

The Relationship Between Vocabulary Memorization Habits and Vocabulary Mastery of EFL Students

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Abstract : *Mastery of English vocabulary is critical for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, as it directly supports clear communication and text comprehension across diverse settings. Nevertheless, many EFL students encounter persistent challenges in retaining and applying new lexical items, necessitating an investigation into potential contributing factors such as memorization habits. This study explored the correlation between vocabulary memorization routines and vocabulary achievement among eleventh-grade students at Jareeyatam Islam Foundation School. Adopting a quantitative correlational approach, data were gathered from 28 participants selected via total sampling. Instruments included a validated questionnaire (evaluated through expert judgment and Cronbach's Alpha reliability testing) and a vocabulary test. Statistical analysis using IBM SPSS Statistics 26 via Spearman's Rank Correlation indicated a weak, statistically non-significant positive correlation ($r = 0.246, p = 0.207 > 0.05$). The outcome suggests that relying solely on vocabulary memorization habits does not guarantee higher vocabulary mastery, underscoring the need to account for additional learning variables.*

Keywords : *Efl Students; Vocabulary Mastery; Vocabulary Memorization Habits*

Abstrak : Penguasaan kosakata merupakan elemen kunci bagi pembelajar bahasa Inggris (EFL) guna memfasilitasi komunikasi yang efektif dan pemahaman teks di bermacam konteks. Kendati demikian, sebagian besar siswa EFL kerap menghadapi hambatan dalam menyimpan serta mempergunakan kosakata secara tepat, yang mengindikasikan perlunya penelusuran faktor pendorong seperti kebiasaan menghafal. Penelitian ini mengkaji hubungan antara kebiasaan menghafal kosakata dan tingkat penguasaan kosakata siswa kelas XI di Jareeyatam Islam Foundation School. Metodologi kuantitatif korelasional diterapkan pada 28 siswa melalui teknik sampel jenuh (*total sampling*). Pengumpulan data memanfaatkan kuesioner teruji dan tes kosakata. Analisis Spearman Rank Correlation melalui SPSS 26 menghasilkan hubungan positif yang lemah dan tidak signifikan secara statistik ($r = 0,246, p = 0,207$). Hal ini menandakan bahwa kebiasaan menghafal saja belum cukup mendongkrak penguasaan kosakata, sehingga faktor eksternal dan internal lainnya perlu dipertimbangkan secara bersamaan.

Kata Kunci : Siswa EFL; Penguasaan Kosakata; Kebiasaan Menghafal Kosakata

INTRODUCTION

In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, lexical competence forms the foundation of overall language proficiency and daily communication. Learners equipped with adequate vocabulary are better prepared to interpret written materials, formulate thoughts, and take part in interactive tasks. As noted by Burhanuddin *et al.* (2019), student capacity to comprehend and produce spoken or written language hinges heavily on their vocabulary range. In a similar vein, Abouzeid (2018) highlighted that word knowledge directly underpins basic skills such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Lacking sufficient vocabulary, learners frequently struggle to digest texts and express ideas clearly. Furthermore, acquiring words depends not only on classroom instruction but also on internal cognitive mechanisms, including word storage, retention, and retrieval (Jonathans *et al.*, 2021; Sun *et al.*, 2023). These active internal processes demonstrate that student engagement and consistent study routines are essential for expanding vocabulary.

Despite the recognized importance of lexical acquisition, numerous students still encounter obstacles when attempting to memorize and deploy English terms. Insufficient lexical knowledge negatively impacts both academic performance and communicative fluency. Recent findings reaffirm that limited vocabulary knowledge remains a prevalent issue (Abidin, 2023; Boroughani *et al.*, 2023). Likewise, Destia *et al.* (2026) documented persistent difficulties among students regarding vocabulary acquisition and retention, proving that vocabulary learning remains a persistent hurdle in language development. A major obstacle in vocabulary acquisition is word retention over extended periods. Students frequently forget new words rapidly due to insufficient repetition and ineffective memorization practices (Hasan, 2024). Additionally, relying on passive approaches—such as memorizing isolated word lists often results in superficial learning (Arochman *et al.*, 2023; Chen, 2025). Studies further suggest that unrefined learning strategies combined with cognitive overload lead to poor word retention and minimal productive usage (Ramadhani & Widiastuty, 2024; Zhou *et al.*, 2025). Therefore, evaluating students' specific memorization habits is necessary to understand how vocabulary mastery can be better fostered.

