

EXPLORING EFL TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES USING MEMORIZATION METHOD TO ENHANCE STUDENT'S ENGLISH VOCABULARY MASTERY

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Abstract

This study looks at the firsthand experience of an English teacher at MAN Barito Selatan in Central Kalimantan who used a memorization method to help students learn more vocabulary. In this narrative inquiry research, I look at how she uses this method every day, including the problems she runs into, how she changes her strategy, and the effects she sees. Over a month, in-depth interviews and the teacher's reflective diary were used to gather data. The most important findings from the research show that the English teacher uses creative ways to make memorization activities less boring. At first, the students were hesitant, but they slowly gained confidence as they got positive feedback. The most significant problems were that the students in the class had different levels of skill and that there was insufficient time and teaching resources. The English teacher made it very clear that memorization is not the primary goal, but rather a way to help students practice speaking. This study shows how important it is for teachers to be "adapters" who can connect memorization method to real-life situations in the classroom. This English teacher's story can inspire other teachers in remote schools like this one to come up with ways to help students learn vocabulary that is both useful and kind.

Keywords: Memorization method; EFL teacher experience; vocabulary mastery; narrative inquiry research

INTRODUCTION

Exploring the experiences of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in utilizing memorization methods to improve students' vocabulary mastery is an important study in language pedagogy. Vocabulary mastery forms a fundamental foundation for the development of holistic language competency, impacting listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills (Kumar & Akbar, 2024). In Indonesia, learning contexts are often constrained by resource challenges, making memorization methods a widely relied-upon strategy by teachers. Kudryashova et al. (2020) confirms a positive correlation between vocabulary mastery and students' communicative abilities, confirming that memorization can provide a solid initial foundation for further learning. Nevertheless, additional research is necessary due to the complexity of its execution.

During the COVID-19 pandemic and other instances where interaction is limited, memorization becomes an inevitable and practical solution (Atmojo, 2021). Teachers can use it to help their students acquire new, everyday-useful words, which is especially important in areas of Indonesia where students lack access to more contemporary and interactive learning materials (Ngadiso et al., 2021). According to Kudryashova et al. (2020), this method enables the systematic acquisition of vocabulary while also constructing fundamental communication skills. However, how well it works in the long run is debatable. The inability to apply one's knowledge of words to real-world situations is at the heart of the matter (Kumar & Akbar, 2024). Because different students have different learning styles, it is not uncommon for them to get stuck in a rut of mechanical memorization rather than grasping the subtleties of usage. Accordingly, a contextual-collaborative approach and the memorization method must work together as a pedagogical necessity (Thiendathong & Sukying, 2021).

If we want to know how words are learned, we can learn a lot from EFL teachers' portrayals of using the rote method. Teachers can find ways to modify the approach to accommodate students' diverse learning styles through critical reflection on practice, such as conducting in-depth interviews or reflective surveys (Nugroho et al., 2022). A compass for adjusting teaching methods is student feedback on the efficacy of rote memorization in absorbing new

vocabulary (Bagaje et al., 2021). Additionally, the social component of learning is crucial and irreplaceable. Students enhance their retention and conceptual understanding through collaborative activities that create a productive ecosystem. In these activities, students experience the use of vocabulary in simulated authentic interactions (Ishfaque et al., 2025). To effectively combine memorization with interactive language practice, classroom discussion must be guided.

Teacher reflection on pedagogical practices enhances student agency (Syam et al., 2023). These findings underscore the need for comprehensive training programs to develop adaptive and competent EFL teachers. When educators actively contribute to curriculum design and professional development initiatives, they create opportunities to innovatively blend traditional rote methods with contemporary methodologies (Radić-Bojanić, 2021). This kind of integrative approach—which combines visual aids with narrative method or gamified learning (e.g., MIMIMO by Zaid et al. (2022))—has been shown to simultaneously strengthen vocabulary acquisition and contextual understanding (Arvizu, 2020). This synergy not only increases intrinsic motivation but also encourages active lexical application through engagement with authentic materials (Kien, 2024).

