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## **THE ROLE OF VOCABULARY IN EFL LEARNING**

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## **РОЛЬ СЛОВАРНОГО ЗАПАСА В ИЗУЧЕНИИ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА**

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As we all know, vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar are the three major components of language [1]. To master a certain amount of vocabulary is the foundation of learning English. For beginners, vocabulary is far more important than grammatical structure. However, most teachers pay too much attention to the teaching of grammar, sentence pattern and pronunciation, and conduct a lot of teaching theory research, but only pay attention to the memorization of vocabulary, and do little research on vocabulary teaching. As an indispensable building material of language, the role of vocabulary in the English language system is often neglected. Many studies have shown that the proficiency of vocabulary categories, usage criteria, vocabulary size and vocabulary depth directly affect students' mastery of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills [2]. Luo Ping from the School of Foreign Languages of Sichuan Normal University proposed in her study on the asymmetric duality of lexical symbols that promoting lexical chunk learning in classroom teaching can promote the development of students' language ability and help improve beginners' written expression ability [3]. Vocabulary knowledge is an important part of language ability and a prerequisite for mastering a language. Roche et al. [4] believe that vocabulary knowledge is a prerequisite for mastering language ability, which is more conducive to improving reading and writing ability, and also plays a crucial role in improving English speaking and listening skills. Although students hold a positive attitude towards the importance of vocabulary and spend a lot of time memorizing words, most teachers do not pay enough attention to it, and overemphasize grammar and sentence patterns in the teaching process, and assume

that students have mastered vocabulary. In fact, however, beginners seem to have a much smaller vocabulary than expected and are unable to integrate vocabulary and grammar, which often makes teachers confused about how to choose the right teaching principles. At the same time, due to the confusion of vocabulary teaching methods and principles, as well as the inadequacy of vocabulary teaching, students have little effect, which further increases many students' aversion to English vocabulary learning. In order to increase the flexibility and efficiency of vocabulary teaching, this paper starts from the theoretical basis of vocabulary teaching, elaborates the concept of English vocabulary theory, discusses its specific application strategies in English vocabulary teaching practice, and analyzes and discusses the importance of vocabulary, vocabulary types, vocabulary size, vocabulary depth and vocabulary teaching principles. The systematic review of previous studies and related theories will help teachers find more efficient vocabulary teaching methods, make vocabulary teaching more interesting and meaningful, and lay a solid foundation for the systematic training of students' English listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

Vocabulary is the main tool of thought exchange and communication, and also the cornerstone of language expression. Vocabulary is the most important factor that restricts the efficiency of language learning. Compared with grammar, another important element of language, language users use words to express their feelings, ideas, emotions, opinions, etc. From a linguistic point of view, learning vocabulary seems to be more practical and helpful to improve language skills and expression. Linguist Wilkins [5] pointed out more incisively: without grammar, one cannot express well, but without vocabulary, one cannot express anything. No matter how much a beginner has mastered the language and how basic the language is, vocabulary can effectively predict the beginner's ability of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

In a word, vocabulary size and vocabulary depth in language communication contribute to the establishment of a good interactive communication mechanism. Grace [7], an American philosopher of language, pointed out that both sides of communication must abide by certain basic principles and divided them into four categories: quantity, quality, relationship and mode. In other words, when enough information is transmitted in the communication and corresponding words are given, the words can usually reach the maximum quantity. When the transmitted information is authentic, the communication parties can obtain the maximum quality of communication. Thus, words are expected to describe real thoughts and lead the listener to a certain informational intention (what the speaker really meant). In addition, the relevance of words makes information interweave and obtain the maximum relevance. Finally, as long as the wording is clear, brief and orderly, theoretically the purpose of communication can be achieved and the maximum manner of communication can be realized.

Because language is a social tool for the exchange of ideas and communication, it has social functions, cultural functions, self-reflection and self-regulation functions. Linguist Richards [8] pointed out that language is a system of expressing meaning.

Through the interaction and communication between two parties, its lexical structure reflects its function and communicative use, and expresses its real intention. The main unit of language is no longer its grammatical and structural features, but the function and communicative meaning category of the words in the text..

Language is also a symbol representing human thoughts and emotions, and human thoughts in the real world can be understood through language. The linguist Roman Jakobson [9] once said, "Every piece of information is made up of symbols." A large number of symbols have been accumulated in the communication of thoughts and emotions in human life, and they are everywhere and have formed specific meanings. It is through the symbolic ability that human beings know the world and themselves, and rely on the function of symbols to realize the transmission of knowledge and mutual communication. That is, word choice in communication is determined by experience and ultimately builds human society.

Words selected in communication and interaction are helpful to generate emotions and perceive the emotions of others, while the expression and understanding of these emotions depend on contextual information such as time, place and events [10]. Language in a given context plays a role in emotion and contributes to the understanding of language, which can be used to perceive emotional meaning from events. This means that emotions are established when feelings are classified using emotional knowledge and corresponding words are found in the emotional vocabulary.

Language is a unique way of packing semantic material into words and expressing intention through words. Therefore, the analysis of lexical types is very important. For teachers, lexical type analysis can also better understand how to use situations, preferences, needs and other scenarios for effective teaching. In recent years, scholars at home and abroad have paid extensive attention to and deeply studied lexical types, and put forward a variety of classification methods. Nation et al. [11] put forward the concepts of receptive and productive words for the first time according to the mastery level and application needs of vocabulary. The number of receptive words is far greater than that of productive words, but the former can evolve into the latter. Generally speaking, the definition of receptive words emphasizes the understanding of language, while the definition of productive words emphasizes the expression of ideas. In other words, the vocabulary in listening and reading teaching is mainly receptive vocabulary, while the writing process is mainly productive vocabulary. In terms of lexical frequency, Laufer et al. [12] divided words into active words and passive words, in which passive words are often not used in the output process, while active words are those words that can be skillfully used in the output activities. For example, listening and reading vocabulary are often understood in the process of language perception. Table 1 shows the types of vocabulary used for different language skills

Active and passive vocabulary is a basic concept in the theory of vocabulary acquisition and is widely used. Active vocabulary refers to words that are fully understood and frequently used by both parties, and can be easily mastered by beginners. Laufer et al. [13] subdivide active words into controlling active words and

free active words. Controlling active words are words that can be output only when prompted, while free active words are words that can be used independently without prompting, that is, they can react immediately when they hear them and are taken freely when they want to use them.

Since vocabulary teaching should run through the whole teaching process and gradually increase the intensity and difficulty with the improvement of students' cognitive ability, understanding what to teach and how to teach it is crucial to grasp the principles of English vocabulary teaching. Zankov's five principles of developing teaching theory [14] point out the principle of teaching at a high level of difficulty, the principle of teaching at a high speed, the principle that theoretical knowledge plays a leading role, and the principle of making students understand the learning process. In the whole process of vocabulary teaching, the coupling and correlation between words will inevitably have a certain impact on vocabulary teaching. In addition to meeting students' needs and teaching tasks, the goal of vocabulary teaching must also be developed from the perspectives of oral form, written form, vocabulary components, vocabulary concepts and their possible associated terms, vocabulary links, vocabulary grammar, vocabulary collocation, vocabulary register and frequency, so as to take into account the whole process, clear hierarchy, deepening layer by layer, and vertical and horizontal connection. To construct students' vocabulary system.

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