Learning habits play an important role in students' academic achievement, including vocabulary mastery, because consistent learning behaviors can influence how effectively students acquire and retain new knowledge. Apriani *et al.* (2025) reported that students who demonstrated stronger reading habits generally achieved higher levels of reading comprehension. Their findings suggest that consistent learning behaviors can contribute positively to language learning outcomes and may also support vocabulary learning. Learning habits refer to students' regular behaviors in learning, such as repetition, practice, and review, which contribute to learning outcomes (Guo *et al.*, 2022; Rahman & Angraeni, 2020). In the context of vocabulary learning, memorization habits are particularly important because they determine how frequently and effectively students engage with new words. Recent research has shown that consistent learning behaviors and adaptive learning strategies can support students' vocabulary acquisition and mastery (Muryani & Yunus, 2024). Accordingly, students' vocabulary memorization practices, which reflect their habitual learning behaviors, can facilitate both the acquisition and long-term retention of vocabulary.

In addition, the use of memorization strategies such as repetition, mnemonic techniques, and spaced learning has been found to improve vocabulary retention (Agnes & Srinivasan, 2024; Nation, 2024). These strategies help students remember vocabulary more effectively when they are practiced regularly and meaningfully. Overall, memorization strategies can contribute more effectively to vocabulary mastery when they are applied consistently as part of students' daily learning habits. Vocabulary development may also be supported through collaborative learning activities. Imeldah *et al.* (2025) found that small group discussion techniques helped students enrich vocabulary, improve lexical variety, and develop greater confidence in English writing. These findings suggest that vocabulary growth can be influenced not only by memorization practices but also by meaningful learning interactions and collaborative learning experiences.

Although previous research has extensively examined vocabulary learning strategies, students' learning habits, memorization strategies, and collaborative learning activities, vocabulary

memorization habits have received relatively little attention as an independent variable, as most research has focused on broader approaches to vocabulary learning. Memorization is often treated as a subcomponent of learning strategies instead of being analyzed independently (Farrokh & Sharifi, 2019). These findings indicate that the contribution of vocabulary memorization habits to vocabulary learning remains underrepresented in the current body of research. Moreover, previous research has primarily emphasized experimental or intervention-based approaches, such as the use of instructional media or teaching techniques to improve vocabulary mastery (Abidin, 2023). However, limited research has examined the relationship between students' habitual learning behaviors and vocabulary mastery using a correlational approach. Consequently, the relationship between students' vocabulary memorization habits and vocabulary mastery remains insufficiently addressed in previous research. Consequently, investigating this relationship is necessary to provide empirical evidence that may clarify the role of students' memorization habits in vocabulary mastery.

In addition to the research gap, there is also a contextual gap in the existing research on vocabulary learning and memorization habits. Most previous research have been conducted in different educational contexts, such as universities or urban schools, which may not fully reflect the conditions and learning characteristics of all students (Zakian et al., 2022). Therefore, further investigation of this issue within a more specific educational context is needed to generate findings that are both more relevant and context-specific. Based on the phenomena and gaps described above, this research focuses on eleventh grade students at Jareeyatam Islam Foundation School. This context is important because students at this level are expected to have sufficient vocabulary mastery to support their academic learning, yet they may still experience difficulties in achieving it. For this reason, conducting this research in the context of eleventh grade students at Jareeyatam Islam Foundation School is important to obtain more context specific findings regarding students' memorization habits and vocabulary learning outcomes.

This research investigates whether a significant correlation exists between students' English vocabulary memorization habits and vocabulary mastery, as both are considered important components of successful vocabulary learning. More specifically, this research aims to determine whether a relationship exists between students' vocabulary memorization habits and their vocabulary mastery. This research offers a distinct contribution by examining vocabulary memorization habits as the independent variable through a quantitative correlational design. Unlike previous research that has examined memorization alongside other learning variables, this research focuses on memorization habits as a distinct variable in relation to vocabulary mastery. Accordingly, this research is expected to provide further insight into how vocabulary memorization habits contribute to vocabulary learning. Furthermore, this research is important because improving vocabulary mastery remains a major challenge in EFL learning, and a better understanding of students' memorization habits may help educators develop more effective vocabulary learning strategies. Based on the issues outlined above, this research investigates the relationship between vocabulary memorization habits and vocabulary mastery among eleventh-grade EFL learners at Jareeyatam Islam Foundation School. Ultimately, the findings of this research are expected to contribute to a broader understanding of vocabulary learning behaviors among EFL learners.