The key to vocabulary retention lies in systematic practice and consistency (Kumar & Akbar, 2024). Masaryk (2024) further states that structured rote repetition increases in effectiveness when combined with practical implementation. Therefore, educators need to proactively design scaffolded projects, assessments, and participatory assignments—both inside and outside the classroom—to ensure sustained lexical mastery. In Indonesia's unique linguistic landscape, addressing limited awareness of variations in World Englishes remains crucial. Guiding students to recognize context-dependent lexical variations enriches the language experience while building intercultural competencies essential for real-world communication (Aljuhaish et al., 2020). Introducing contextual knowledge through practical learning experiences is a solution to prevent vocabulary from becoming trapped in mere memorization.

Implementation of memorization methods in the field faces systemic obstacles, including limited resources, gaps in facilities, and a lack of training support for teachers (Alshehri, 2024). Resistance to method change among experienced teachers is also a barrier, as old habits are difficult to replace, even though active methods like experiential learning have been shown to increase engagement and vocabulary learning outcomes (Fitri & Regina, 2024). The COVID-19 pandemic has added another layer of complexity, forcing teachers to adapt to distance learning and explore technology integration (Ulla & Perales, 2021). Meanwhile, digital tools offer interactive resources to make memorization more engaging (Ahmed et al., 2022), teacher readiness to utilize technology remains a pressing issue requiring specific professional development programs (Alshehri, 2024).

In-depth qualitative research on individual teachers' experiences in implementing memorization methods is essential. A narrative approach can uncover complexities often overlooked in quantitative research (Isnaini et al., 2022), highlighting the strategies employed, emotional and practical challenges, like frustration when students struggle to adapt, and how teachers motivate students. A comprehensive analysis of the factors supporting the success of rote memorization methods in specific contexts (Tai & Zhao, 2022), including the influence of school culture and student background, will result in a mapping of best practices (Ngadiso et al., 2021). These insights provide a valuable basis for designing effective teacher training programs and informed policy recommendations. Ultimately, a holistic understanding of the dynamics of vocabulary instruction through the lens of teacher experience will contribute significantly to improving the quality of EFL education in Indonesia, creating a more balanced, adaptive approach that is centered on the real needs of students and their learning contexts.

While numerous previous studies have addressed the effectiveness of rote memorization methods quantitatively, very few have examined the real-life experiences of EFL teachers implementing these methods in the classroom. This study makes a novel contribution by presenting a qualitative approach that focuses on an EFL teacher's direct experience using rote memorization methods to improve students' vocabulary mastery. This study aims to uncover how the teacher applies rote memorization methods in real-life learning contexts, the challenges they face during implementation, and their perceptions of the method's advantages and disadvantages. This research sheds light on the frequently overlooked memorization method by showcasing the personal and practical viewpoints of educators. This study aims to address three primary questions based on this:

1. How does the EFL teacher implement the memorization method to enhance students' English vocabulary mastery?
2. What challenges does the EFL teacher face in using the memorization method in vocabulary instruction?
3. What are the perceived benefits and drawbacks of using the memorization method according to the EFL teacher?

METHODS

This study adopted a narrative inquiry approach by Clandinin (2006) to explore an English teacher's subjective experience in implementing vocabulary memorization methods. The basic philosophy of this methodology rests on the understanding that human experience is constructed through narrative. Hence, teachers' personal stories are not merely data but a medium for understanding the complexity of pedagogical practices holistically. The study was conducted at MAN Barito Selatan, Central Kalimantan. The participant was an experienced EFL teacher (name disguised as TK) who consistently integrated memorization method into the curriculum for 28 years. Participant selection was conducted purposively based on the following criteria: (1) a minimum of three years of experience teaching EFL in a similar environment, (2) use of written documentation on memorization strategies, and (3) willingness to share in-depth reflective experiences.

