



## **Acquisition of Vocabulary Knowledge through Reading among Second Language (English) Adult Learners**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Although vocabulary knowledge is vital in constructing meaning in language, enhancing vocabulary knowledge is a challenging task for both teachers and learners of a second language. One of the predictors that can be argued to address this challenge is reading. Reading may facilitate language learners to enrich their vocabulary knowledge as they are exposed to written language in reading. Therefore, this study examined whether reading contributes to enhancing the breadth and depth of vocabulary knowledge of ESL learners. The study was conducted with a group of undergraduate students from a state university in Sri Lanka. In the research implementation, measures of reading and vocabulary knowledge were administered to 189 participants to assess their reading and vocabulary knowledge. Additionally, a questionnaire was used to collect demographic information of the participants in order to perceive the level of their prior exposure to the target language. Multiple regression analysis showed that reading significantly contributed to both breadth and depth of vocabulary knowledge. However, the results indicated that reading can contribute more to the breadth of vocabulary knowledge than to its depth. Therefore, it can be argued that although reading can contribute to vocabulary knowledge, the contribution can vary across the types of vocabulary knowledge. In conclusion, the findings help to establish that reading significantly boosts the acquisition of vocabulary knowledge among adult learners of English as a second language.

**Keywords:** *Acquisition, Adult learners, English as a Second Language, Reading, Vocabulary knowledge*