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed". You will notice tremendous improvement in your language learning if you learn more words and expressions. Most learners too acknowledge the importance of vocabulary acquisition.

Also, vocabulary drives communication in a meaningful way. It adds value to one's speech or writing. Echoing this notion, McCarthy (1990:VIII) explains that "no matter how well the students learn grammar, no matter how successfully the sounds of L2 are mastered, without words to express a wide range of meanings, communication in an L2 just cannot happen in any meaningful way."

Nevertheless, in spite of the importance of this element, vocabulary is the least systematized and the most neglected area of learning a second language not just in EGP

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