

## LEXICAL OPPORTUNITIES IN ENGLISH THROUGH THE LENS OF ETYMOLOGY

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### abstract

A substantial linguistic base requires a good command of grammar and vocabulary. The knowledge of vocabulary encompasses form, meaning, and use. Aside from pronunciation and grammatical functions, etymology might also be associated with vocabulary knowledge (i.e., form and meaning) in that the spelling and pronunciation and, accordingly, meaning of words have evolved in time. In this regard, studying etymology might offer educational advantages for language learners and teachers. To this end, this study dealt with the utilization of etymology in vocabulary instruction. The background information and the conceptual framework of etymology were initially presented. The relationship of etymology with vocabulary and its significance were established next. Previous studies on the relevant topic were cited afterward. The potential benefits of etymology in language education, particularly vocabulary instruction, and their implications were discussed. The study concluded by verbalizing the limitations and offering recommendations for future research. It is consequently expected to contribute to the relevant literature by serving as a guide for language practitioners.

## INTRODUCTION

Language is a constantly changing and adaptive system that forms the foundation of human communication. It is not only characterized by its vocabulary, but also by the complex network of associations that link words to their origin, meaning, and history. For language learners and educators, exploring etymology – the study of the origin and evolution of words – provides a captivating experience that can significantly improve one’s capacity to comprehend and retain new vocabulary (Boers, Eyckmans & Stengers, 2007).

Etymology studies the origin and evolution of words, originating from the Greek words *etym*, meaning “true sense or original meaning” and *logia*, meaning “study of”. Beyond simply memorizing word lists, an understanding of etymology allows language learners to gain a deeper understanding of the complex network of human expression. Etymology reveals the narratives behind words, revealing their mysterious histories and cultural associations.

One of the most distinctive features of etymology lies in its capacity to facilitate the accessibility of obscure and intricate terms. Learners can recognize well-known roots, prefixes, and suffixes by dividing words into morphemes. This helps to elucidate the meanings and associations between words that may appear to be unrelated (Akbulut, 2017). Consider the words *benevolent* and *malevolent*. Both are derived from the Latin roots and only differ in their respective prefixes (*male* means “bad”, and *bene* means “good”). Learners can immediately understand that the two have opposite meanings.

Not only does etymology assist learners in understanding new words, but it also provides them with a useful set of tools for extrapolating the meaning of unknown lexical items they may come across in the future (Bellomo, 2005). When learners acquire proficiency in

identifying common suffixes and affixes, they can make educated guesses about the meaning of words encountered in reading or conversational contexts (Nation & Meara, 2013). This allows learners to become more independent in their language learning and increases their confidence in coping with new vocabulary (Ebbers, 2017).

In addition, incorporating etymology into the curriculum enhances the learning process by providing contextual and cultural information (Maxson, 2010). It provides insight into the evolution of languages over time, reflecting migrations, invasions, and cultural shifts that have shaped human experience (Arbib, 2012). Learning the origin of languages can reveal how it relates to different languages and cultures, making language learning a way to bridge the gap to understanding and appreciating various cultures (Lund, 2007). Despite a plethora of research on the impact of etymology on learning and teaching idioms (Ali Zarei & Rahimi, 2014; Baleghizadeh & Bagheri, 2012; Jahangard & Sedghatkar, 2019; Moreno, 2011; Reisi Gahroei & Tabatabaei, 2013; Vasiljevic, 2015), research that highlights the theoretical foundation of including etymology in language education is scarce. Plus, the introduction of etymological cognition of learners to exploit etymology effectively in language learning also contributes to the significance of this study.

All things considered, this article will explore the practical advantages of including etymology in vocabulary learning practices by (i) presenting a concise description of etymology, (ii) establishing a theoretical rationale for using etymology in vocabulary instruction, (iii) outlining the relationship between vocabulary and etymology by particularly explaining the significance of vocabulary in language education, and (iv) citing the previous studies on the topic of interest. The article will discuss the potential opportunities for incorporating etymology in vocabulary learning and teaching and conclude with some recommendations.

