

## **Second Language Vocabulary Learning: Etymology or Synonymous Words?<sup>1</sup>**

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### **Abstract**

Teaching experiences show that sometimes having knowledge about etymology and knowing synonymous words can improve second language vocabulary learning. As these are from among the most common methods of language learning, this research is about investigating the effect of teaching etymology in comparison with providing synonymous words on vocabulary learning. As the learners' ability in using words during different time spans after learning is important, the effect of these two methods on short-term and long-term retention of different language proficiency levels was investigated. Participants were 120 learners from Alzahra University in Tehran, Iran. They were divided into two groups of elementary and advanced language proficiency levels according to PET test. The vocabulary was taught through etymology and synonym. Results

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of this study show a significant effect of etymology knowledge on vocabulary learning in short and long term retention of high language proficiency level learners.

**Keywords:** *second language vocabulary learning, etymology, synonym, language proficiency level.*