

ESL Vocabulary Learning Techniques in an ESL Classroom

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Vocabulary learning is at the heart of language teaching and is of great importance to the language learner. Vocabulary is an essential knowledge component of a language and much of the acquisition of language is dependent on the mastery of vocabulary. Language development is directly related to vocabulary development.

The Definition of Vocabulary

Neuman & Dwyer (2009) defines vocabulary as “words we must know to communicate effectively: words in speaking (expressive vocabulary) and words in listening (receptive vocabulary)”. Coady and Huckin (1998) place vocabulary learning as a critical aspect of language learning. Vocabulary refers to the stock of words in one language which are used for reading, listening, writing and speaking. Typically, vocabulary is of two types: Active and passive vocabulary. Active vocabulary refers to the words that we understand and use in our daily lives whereas the words that we understand but do not use in our daily lives are known as passive vocabulary. Vocabulary usually develops with age and serves as an important tool of communication and acquiring knowledge. Acquiring extensive vocabulary is a challenging task in learning a second or foreign language.

Vocabulary is presented in oral and printed contexts. For oral style; it is used in speaking and listening while in printed style; for reading or writing. Vocabulary of a language is just like bricks of a high building. Despite small pieces, they are vital to the great structure. Without grammar, very little can be conveyed, but without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed. Vocabulary learning is carried out in a systematic way in a second language. Furthermore, vocabulary is used to express our thoughts or feelings in a meaningful way. Indeed, neither literature nor language exists without vocabulary. It shows words

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