### **Etymology: A Concise Description**

Etymology is the study of word origin, evolution, and history, seeking to reveal the complex paths that words have traveled through history and across languages and their meanings and cultural importance (Minkova & Stockwell, 2009). The following definition is provided by Merriam-Webster online dictionary:

the history of a linguistic form (such as a word) shown by tracing its development since its earliest recorded occurrence in the language where it is found, by tracing its transmission from one language to another, by analyzing it into its component parts, by identifying its cognates in other languages, or by tracing it and its cognates to a common ancestral form in an ancestral language (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).

Essentially, etymology is the study of the evolution of a word from its earliest forms to its modern form, involving the analysis of the root, prefix, and suffix of a word, as well as the semantic changes that have occurred throughout its history (Frățilă, 2011). This method of word analysis allows etymologists to uncover hidden associations between seemingly disparate terms.

Etymology can also be viewed as a multidisciplinary field of study that is not restricted to a single language (Stanciu, 2020). Many languages have borrowed words and expressions from other languages, and etymology helps to map these borrowing patterns. English, for example, was heavily influenced by Latin, French, and German, as well as many other languages. As a result, English has a wide variety of vocabulary.

What etymology also gives us is a better understanding of how languages developed in the past and in different cultures (Durkin, 2009), revealing the impact of conquest, migration,

and commerce on linguistic development. It also offers insight into how languages can articulate new ideas and reflect society's changing needs and developments (Hosford, 1987).

All in all, etymology enhances our comprehension of language by elucidating the narratives and associations behind the words that we use on a daily basis. It provides a historical perspective, a means of connecting different cultures, and a means of understanding and appreciating the intricacies of language.

### **Connectionism as a Theoretical Rationale**

Connectionism is a cognitive approach to language learning that emphasizes the process of language acquisition through the formation of neural connections between words and their associated meanings (Ellis, 2003). This implies that language development is not primarily governed by rules or reliant on explicit grammatical constructions, but rather is based on the reinforcement of word-to-word associations based on associative patterns and experiences (Sloutsky et al., 2017).

In connectionism, the process of learning occurs through the use of language and the repetition of words in different situations (Ellis, 2003). As a result of these interactions, neural networks are formed that connect words with their meanings, pronunciations, and contexts. As words are used more often and in more contexts, these neural networks grow stronger and more reliable.

When used in the context of vocabulary development, connectionism accords with the utilization of etymology. Etymology allows learners to gain insight into the historical and linguistic contexts of words, thus enabling them to form meaningful associations. In the first place, etymology breaks down words into root, root-phonetic, and root-phonetic suffixes. Connectionism uses this information to help students identify common elements across words, helping them form neural connections. For example, recognizing that the terms *benefactor* and *malefactor* are derived from the root *bene* allows students to more effectively connect these two terms and their opposite meanings.

Connectionism is based on the concept of semantic networks, in which words are associated with associated concepts and meanings (Rumelhart & Todd, 1993). The historical and cultural context of words is provided by etymology, allowing learners to form more complex semantic associations. For example, knowing that *disaster* derives from the Latin word *dis-* and Greek word *astron* (star) due to the historical beliefs about unfortunate events attributed to the positions of celestial bodies heightens our understanding of the word's origins and connotations.

Additionally, memory is consolidated by the formation of associations and links between words and their respective etymological origins (Boers, 2004). The use of etymological insights provides learners with a logical framework for the organization and retention of vocabulary. This integration with connectionism facilitates the long-term preservation of words and their cognates. Furthermore, connectionism encourages learners to make inferences based on their collected associations (Bereiter, 1991) Etymology empowers learners to infer the meaning of unknown words by identifying common root and suffixes (Bellomo, 2005). Predictive vocabulary learning might help improve vocabulary and reading skills (Grabe, 1991).

In brief, the connectionist approach to language learning emphasizes the importance of associations and neural links in the acquisition of vocabulary. Etymology provides the necessary historical and linguistic context to construct meaningful word associations. It

facilitates pattern recognition, semantic network enhancement, and memory consolidation, resulting in more efficient and comprehensive vocabulary development.