Data collection was conducted through two main instruments: in-depth interviews and analysis of the teacher's reflective diary. Interviews were conducted in three sessions over the period August 2025. The semi-structured guide focused on three key dimensions: (a) the operational practices of implementing the rote method (strategies, evaluation tools, material adaptations), (b) contextual challenges (social, cultural, infrastructural), and (c) the evolution of teachers' perceptions of the method's effectiveness throughout their careers. All sessions were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim, then revalidated by the participants to ensure accuracy. Meanwhile, teacher reflective diaries were analyzed as a secondary data source to track patterns of pedagogical iteration, emotional responses to classroom challenges, and changes in professional beliefs. These documents provided a chronological lens that enriched the interview data through authentic, in-the-moment accounts.

The data analysis process followed an interpretative-phenomenological framework utilized by Smith et al. (2009) with three main stages. First, an initial thematic exploration was conducted through repeated readings of interview transcripts and diaries to identify significant statements related to teachers' experiences. Second, a thematic narrative was constructed by constructing story segments based on the chronology of the kindergarten's professional journey, the method adoption phase, adaptation experiments, and the crystallization of the hybrid strategy. This stage involved interrogative hermeneutics by Kinsella (2006) to uncover the hidden meanings behind reported experiences, such as the link between school administrative pressure and the rigidity of rote memorization. Third, reflective triangulation was conducted by critically comparing oral narratives (interviews), written notes (diaries), and field observations (the researcher's notes during a visit to MAN Barito Selatan).

The validity of the study was maintained through extensive credibility testing by Lincoln et al. (1985), including member checking with the teacher (TK) to verify interpretations, a thick description of the socio-cultural context of MAN Barito Selatan, and the researcher's reflexive journaling to manage bias. Ethical aspects were ensured through participant anonymity (codenamed TK), written informed consent, and the retrospective right to withdraw data. Methodological limitations primarily lie in the generalizability of the findings, given the nature of the single-case study, but this provides analytical depth into the teacher-context dialectic often overlooked in quantitative research. This narrative approach does not seek to produce empirical generalizations, but rather to ensure conceptual transferability through rich contextual descriptions for similar studies in rural Indonesia.

Data collection procedures

The data collection process began with the research preparation stage, where the researcher comprehensively explained the research objectives, confidentiality rights, and the freedom to

withdraw at any time to the participants. Afterwards, access to the research location at MAN Barito Selatan was facilitated through official permission from the madrasah principal, accompanied by a Letter of Acceptance from the UNNES International Conference on English Language Teaching, Literature and Translation (ELTLT) 2025.

In-depth interviews were conducted in three temporal phases (August, 2025) in a special madrasah room that guaranteed privacy and minimal disruption. Each session was planned for 15-25 minutes but was flexible to follow the dynamics of the participant's narrative. The semi-structured interview guide was prepared based on the life-history approach framework of Clandinin (2006), focusing on three main axes: the chronology of the adoption of the memorization method, turning points in pedagogical transformation, and value conflicts in daily practice. All dialogues were recorded using two parallel audio devices to anticipate technical failures. At the same time, field notes were made immediately after the interview to document the non-verbal context and the researcher's reflections. The member checking procedure was integrated by sending the raw transcript to TK via hard copy, 48 hours post-interview, allowing for clarification or addition of data.

Data analysis

This study used the interpretive-phenomenological framework developed by Smith et al. (2009) to analyze the data. The researchers considered that this framework would be the best fit for investigating the complex subjective experiences of instructors in a holistic way. The analysis was conducted iteratively through three interrelated, cyclical stages, allowing researchers to delve into the dynamics of rote method implementation from the perspective of the teacher as the primary actor.

The first stage began with an in-depth thematic exploration of the entire data corpus, including 18-minute interview transcripts for each of the three sessions. This close reading process focused on identifying significant statements that captured critical moments in pedagogical practice.

