

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE AND L2 READING / LISTENING COMPREHENSION: A META-ANALYSIS



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KEY TERMS

Vocabulary Knowledge

Vocabulary knowledge is not limited to only the definition of a word. It also refers to the appropriate use of the word based on the context

WHAT CAN I LEARN FROM THIS SECONDARY RESEARCH?

The role of vocabulary knowledge in second language reading and listening comprehension

WHAT EVIDENCE IS SUMMARISED?

Findings from

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studies were used in this meta-analysis

WHAT DOES IT FIND?

- Vocabulary Knowledge is very important for second language reading and listening
- Those students who have mastered the meaning recall skills are better at second language reading and listening comprehension
- Form knowledge is necessary for fluency in reading
- While reading or listening, learners should first be able to recognize a word before retrieving its meaning
- Recalling accurate forms of the word may not be always necessary for comprehending the reading passage
- Form recall is the highest mastery level among other types of form meaning knowledge
- Even when learners have the mastery level of word forms, they still might not be able to use the word correctly
- While punctuation and spaces are the boundaries for understanding the words in reading passages, strings of phonemes are the stimuli in listening
- While listening, learners should put the phonemes into groups to form the words, and match the word with the mental lexicon
- Adequate knowledge is necessary to recognize the words in spoken word segmentation
- It is common for learners to have mastered a good level of spoken vocabulary knowledge, yet struggling with written vocabulary items
- Context should be limited as the variety of contexts can cause confusion and promote inferencing and guessing which are not desirable for Vocabulary Knowledge tests
- The lexical and grammatical similarities between the first language and the second language can assist second language comprehension
- When the difference between the first language and the second language is not significant, the shared lexical items between the two languages can help learners comprehend the second language input using their first language resources

HOW CAN I USE THE FINDINGS IN MY TEACHING?

- One way for teachers to develop learners' vocabulary knowledge is to encourage learners to use language resources e.g., dictionaries, concordancers. This can help learners build adequate knowledge about the target words, and find different forms, and the way words can be used in a sentence
- Graded materials can help teachers gauge the amount of vocabulary input needed for different levels
- Through extensive reading, learners might come across the same word used in different contexts which can help them know the word better
- Integrated tasks can help learners synchronise the spoken and written forms of vocabulary