## **Vocabulary in Language Education**

Vocabulary plays an essential role in language development, providing the foundation for communication and comprehension (Richards, 2015). It is a collection of words and sentences that enable us to express concepts, communicate ideas, and comprehend the communications of others. As Wilkins rightly (1972) argues, “while very little can be conveyed without grammar, nothing can be conveyed without vocabulary” (p.111). Vocabulary plays a multifaceted role in language learning, and its incorporation into etymology provides an additional layer of complexity to the learning experience.

Vocabulary refers to the language to communicate their ideas, feelings, and aspirations, without which communication can become difficult (Tran, 2016). A well-developed vocabulary is essential for learners to effectively communicate complex concepts and engage in conversational contexts. Etymology improves vocabulary acquisition by elucidating the linguistic and cultural contexts of words, thereby providing contextual information and depth to how they are used (Fageeh, 2014).

In order to comprehend language, whether spoken or written, learners must be able to identify and understand the words used. Having a good vocabulary is necessary for understanding the content of texts, comprehending spoken language, and comprehending the nuances of language (Schmitt et al., 2017). Etymology facilitates understanding by revealing the origin of words, allowing students to make informed guesses about the meaning of unknown words based on their semantic origins.

A well-developed vocabulary enables individuals to express their ideas and emotions accurately, empowering learners to select the most appropriate words to express their concepts, especially relevant in creative writing, effective communication, or any other context where the subtleties of language are significant (Shea & Ceprano, 2017). Etymology can improve clarity by providing insight into the meanings and nuances of words.

Vocabulary is also an essential part of reading and writing (Webb & Nation, 2017). An extensive vocabulary improves reading ability as readers come across more words in a text. It also allows for more complex and engaging writing. Etymology might assist students in the acquisition of literacy skills by providing them with the ability to identify word families, grammatical constructions, and related concepts, thus enabling them to better comprehend concepts and compose cohesive written works.

Last but not least, etymology offers an insight into a word’s linguistic and cultural history and shows how languages have developed over time, emphasizing the influence of various cultures and historical events. Contextual knowledge enhances vocabulary and promotes a broader comprehension of linguistic and cultural aspects (Brooks, Clenton & Fraser, 2021).

## **Previous Research on Etymology in Language Education**

Early in the academic history, Pierson (1989) proposed that etymology could be incorporated into language teaching programs for meaningful and retainable learning. In 1999, Bellomo conducted an action research on using etymology in classroom and suggested its exploitation for word attack strategy regardless of learners’ native language backgrounds. The usefulness of etymology in learning figurative meaning was reported in a previous study

(Boersma et al., 2007). Takahashi (2011) concluded in her thesis that learning vocabulary was “impressive and fun” (p.1). Relevant literature review revealed that studies on etymology mostly revolved around learning and teaching idioms or figurative language. For example, Moreno (2011) stated that color-themed idioms were teachable and learnable through etymology supported with visuals. The study by Baleghizadeh and Bagheri (2012) showed that etymological elaborations assisted in better understanding and use of idioms. Exploring the influence of etymology and movie clips on learning idioms, Reisi Gahroei and Tabatabaei (2013) reported better learner performances with the first method. Ali Zarei and Rahimi (2014) investigated the impact of etymological development, contextual cues, and vocabulary knowledge on idiomatic comprehension and use and found the effectiveness of the first over the others. Jahangard and Sedghatkar (2019) compared the effectiveness of translation, definition, etymology, and pictorial methods in retaining idioms and found the prevalent positive impacts of etymology and imageable expressions. However, other studies examined the effect of etymology on general vocabulary instruction. For instance, Vasiljevic (2015) examined the comparative effect of pictorial support and etymology notes in idiomatic recall and concluded precedence of the latter over the prior. Solgi and Sotoudehnama (2017) reported the short- and long-term positive effects of etymology over synonyms in learning vocabulary. Positive results of teaching word etymologies were also reported by Golzarnia and Rahmani (2018) in learning vocabulary among young learners.