In the second stage, the fragmented data were woven into a chronological thematic narrative that reconstructed the teacher's professional journey. The method adoption phase was analyzed through the lens of her strong pedagogical beliefs. In contrast, the adaptation experimentation phase was explained by analyzing the dialectic between resource limitations and her creativity in designing word chains or semester projects. The crystallization stage of the hybrid strategy was traced through inconsistencies between diary entries that recorded frustrations and claims of success. An interrogative hermeneutic approach is applied here to uncover hidden paradigms.

The validity of the site is tested through rigorous reflective triangulation. Consistency between the teacher's oral narrative about peer teaching method is verified against her diary documenting group dynamics. At the same time, claims of the vocabulary project's effectiveness are confronted with the researcher's field observations. The member-checking process, conducted by sending the raw transcripts to the teacher, creates a space for critical dialogue, such as when she revises her interpretation of "wasting time" by asserting that repetition is "the price to pay for basic mastery." The researcher's reflexive journal serves as a mirror for managing bias, for example, by acknowledging initial prejudices against rote memorization, which were later reduced after witnessing firsthand the practice of differentiation among junior high and high school students.

The depth of contextual analysis offsets the limitations of a single case study in generalizability. A detailed description of the MAN Barito Selatan environment facilitates conceptual transferability to similar rural settings. This approach intentionally positions the teacher as a co-researcher. This methodological choice respects the authority of the subject's experience in interpreting their practice, while simultaneously criticizing the tendency of quantitative research to ignore the teacher-context dialectic often.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of the Memorization Method in Teaching English Vocabulary

An EFL teacher or TK at MAN Barito Selatan has consistently used the memorization method for nearly three decades. Although this method is often considered traditional, she has modified it to be relevant to the local context and students' needs.

Vocabulary Introduction through Full Sentences

The primary principle held by TK is to introduce vocabulary in the context of full sentences, not as stand-alone words. This ensures students understand the meaning of words in authentic contexts:

"We must introduce vocabulary to students through full sentences. If students do not understand a new vocabulary item, I give them another, simpler sentence as an example." (TK, August 6, 2025)

For example, the word "family" is initially introduced through the sentence "My family consists of four people". If students do not understand, the TK provides alternatives such as "I have a big family". After that, she associates the word "family" with related vocabulary such as father, mother, son, and daughter to broaden students' understanding.

Linking Words and Avoiding Direct Translation

TK teaches students to look for connections between words and avoid using instant translations like Google Translate.

"Don't get students used to immediately using Google Translate. Instead, find other words that are related to the new vocabulary." (TK, August 6, 2025)

For example, for the word "increase", she associates it with contexts like "economy" or "height" so students understand the word's use in various situations.

Structured Repetition at the Beginning of the Learning Activities

The memorization method is integrated into the classroom routine. At the beginning of each lesson, students are asked to name new vocabulary words they've brought from home.

"Every time I start teaching English, when I call a student's name, they must respond with an English word. Then we repeat it together—I say it in Indonesian, they answer in English, and vice versa." (TK, August 6, 2025)

The vocabulary collected from all students is repeated collectively, so that in one session, 27–31 words can be collected, depending on the number of students in the class.

End of Semester Memorization Project

In addition to routine repetition, kindergarten requires a final semester project in which students must memorize a number of verbs:

- ✓ Semester 1: minimum 20 verbs
- ✓ Semester 2: minimum 30 verbs
- ✓ Grade 11: minimum 50 verbs

"Before the final examination, each student must submit 20 or 30 verbs they have memorized. As they move to higher grades, the number increases." (TK, August 6, 2025)

Activity Variations and Peer Teaching

To prevent boredom, TK uses variations such as word chains and question and answer exercises. It also utilizes peer teaching, where students with richer vocabulary help students who are struggling.

