

COMPARISON OF APPROACHES TO VOCABULARY ACQUISITION IN TESOL: INSIGHTS FROM NATION (2000) AND MARINO (2023)

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Abstract: *This review examines two approaches to vocabulary acquisition in second language (L2) learning: managing lexical interference and using storytelling. Paul Nation's research highlights the cognitive challenges of learning related vocabulary items together, supported by studies showing increased interference and confusion. In contrast, storytelling embeds vocabulary in meaningful narratives, fostering engagement and retention. Combining Nation's strategies for reducing interference with storytelling's contextual richness offers a comprehensive approach to vocabulary instruction, addressing both cognitive and contextual aspects of learning.*

Keywords: *Vocabulary acquisition, lexical interference, storytelling, english language learners (ells), higher education, second language learning, pedagogical strategies*

This literature review synthesizes research on vocabulary acquisition, focusing on the issues of lexical interference in second language (L2) learning and the application of storytelling for enhancing vocabulary among English Language Learners (ELLs) in higher education. The first article by Paul Nation investigates the impact of learning related vocabulary items together, such as synonyms and antonyms, on L2 vocabulary acquisition. Nation's review of empirical studies highlights that presenting related words simultaneously can lead to significant interference, complicating recall and learning (Nation, n.d.). Foundational research by Higa (1963) demonstrated that related vocabulary items, learned in sets, can interfere with each other more than unrelated items, due to semantic similarities. Tinkham (1993, 1997) and Waring (1997) corroborate this, finding that lexical sets, such as groups of fruit or clothing terms, require more repetitions and result in increased confusion compared to unrelated vocabulary. Schneider, Healy, and Bourne (1998) added nuance by comparing thematic versus unrelated word sets, finding that while thematic organization reduces some interference, it does not fully eliminate it.

In contrast, the second article explores the use of storytelling as a strategy for vocabulary acquisition among ELLs in higher education. This review underscores the effectiveness of embedding vocabulary in rich, contextually meaningful narratives to enhance learning. Theoretical frameworks by García and Kleifgen (2019) and Collier and Thomas (2017) support an integrative approach to language learning, emphasizing the dynamic nature of multilingualism. Adichie's (2009) concept of "the danger of a single story" and Eisenman's (2021) advocacy for diverse curricula highlight the value of incorporating multiple perspectives in educational content. Marino (2023) builds on this by demonstrating how storytelling and creative writing prompts can actively engage students with new vocabulary,

improving retention and comprehension. Research by Taffe et al. (2009) and Gatlin-Nash and Dockterman (2020) on literature-based approaches further supports this method, showing that interactive vocabulary learning through storytelling can be particularly effective in higher education settings.

Comparing the two articles, Nation's research emphasizes the cognitive challenges and interference associated with learning related vocabulary items, recommending strategies such as separating related terms and using varied contexts to mitigate these challenges (Nation, n.d.). This focus addresses specific issues of lexical interference that arise when similar words are taught together. Conversely, the second article highlights storytelling as a broader pedagogical tool that not only engages students but also embeds new vocabulary within meaningful and varied narratives (Marino, 2023). Storytelling addresses vocabulary acquisition from a perspective that integrates context and personal relevance, rather than solely managing cognitive interference. In conclusion, while Nation's article provides insights into managing lexical interference through instructional strategies, the second article demonstrates how storytelling can enrich vocabulary learning by contextualizing new words in dynamic narratives. Both approaches offer valuable contributions to vocabulary instruction: Nation's strategies help mitigate specific learning difficulties, whereas storytelling fosters a more holistic and engaging learning environment. Combining these strategies could enhance overall vocabulary acquisition by addressing both cognitive and contextual aspects of learning.

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