

# *Assessing the Role of Vocabulary Knowledge in Developing EFL Learners' Writing Skills: Implications for Intentional and Incidental Vocabulary Learning*

Linda H. F. LIN

*The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, HKSAR*

*Vocabulary knowledge is essential for language learning. This is particularly so for English as a second language (L2) and foreign language (EFL) learners, whose affordances of input and output opportunities may be limited. A rich contextual learning environment is instrumental for these language learners because it enables incidental learning to take place. However, little research has investigated the role of vocabulary knowledge in developing EFL learners' writing proficiency. The current study, drawing upon two vocabulary tests, one writing test, three focus group interviews, and two case studies, addresses this gap from multifaceted perspectives. The findings of the study provided empirical evidence of the critical role of vocabulary knowledge in EFL learners' writing proficiency. The results also revealed the centrality of a contextual learning environment in developing EFL learners' writing skills. The paucity of such an environment limited the learners' writing experience, hampered their confidence, and caused their misconceptions of what counts as good writing. This study contributes to research on the relationships between learners' vocabulary knowledge and writing proficiency. It has significant implications for intentional and incidental vocabulary learning and profound implications for EFL teaching pedagogy.*