

**MOTHER TONGUE AS A
RESOURCE FOR THE TEACHING OF
ENGLISH VOCABULARY**

by
Dr. Shiny K.P., JMJ

EMESCO

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Chapter-I

Introduction

“Education is not the learning of facts, but the training of the mind to think”

– *Albert Einstein*

1.1 Defining Vocabulary

Vocabulary is knowledge of words and word meanings. In the context of L2 learning, it is usually implicit that vocabulary means new words. Yet, a new item of vocabulary may be more than just a single word as it may be two or three words occurring together expressing one idea.

Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (OALD) defines vocabulary as follows:

- a) all the words a person knows or uses,
- b) all the words in a particular language,
- c) the words that people use when they are talking about a particular subject,
- d) a list of words with their meanings, especially in a book for learning a foreign language (OALD, p.1707).

It is clear from the above definitions that vocabulary means all the words in a particular language.

Language emerges in the life of a speaker first as words. Moreover, vocabulary goes on widening in one’s own language or in a second or foreign language. The pressing needs of the learners and also their level and the context in which they are placed shape

one's command of vocabulary. In this study, the term vocabulary refers to the learning of the basic vocabulary of a second language, i.e. English with the support of mother tongue in the classroom to enable the learners to communicate in English.

1.2 Types of Vocabulary

There are two types of vocabulary, according to their usefulness in a language: *active* (productive) and *passive* (receptive). The first is actually used in speaking and writing. The second one is used to comprehend while listening and reading. An individual's receptive vocabulary is always larger of the two. For example, a young child will be able to follow simple commands before it begins to say something. In this case, the child's passive vocabulary is liable to be in tens, if not more, but his or her productive vocabulary may be nil. When the child starts to speak and later to write, his active vocabulary begins to increase. Sometimes the productive vocabulary may end up being as large as the receptive vocabulary, as in the case of a scholar. Some scholars use a large number of words while writing but may not use them in actual conversation. In academic presentations he or she may use many 'learned' words, though.

Active vocabulary that comprises words 'used' or 'usable' in a context to encode the intended meaning. To say that someone has a word as part of his or her active vocabulary he or she should 'know' its spelling and pronunciation, its grammar, its collocational values and its appropriate use. If the user is a scholar, he/she also would know the technical use of the word. For example, a word like 'incident' has a specific meaning in Physics which an ordinary user would not be aware of.

1.3 Lexis and Grammar

Lexis is the total stock of words in a language and grammar is the system that underlies the functioning of a language. Lexis is distinguished from vocabulary in that vocabulary represents