## **METHOD**

### **Research Design**

The study intended to explore the potential pedagogical advantages of etymological incorporation into language learning, particularly vocabulary learning. To this end, it employed a systematic literature review (Feak & Swales, 2009) and was exploratory in nature (Bernard, 2017). Frequently used to investigate a novel or unknown issue (Olawale et al., 2023), exploratory research design (ERD) can be used to elucidate concepts, establish goals for future studies, gather data for research conducted in a specific real-world setting, etc. (Swedberg, 2020). The current study employed ERD to identify the priorities for using etymology in language education contexts. Secondary research methods, such as reviews of existing literature and empirical data, can be used in the ERD (Bernard, 2017). A comprehensive literature review was therefore utilized to collect data in this study. Although ERD cannot make definitive judgments by itself, it might be able to provide valuable insights into a particular issue or situation (Elman, Gerring & Mahoney, 2020).

### **Data Collection**

To identify the potential benefits of etymology in vocabulary learning, such databases as ERIC, Google Scholar, Sage, ScienceDirect, and Taylor & Francis were utilized for data collection. All potential research regarding the use of etymology in language instruction was found by searching these databases. The query was not time-bound, but was limited to such keywords as “etymology,” “vocabulary,” “vocabulary learning,” “etymological knowledge,” “language learning,” and “language classrooms.” The additional criteria adopted in the study were as follows: (i) The research articles must be published in English, (ii) The research articles must include etymology, vocabulary, and/or language in its title, and (iii) The study must be conducted in language and/or education contexts. Initial screening revealed a total of 602 articles across the five databases (ERIC= 123, Google Scholar= 100, Sage= 307, ScienceDirect= 28, and Taylor & Francis= 44). Relevant theses and dissertations (e.g., Miño

Meneses, 2022) were also included in the data collection tools to eliminate any publication bias. After a careful examination by three experts in the field, the total sum of reviewed articles was finalized as 25 (see appendix 1).

## **Data Analysis**

The raw data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis in compliance with the recommendations of other studies (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Mayring, 2000; Patton, 2002). The data were initially prepared in this context. The complete content was then used to determine the coding units, paying particular attention to physical language units (words like etymology, advantages, and vocabulary). Next, categories were determined, and then they were labeled under coding systems (like benefits). To ensure coding uniformity across the three coders, a sample was coded. All the data set was coded after a high level of inter-coder agreement. For uniformity, the entire coding was reviewed again. From the coded data, inferences were drawn later. The results were at last prepared for publication.

Regarding trustworthiness, the guidelines provided by Lincoln and Guba (1985) were adhered to (i.e., credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability). Peer debriefing was used to achieve this credibility. Additionally, the coders' proficiency in language education added to their believability. Because the material was examined impartially and consistently, it is believed that the conclusions are applicable to different situations. For the purpose of auditing, sources such as raw data, memoranda, coding guides, and process notes were employed to ensure dependability and confirmability.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

This paper tackled the opportunities that etymology offers for vocabulary learning and teaching. To this end, it initially presented a succinct description of etymology. It summarized that etymology is a cross-disciplinary field that studies lexical evolutions, including inflectional analyses and semantic changes. It also asserted that studying etymology provides learners with insights into linguistic developments across cultures, thereby supplying them with cultural information. Following the etymological characterization, the integration of etymology was built on a theoretical ground - i.e., connectionism. Just as learners form neural links between words and their associated meanings in connectionism, etymology allows learners to make connections thanks to the linguistic and historical context it provides. For instance, learners might form and consolidate the neural links they have formed when they are equipped with etymological awareness and knowledge (e.g., “bene” means good; “male” means bad in Latin) about the target language. By associating these Latin-originated prefixes with positive and negative meanings, learners might form links between the lexical items (i.e., prefixes) and their associated meanings. Once supplied with such etymological knowledge (e.g., roots, suffixes, prefixes), learners will be able to make informed guesses about unfamiliar lexical items in prospective readings. Etymological knowledge also provides learners with cultural information, as in the case of “disaster,” derived from the Latin prefix “dis” and Greek word “astron (star).” Learners engaged in such an etymological study might also discover the historical beliefs about unfortunate events attributed to the positions of celestial bodies and be equipped with the cultural foundation of the word, resulting in more meaningful learning. Thanks to these meaningful associations, learners will be able to retain more vocabulary.