"If there are ten students with rich vocabulary, they can drill their peers. Learning from peers is often more enjoyable than learning from the teacher." (Interview, August 8, 2025)

Challenges in Implementing the Memorization Method

Although this method has been implemented for a long time, TK identified a number of barriers that affect its effectiveness.

Limited Face-to-Face Time

English lessons are only scheduled for three 45 minute sessions per week, while memorization checks take up significant time, especially in large classes.

"If there are more than 30 students in a class, memorization checks can take up to 45 minutes, leaving less time for other curriculum materials." (TK, August 11, 2025)

Large Number of Students

The large number of students makes it difficult for teachers to provide individual attention, especially for those who have difficulty memorizing.

Low Vocabulary Retention

Some students easily forget vocabulary if they don't actively use it. TK cited the influence of online games and distractions as external factors.

"Some students remember today but forget the next week. That's why repetition is mandatory, even if some people say it's a waste of time." (TK, August 8, 2025)

Differences in Learning Interests

Differences in interests pose a significant challenge.

"Students who like English enjoy memorizing, but those who don't like it feel burdened." (TK, August 11, 2025)

Pressure on Curriculum Achievement

Some teachers find this method reduces time for reading or grammar, but TK emphasizes that vocabulary is the foundation that must be built.

Teacher Adaptation Strategies and Solutions

To overcome various obstacles in implementing the memorization method, the Kindergarten implemented several adaptation strategies. She differentiated her learning by providing more advanced students with idioms and verbs, while beginners focused on mastering basic vocabulary. She also integrated context and body language into her teaching, for example, introducing the word "run" while jogging to make its meaning easier to understand. The use of creative media such as songs and games was also utilized to attract students' interest and create a more enjoyable learning atmosphere. Furthermore, the TK fostered collaboration between students through a peer learning system, where students with richer vocabulary helped their peers who were having difficulty memorizing.

Teachers' Perceptions of the Advantages of the Memorization Method

TK students found this method to offer several significant benefits.

"They become more confident in making sentences and expressing opinions. They have more vocabulary to support discussions and understand texts." (TK, August 11, 2025).

Students' confidence in speaking increases, their vocabulary expands, and their ability to follow text-based learning improves. This method has also proven relevant in areas with limited modern learning resources, as it provides students with a strong vocabulary foundation.

Teachers' Perceptions of the Disadvantages of the Memorization Method

Nevertheless, TK also acknowledged the drawbacks of the rote method.

"It takes a lot of time, and without variation, students can get bored. Its success depends on the students' interest in English." (TK, August 11, 2025).

According to her, this method requires a significant allocation of time, has the potential to cause boredom if not varied, and its success is highly dependent on students' initial interest in English.

Long-Term Impact on Students

In the long term, TK observed positive developments in students who consistently followed memorization and drill.

"Once they have a lot of verbs, they are braver to speak. You can see it from how they respond to questions in class." (TK, August 11, 2025).

With a broader vocabulary, students become better able to express opinions, understand instructions, and even use English outside the classroom context, both in informal conversations and academic situations.

Discussion

This study seeks to investigate how English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructors at MAN Barito Selatan have dealt with the memorization strategy for increasing their students' vocabulary. The findings show that this approach is still very useful for language instruction in low-resource areas, despite its reputation as a dated strategy.

Implementation of the Memorization Method in Teaching English Vocabulary

Many have criticized TK for what they see as a mechanistic and decontextualized approach to improving the rote learning method, but this has not stopped them from implementing their innovative practices (Kumar & Akbar, 2024). By putting it into practice, we can see how rote learning can be used to build competence in communicating. In line with the hybrid methods advocated by Thiendathong and Sukying (2021), this approach introduces vocabulary through whole sentences, like "My family consists of four people," and through semantic links, like "increase", "economy" or "height." This method is similar to what Durrant and Schmitt (2010) called "meaningful chunking," which is based on the idea that words are better retained when they are contextualized within situations and syntactic frameworks.

