

Research article

Reading contributes to the incidental acquisition of vocabulary

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Abstract. Research within the realm of second language acquisition has demonstrated the salience of reading for learning incidental vocabulary. Although many studies have investigated the incidental acquisition of vocabulary through reading, only a few studies have explored the extent to which vocabulary learning is dependent on the pleasure and frequency of extensive reading. In an attempt to fill this gap, this study reports the association between vocabulary competence and free reading, reading pleasure, and reading frequency of 239 Indian ESL learners. We administered a questionnaire to measure the said components of reading. We employed the locally modified Oxford b1 online vocabulary proficiency test to measure the vocabulary competence of learners. The findings indicated that reading frequency and reading pleasure significantly affected the vocabulary scores. There was no direct effect when the participants were merely involved in reading their own choice. We observed that free reading contributed significantly to reading pleasure and reading frequency and thereby to the participants' vocabulary test scores.

Keywords: vocabulary, reading, incidental acquisition

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