Subsequent to the theoretical ramifications of etymology for language learning in general and vocabulary learning in particular, the study conducted a comprehensive literature

review on the research topic. The search was not time-bound but limited to specific keywords, such as “etymology,” “language,” and “vocabulary.” The research articles published in English that included one of the aforementioned keywords in their title were collected for analysis. Five well-known databases (e.g., ERIC, Google Scholar, Sage, ScienceDirect, and Taylor & Francis) were included in the study. To eliminate publication bias, thesis and dissertations about the topic were also taken into account. As many as 602 results were acquired after the database search. The total number of research articles was concluded as 26 after implementing the requirements (e.g., to be published in the field of language and/or education). The review process was conducted by three experts, including the researcher, to ensure reliability of the procedures. Full screening of the 25 articles was administered to reveal the potential benefits of etymology in vocabulary learning and teaching.

As far as the findings are concerned, Pierson (1989) claimed that etymology was ignored in second language education contexts; however, its integration into classes might offer meaningful linguistic input for upper-level language learners, especially with regard to abstract technical vocabulary. In another study, Bellomo (1999) found no significant impact of Latin-based native languages on vocabulary acquisition of learners with such linguistic backgrounds. In other words, students whose L1 is Latin-based (the Romance languages) do not unfairly benefit from using etymology as a word attack strategy. In 2004, Rothwell (2004) discussed the etymology of the word “kevil” in its relationship to “quibble.” Boers et al. (2007) argued that identifying an idiom by its origin was shown to improve retention. Their study findings indicated that identifying idioms by their origin helps learners understand their figurative meaning better. The results also showed that identifying the origin of some idioms helps learners determine whether they might be typical of informal speech. Soyşekerci and Erturgut (2009) investigated the usage of “academician” and “academic” in the Turkish context, where the first referred to members of academies (e.g., the Royal Academy) and the latter concerned with teaching staff at universities. In their study with 50 Iranian advanced students, Bagheri and Fazel (2010) found that etymological elaboration enhances learners' comprehension and retention of idioms and supported their finding with Dual Coding Theory. Hashemi and Aziznezhad (2011) maintained that vocabulary acquisition is crucial for English language learners and might be achieved through various methods, such as practicing in conversations, reading books, watching media, and learning about common roots. They, therefore, proposed etymology as a word attack strategy. In a similar vein, Moreno (2011) asserted that teaching figurative language and idioms in L2 is challenging, with idioms related to colors varying depending on origin, but etymology might help determine their root and teachability. According to Pongweni and Alimi (2013), English has a history of Graeco-Latinate origin, resulting in a mix of short and familiar words and foreign and long ones. ESL students struggle with deficient vocabulary instruction and acquisition of the vocabulary of academic discourse. Their study examined the etymology of English words for ESL students and offered measures to alleviate their problems. It also discussed confused pairs of words, mistaken synonymous pairs, and coinage resulting from a lack of appropriate vocabulary and recommended teaching etymology to improve fluency. Sun and Sun (2013) explored the role of etymology in teaching English vocabulary from a cognitive perspective. In their study with 90 intermediate students, Reisi Gahroei and Tabatabaei (2013) investigated the effect of teaching idioms through etymology and movie clips on the quality of L2 learners' idiom learning and found that participants in etymology-and movie clip groups had better performance. Dance (2014) explored etymologies, semantics, and contexts of key words from the 12th century, during which English was significantly influenced by Norse and French, investigating the evidence for contact and change at the boundary of Old and Middle English. In a study by Ali Zarei and Rahimi (2014), 60 male