Importantly, the fact that TK forbids direct translation ("Don't use Google Translate") makes Kumar and Akbar (2024) worries about inert knowledge seem silly. This rule makes students think more deeply about the target language by making them associate words with their meanings, which improves their cognitive engagement. Memorization is thus turned into an active process that builds conceptual understanding, rather than a passive activity.

Challenges in Implementing the Memorization Method

On the other hand, this method's foundational repetitive structure has its advantages and disadvantages. As confirmed by Kumar and Akbar (2024), spaced repetition is an empirically valid strategy for long-term retention; however, there is a fundamental tension in TK's daily vocabulary drills, where students recall words during roll call, because while repetition improves retention, it takes 45 valuable minutes out of a class of more than 30 students. Grammar, reading comprehension, and interactive speaking practice are consequently given far less time. This fact lends credence to Alshehri (2024) claims that teachers are compelled to prioritize either breadth or depth of content due to systemic constraints, such as limited instructional time.

This problem is exemplified by the mandatory verb memorization assignment at the end of the semester, which requires students to memorize twenty to fifty verbs. Although it offers a tangible achievement, its success is highly dependent on the students' intrinsic motivation, which is an uneven variable that TK admits: "Students who enjoy English enjoy memorizing; others find it a

burden." This finding is in line with what Kudryashova et al. (2020) discovered that there is a strong correlation between learner autonomy and interest and the success of memorization. This dependence on intrinsic motivation produces inequalities in learning outcomes at MAN Barito Selatan, where external influences like family expectations or interest in other subjects differ, and this presents an ongoing challenge for instructors.

Teacher Adaptation Strategies and Solutions

The adaptive solution that TK implemented in response to these structural constraints—a paradigm of the "teacher as adaptor" (Ngadiso et al., 2021)—became an important focus of the research. She takes into account the diversity in her classroom by using a differentiation strategy that allows more advanced students to study idioms and more beginner students to concentrate on verbs that are used frequently. In rural Indonesian schools, this is a significant problem, as Masaryk (2024) has shown. Given the incredibly varied English proficiency levels among MAN Barito Selatan students as a result of their varied educational experiences, this method is more than just a nice-to-have; it is an absolute need.

Songs, games, and physical movement are all part of TK's multimodal integration. This adds vital dynamics to what could otherwise be a mechanical process of learning, such as teaching "run" by jogging on the spot. According to Arvizu (2020), this method is in line with the idea that engaging more than one sense improves engagement and memory retention.

An even more significant example of resource optimization is the use of one's body and voice as learning tools in contexts where such tools are scarce. Use of peer learning is also strategically important. According to Ishfaq et al. (2025), a crucial strategy for retention, TK establishes a collaborative ecosystem by utilizing high-ability students as peer tutors (e.g., "ten students tutoring a classmate"). This approach works by addressing resource constraints and promoting social learning. At MAN Barito Selatan, this method also takes advantage of the collectivistic local sociocultural dynamics, turning the disadvantage of big classes into an advantage by strengthening students' social networks.

Teachers' Perceptions of the Advantages and Disadvantages of the Memorization Method

TK paints a nuanced picture of how effective the method is. Students' self-assurance in front of an audience and their ability to understand what they read were two areas where she noted notable gains. This finding provides more evidence that memorization is an important tool for laying the groundwork for literacy and giving students "linguistic raw materials" to work with, which helps alleviate the communicative anxiety that many first-year students experience. This confirms what Kudryashova et al. (2020) found, that there is a connection between an extensive vocabulary and effective communication.

However, TK was forthright and critical when he admitted the method's main flaws, it is tedious and tediously slow. Memorization without modification and variation poses a high risk of disengagement, particularly in students lacking motivation, as her experience echoes Radić-Bojanić (2021) warning. Given the high levels of distraction from online games and academic pressure from national exams, this risk of boredom presents a serious challenge to the method's sustainability in the context of MAN Barito Selatan.

