

Words fail me:

# Word learning in English as a second language, in and out of context

## Irina Elgort

is a Senior Lecturer in Higher Education at Victoria University of Wellington. Her research concerned factors that affect word learning and processing in the second language. Together with her students and national and international colleagues, she has investigated deliberate and contextual learning of words and multiword expressions through reading and listening. In her studies, Irina combines research methods from psycholinguistics and language education to better understand, predict and influence learning. Irina is a member of the Editorial boards of the CALICO Journal, Journal of Computing in Higher Education, RELC Journal and the PROFILE journal. Her research has been published in *Language Learning*; *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*; *Language Testing*; *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*; *Language Teaching*; *Second Language Research*; and *Language, Cognition and Neuroscience*.

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A key goal of research in L2 vocabulary acquisition is to establish how different participant, item, and task variables affect learning, in order to develop more effective and efficient learning and instructional approaches. An important step in achieving this goal is operationalising vocabulary knowledge and selecting instruments and measures for evaluating its development. Essentially, this boils down to the question, What does it mean to know a word? In this lecture, I will identify key frameworks that informed my own research into word learning and share research approaches that combine online and offline

measures of word knowledge. I will consider studies investigating the effect of deliberate and incidental learning, with and without additional support. I will discuss what may be gleaned from different vocabulary knowledge tests, priming studies, eye-movement research and ERP measures.

### Readings

**Elgort, I.** (2011). Deliberate learning and vocabulary acquisition in a second language. *Language Learning*, 61(2), 367-413. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9922.2010.00613.x>

**Elgort, I.** and Warren, P. (2014). L2 vocabulary learning from reading: Explicit and tacit lexical knowledge and the role of learner and item variables, *Language Learning*, 64(2), 365-414. DOI: 10.1111/lang.12052.

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8TH**  
**5-7:30 PM | ONLINE**

If you are interested in joining, please send an email to [ttytko@umd.edu](mailto:ttytko@umd.edu) to be included in the invitation to the Zoom meeting.