intermediate-level EFL students were randomly assigned to one treatment condition. Participants in the etymological elaboration group performed significantly better than those in the vocabulary knowledge group on idiom production. The authors argued that the findings might have implications for teachers, learners, and syllabus designers. Fageeh (2014) investigated the effects of using the Online Dictionary to present an etymological analysis of new vocabulary items in hyperlinked words to students online. He found that this technique improved vocabulary learning and induced positive attitudes toward vocabulary instruction, with recommendations for further research. Images, according to Vasiljevic (2015), have a powerful mnemonic effect, and dual-coding of input strengthens memory traces and information retrieval. His study compared the effectiveness of pictorial support and etymological notes, revealing that etymology promoted the retention of idiom meaning, while pictorial support facilitated the recall of linguistic form. For Yamsani (2018), etymology is an effective and efficient approach to vocabulary acquisition, with root word analysis, relation with other languages, and word origins being central and significant for academic and professional success, and etymology should be included as a subject at high school level in India. In their study, Golzarnia and Rahmani (2018) investigated the effect of teaching morphemes on young EFL learners by dividing them into experimental and control groups, with the first group outperforming the latter in their knowledge of word parts. They suggested implications for teachers, material developers, and learners. Wang (2019) argued that vocabulary is essential for language expression, but previous teaching methods only paid attention to pronunciation and collocation without explaining the original meaning. He, therefore, claimed that the etymology-linking method assists with the source of words' meaning to establish systematization and motivation, expand vocabulary, and improve cross-cultural communication. Jahangard and Sedaghatkar (2019) examined the impact of translation, definition, etymology, and imageable expressions on idiom retention in 120 EFL Iranian learners. Etymology and pictorial methods had a more positive influence on retention in receptive and productive modes. Saeed and Abdulrahman (2020) tackled the importance of etymology in teaching second language words and how it helped learners understand their meaning sooner. Language is a carrier of culture, and culture nourishes language, with 56% of commonly used English words originating from Latin and Greek (Fan & Yu, 2021). They believe that etymology is crucial in vocabulary teaching, and this paper proposes applying Greco-Roman mythology to improve vocabulary learning by classifying English vocabulary into four forms based on etymological motivation. In her thesis, Miño Meneses (2022) analyzed the influence of etymology instruction on vocabulary learning of sixth-semester University students in Ecuador. Twenty-six students received five one-hour sessions on cognates, borrowings, word-formation processes, diachronic study of words, and basic Greek and Latin roots, and learned how to use etymological dictionaries. A pre-experimental study assessed their receptive vocabulary knowledge before and after the treatment, and statistical procedures showed a positive influence on receptive vocabulary learning. In a recent study, Li (2023) examined the relationship between *jiao* and *xue* in traditional Chinese education. She used etymological investigation, canonical analysis, and experiential reflection to provide an extensive analysis. The interdependency of *xue* and *jiao* was supported by canonical doctrines and individualized experiences. The study consulted sources in multiple languages and integrated both the classics and the self as a method.

The findings of previous research on etymology showed that it is learnable and teachable, especially in the context of vocabulary instruction. Although most academic studies centered on using etymology in learning and teaching figurative language, more specifically, idioms (Baleghizadeh & Bagheri, 2012; Reisi Gahroei & Tabatabaei, 2013; Ali Zarei & Rahimi,



2014; Jahangard & Sedghatkar, 2019), other studies yielded positive results on its effectiveness in general vocabulary learning and teaching as well (Solgi & Sotoudehnama, 2017; Golzarnia & Rahmani, 2018). As far the results of previous studies are concerned, one interesting findings was that the majority of the studies accumulated in the Asian (e.g., Iranian) context. Another finding riveting findings was the predominant focus on idiomatic expressions in etymological studies. This apparently calls for more research (quantitative and qualitative) on other language areas across diverse linguistic and cultural contexts.

Given the significance of etymology in language education, particularly in vocabulary instruction, one important implication of this research might be the acquisition of etymological cognition (i.e., awareness, knowledge, and competence) (Figure 1) by language learners. It might be stated that there is a hierarchical relationship between the components of etymological cognition. Etymological awareness here refers to the perception of etymology based on collected information or experience. In simplest terms, language learners with etymological awareness know that words might come from various linguistic origins and have different histories. Etymological knowledge, on the other hand, pertains to the understanding of etymology acquired by experience or study. That is, learners knowledgeable in etymology are expected to know about etymological facts, ideas, theories, and principles. In the next step, language learners might be expected to have etymological competence, referring to the ability to utilize etymology in their language learning experiences. In addition to encompassing the first two constructs (i.e., etymological awareness and etymological knowledge), being competent in etymology also involves accurately exploiting etymological information and analysis in oral and written language use.