RESEARCH METHOD

To evaluate the connection between students' English vocabulary memorization habits and their vocabulary mastery, this research utilized a quantitative correlational framework without variable manipulation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The study focused on two primary variables: vocabulary memorization habits as the independent variable (X) and vocabulary mastery as the dependent variable (Y). The target population encompassed all eleventh-grade students at Jareeyatam Islam Foundation School. Employing a total sampling technique, all 28 students across the eleventh-grade cohort participated as the research sample. Two data collection tools were administered: a structured questionnaire and a standardized vocabulary test. The questionnaire, designed to assess memorization habits across 25 items, encompassed metrics such as practice frequency, memory strategies, word application, perceived benefits, and negative study habits. Responses were measured using a 5-point Likert scale (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Meanwhile,

vocabulary mastery was assessed through a 25-item multiple-choice test aligned with the curriculum to gauge lexical recognition and comprehension.

Before being administered to the participants, the questionnaire and vocabulary test underwent expert judgment to establish their validity. The instruments were reviewed by validators to ensure that the items were relevant, clear, and appropriate for measuring students' vocabulary memorization habits and vocabulary mastery. Suggestions and revisions from the validators were used to improve the quality of the instruments. Therefore, the questionnaire and vocabulary test were considered appropriate for collecting the research data. Data were processed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 26. Normality was evaluated using the Shapiro-Wilk test, which is specifically suited for sample sizes under 50. Following the normality check, a linearity assessment was conducted. Given that one variable departed from a normal distribution, Spearman's Rank Correlation was chosen to compute the strength and direction of the relationship (Schober et al., 2018). applying a standard significance threshold of $p < 0.05$.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings regarding the relationship between students' English vocabulary memorization habits and vocabulary mastery among eleventh-grade students at Jareeyatam Islam Foundation School are presented in this section. Data were obtained using a questionnaire and a vocabulary test administered to the participants. Expert judgment was employed to evaluate the validity of the research instruments. The collected data underwent a series of analyses using IBM SPSS Statistics version 26, including instrument reliability testing, normality and linearity assessments, and examination of the relationship between the research variables. Overall, the findings of this research provide insight into the relationship between students' vocabulary memorization habits and vocabulary mastery.

Validity of Instrument

Expert judgment confirmed the validity of both the questionnaire and the vocabulary test, indicating that the instruments were appropriate for achieving the research objectives. The instruments were reviewed by English education experts to evaluate the relevance, clarity, and suitability of the items in measuring students' vocabulary memorization habits and vocabulary mastery. Based on the validators' evaluation, the questionnaire and vocabulary test were considered valid and appropriate for collecting the research data.

Reliability analysis

The reliability of the questionnaire was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha in IBM SPSS Statistics version 26. Cheung et al. (2024) stated that a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of at least 0.70 indicates an acceptable level of internal consistency. Table 1 summarizes the results of the questionnaire reliability analysis.

Table 1. Table of Reliability Test

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.770	25

A Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.770 was obtained for the 25-item questionnaire, as shown in Table 1. Because this value exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, the questionnaire demonstrated acceptable reliability and was considered suitable for use in data collection. These findings indicate that the questionnaire demonstrated acceptable internal consistency for measuring students' vocabulary memorization habits.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were first used to examine the distribution and key characteristics of students' vocabulary memorization habits and vocabulary mastery scores before conducting the subsequent statistical analyses. The descriptive statistical findings are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Table of Descriptive Statistics

N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
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Memorization Habits	28	59	111	87.29	10.579
Vocabulary Mastery	28	16	100	60.29	29.433
Valid N (listwise)	28				

Before proceeding with further statistical analyses, the distribution of vocabulary memorization habits and vocabulary mastery scores was examined through the descriptive statistics summarized in Table 2. The findings show that the participants generally demonstrated relatively good vocabulary memorization habits, as reflected in the mean score of 87.29. In addition, the standard deviation (10.579) indicates relatively low variability in the participants' vocabulary memorization habit scores. In contrast, the vocabulary mastery scores showed greater variability, indicated by the higher standard deviation (29.433). These findings suggest that although the participants demonstrated relatively similar memorization habits, their levels of vocabulary mastery were more diverse and may have been influenced by other learning factors. Overall, the descriptive statistical findings offered an initial understanding of the research data and provided the foundation for the subsequent statistical analyses.

Normality Test

To determine whether the research data were normally distributed, a normality test was conducted before performing the correlation analysis. Table 3 presents the results of the Shapiro-Wilk normality test for the vocabulary memorization habits and vocabulary mastery variables.