A profound comprehension of the intricacy of pedagogical practice in the field is demonstrated by TK's forthright recognition of this compromise between allocating time and the risk of burnout and improving basic language competency. The two-sided perspective prevalent in academic discussions is at odds with this reality.

Long-Term Impact on Students

Important results are shown by the longitudinal examination of the long-term effects of TK's method. She emphasizes the power of contextual application encouragement in tandem with rote memorization, arguing that students can "use English outside the classroom" with consistent practice. This finding is in line with Masaryk (2024) conclusion that in order to avoid fossilization and promote the transfer of knowledge to new contexts, authentic practice must accompany structured repetition.

Students' ability to use their memorization of vocabulary in spontaneous interactions (no matter how small) is a critical measure of this method's effectiveness in preparing them for independent communication in the English-speaking environment of MAN Barito Selatan. According to these results, learning new words by heart can do two things: (1) boost confidence, and (2) encourage linguistic exploration, which in turn can lead to the development of more sophisticated communicative competences later on in the learning process.

CONCLUSION

Based on an in-depth exploration of TK's experiences in implementing the memorization method at MAN Barito Selatan, this study concluded three crucial findings. First, the memorization method—when contextually transformed through the introduction of vocabulary in whole sentences, semantic associations, and the avoidance of direct translation—was found to function as an effective scaffolding for building students' basic communicative competence. Second, implementation challenges such as time constraints (45 minutes/session for classes of >30 students), disparities in motivation, and the risk of boredom were successfully mitigated through adaptive strategies: material differentiation (basic verbs for beginners vs. idioms for advanced students), multimodal integration (singing/gestures), and the use of peer teaching. Third, although this method increased students' speaking confidence and text comprehension, its effectiveness depended on the balance between structured repetition and opportunities for authentic practice beyond memorization.

SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings and discussion of this study, there are several suggestions for teachers, schools, and future researchers to consider.

For Teachers

Teachers can continue to utilize the memorization method as a vocabulary learning strategy, but they need to integrate it with contextual and interactive approaches. The use of complete sentences, word associations, and the integration of body language can help students understand word meanings more deeply. A variety of activities, such as games, songs, and peer learning, are also recommended to prevent student boredom. Furthermore, teachers need to set realistic memorization targets based on students' ability levels so they feel motivated to achieve them. The researchers also suggest that teachers designate several students with strong vocabulary to act as coaches for their classmates. They could lead small-group memorization sessions or become weekly study partners. This approach not only helps struggling students but also boosts the coaches' self-confidence.

For Schools

Schools can support the success of this method by providing additional time outside of regular class hours for vocabulary enrichment activities. Extra classes or English Club programs can provide a forum for students to practice memorized vocabulary in conversational contexts. Furthermore, memorized vocabulary should be used immediately in real-life communication situations. Schools can hold weekly English Corners or Role Play Market Day sessions, where students practice vocabulary in everyday dialogue. These activities ensure that memorized words are not lost due to infrequent use.

For Future Researchers

This study focused on one teacher in one school, so further research could involve more participants from diverse backgrounds and regions to gain a broader understanding of the effectiveness of the memorization method. Quantitative or quasi-experimental research could also be conducted to more objectively measure the effect of the memorization method on students' vocabulary achievement. Furthermore, further studies could explore the combination of the memorization method with technology-based teaching strategies to see if this integration can overcome the limitations of face-to-face time and increase student learning motivation.

END NOTES

The story of a TK's 28 years of teaching at MAN Barito Selatan proves that in a context of limited resources, pedagogical success lies not in the method itself, but instead in the teacher's capacity as a "contextual innovator." Memorization methods—often considered outdated—can actually be a

stepping stone to communication when creatively adapted, taking into account local constraints, student social dynamics, and authentic learning objectives. This kind of teacher agency needs to be catalyzed through systematic support, not simply a method replacement.

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APPENDIX

Documentation