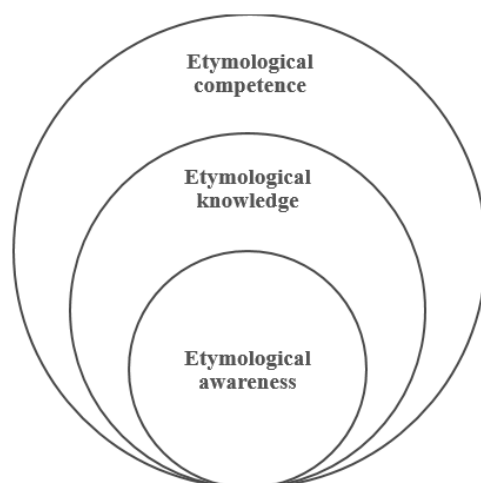


Figure 1. *The components of etymological cognition*

Despite the primary focus on vocabulary in this study, etymology might also be leveraged in other linguistic and lexical areas. For instance, studying etymology can help learners with spelling and pronunciation. As a result of linguistic changes, the spelling may be altered to reflect changes in pronunciation, or the pronunciation may be altered to match the changed spellings. Thanks to etymology, these changes might be followed. Etymological study might also aid in establishing cross-cultural connections because common roots and affixes can foster the acquisition of other languages. In addition, introducing etymology in classrooms might enable learners to build up a solid vocabulary base. For example, teaching the Latin root *aud-* (to hear) might facilitate the learning of words with similar roots, such as *audio*, *audience*,

and *auditory*. Moreover, language teachers might harness etymology-based games and activities for a more engaging and entertaining learning environment. Additionally, words maps and visual aids (e.g., etymology charts) might assist learners to visualize the connections between words and their origins. Furthermore, the etymologies of two or more languages might be compared in multilingual learning environments. To illustrate, comparing the English word *appetite* with French *l'appétit*, Italian *l'appetito*, and Spanish *el apetito* allows learners to the linguistic connections. Ultimately, online resources and etymology dictionaries such as Etymonline.com (<https://www.etymonline.com/>) might be used for etymological explorations.

## CONCLUSION

This study handled the potential benefits that might be reaped from etymological study in vocabulary learning and teaching. A brief description and the underlying theoretical rationale were initially provided. It was followed by the salience of vocabulary in language education and the relationship between etymology and vocabulary. Earlier scholarly work on the topic of interest was cited afterward. The educational advantages that etymology offers include but not limited to: (i) learning and retaining vocabulary (e.g., idioms), (ii) aiding spelling and pronunciation, (iii) building a substantial lexical base, (iv) providing insights into historical and cultural contexts, (v) enhancing guessing skills, (vi) establishing cross-linguistic connections, (vii) planning more fun lessons through etymology-based games and activities, (viii) presenting etymological and linguistic connections through visuals, and (ix) carrying out etymological explorations through online resources.

However, it should be noted that this was only a descriptive study aimed at dealing with the use of etymology in vocabulary instruction. Further studies, of both qualitative and quantitative nature, are strongly recommended. A prospective study, for instance, might explore the perceptions of learners toward using etymology in language classrooms across diverse educational contexts. Another study might examine the etymological cognitions (etymological awareness, knowledge, and competence) of learners and/or teachers from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds. A further study might look at the effectiveness of etymology in learning and teaching other language areas, such as spelling and pronunciation. Similarly, a future study might explore learner perceptions of online resources about etymology (e.g., etymonline.com) or the extent to which such tools might foster language learning. The present study intends to contribute to the relevant literature theoretically (e.g., establishing a theoretical ground) and practically (e.g., tips for using etymology in classrooms), albeit a descriptive one.

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