Table 3. Table of Normality Test

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Memorization Habits	.149	28	.115	.936	28	.085
Vocabulary Mastery	.139	28	.180	.898	28	.010

As presented in Table 3, the vocabulary memorization habits variable had a Shapiro-Wilk significance value greater than 0.05, indicating that the data were normally distributed. By contrast, the vocabulary mastery variable produced a Shapiro-Wilk significance value below 0.05, indicating that the data did not follow a normal distribution. Overall, the results indicate that only one of the research variables was normally distributed, suggesting that the assumption of normality was not fully satisfied.

Linearity Test

Before the correlation analysis was carried out, a linearity test was conducted to determine whether vocabulary memorization habits and vocabulary mastery exhibited a linear relationship. The findings of the linearity analysis are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Table of Linearity Test

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Vocabulary Mastery* Memorization Habits	Between Groups	(Combined)	12963.048	15	864.203	.995	.512
		Linearity	2415.602	1	2415.602	2.780	.121
		Deviation from Linearity	10547.445	14	753.389	.867	.605
	Within Groups		10426.667	12	868.889		
	Total		23389.714	27			

As presented in Table 4, the relationship between vocabulary memorization habits and vocabulary mastery satisfied the assumption of linearity, with a Deviation from Linearity significance value of 0.605, which exceeded 0.05. These findings indicate that the relationship between the two variables met the assumption of linearity. Accordingly, the correlation analysis could be performed using the available data.

Correlation Analysis

The relationship between vocabulary memorization habits and vocabulary mastery was examined using Spearman's Rank Correlation. The results of the Spearman's Rank Correlation analysis are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Results of Spearman Rank Correlation Analysis

			Memorization Habits	Vocabulary Mastery
Spearman's rho	Memorization Habits	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.246
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.207
		N	28	28
	Vocabulary Mastery	Correlation Coefficient	.246	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.207	.
		N	28	28

As shown in Table 5, the Spearman Rank Correlation analysis revealed a positive relationship between students' vocabulary memorization habits and vocabulary mastery, with a correlation coefficient of 0.246. However, because the significance value (0.207) was greater than 0.05, no statistically significant relationship was identified between the variables. Therefore, the relationship between the two variables was classified as weak, and the null hypothesis (H_0) was accepted. These findings suggest that students' vocabulary memorization habits made only a limited contribution to their vocabulary mastery.

Overall, the findings of this research support earlier research indicating that students' learning habits and vocabulary learning strategies play an important role in vocabulary development. Muryani and Yunus (2024) found that students who applied consistent vocabulary learning strategies tended to demonstrate better vocabulary achievement. Similarly, Guo et al. (2022) emphasized that regular vocabulary learning practices and self-regulated learning behaviors may contribute positively to vocabulary acquisition. In addition, Apriani et al. (2025) reported that students with stronger reading habits tended to achieve better reading comprehension, indicating that habitual learning behaviors can positively influence language learning outcomes. Similarly, Imeldah et al. (2025) reported that engaging in collaborative learning activities enabled students to expand their vocabulary while strengthening their confidence in learning English. Nevertheless, the findings of this research suggest that vocabulary memorization practices may play only a limited role in students' vocabulary development.

One possible explanation for the weak and non-significant correlation found in this research is that vocabulary mastery may be influenced by various factors beyond memorization habits. Students may memorize vocabulary regularly without fully understanding word meaning, pronunciation, usage, and contextual application. Nation (2024) stated that effective vocabulary learning requires meaningful exposure, repetition in context, and active language use rather than relying solely on memorization activities. In addition, differences in students' motivation, learning environment, and opportunities to use English in daily communication may also influence vocabulary mastery outcomes. These findings imply that vocabulary learning should involve

broader and more meaningful learning experiences to support students' vocabulary development more effectively.

CONCLUSION

The present research focused on examining the relationship between students' vocabulary memorization habits and vocabulary mastery among eleventh-grade students at Jareeyatam Islam Foundation School. The findings revealed a weak positive relationship between vocabulary memorization habits and vocabulary mastery; however, the relationship did not reach statistical significance. These findings suggest that vocabulary memorization habits made only a limited contribution to students' vocabulary mastery. This research also suggests that vocabulary mastery may be influenced by other factors, such as learning strategies, learning habits, collaborative learning experiences, meaningful language exposure, learning motivation, learning environment, and active vocabulary use in context. Therefore, vocabulary instruction should incorporate a broader variety of meaningful learning experiences rather than relying solely on memorization activities. Overall, this research contributes to a better understanding of vocabulary memorization habits in vocabulary learning while providing useful implications for English teachers and students in promoting more effective vocabulary learning practices.

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