

INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF USING VOCABULARY JOURNALS ON WORD RETENTION AMONG NON-ENGLISH MAJORS AT A UNIVERSITY IN DA NANG

NGHIÊN CỨU ẢNH HƯỞNG CỦA VIỆC SỬ DỤNG NHẬT KÝ TỪ VỤNG ĐỐI VỚI KHẢ NĂNG GHI NHỚ TỪ VỤNG CỦA SINH VIÊN KHÔNG CHUYÊN TIẾNG ANH TẠI MỘT TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC Ở ĐÀ NẴNG

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(Received: March 20, 2026; Revised: May 18, 2026; Accepted: May 25, 2026)

DOI: 10.31130/ud-jst.2026.24(6B).166E

Abstract - This study investigated the effectiveness of vocabulary journals compared to word lists in enhancing retention of word form, meaning, and use among non-English-majors at a university in Da Nang, Viet Nam. It involved 62 second-year students divided into an experimental group using vocabulary journals and a control group using word lists. Twenty target words were selected via a pre-test to ensure unfamiliarity. The six-week intervention included a post-test and a delayed post-test four weeks later. Results showed the experimental group achieved higher mean scores and lower standard deviation in both tests. Vocabulary journals enhanced cued productive recall of form and productive recall of meaning, while receptive knowledge of word use also improved significantly. The findings suggest vocabulary journals are more effective than word lists in promoting long-term functional usage and linguistic competence.

Key words - Vocabulary journals; word retention; form-meaning-use; deep processing; learner autonomy

1. Introduction

For non-English majors in Vietnam, mastering English, especially vocabulary, plays an important role to improve their academic performance and to enhance their future career prospects. At a university in Da Nang, teaching observations show that many students struggle to express their ideas or discuss with their classmates in the English lessons because they have limited words and poor retention. Additionally, the retention of vocabulary knowledge is essential for language development, and to have successful retention, students require multiple exposures to a word in various contexts [1]. Besides, word lists method may be often not effective in the long run because it focuses on rote memorization. Therefore, it is very necessary to introduce engaging and individualized vocabulary learning methods such as vocabulary journals to improve the effectiveness of vocabulary learning. It allows learners to encounter words with their meanings and any other aspects of the word deemed important [2]. Even though previous research has also emphasized the effectiveness of using vocabulary journals to improve vocabulary learning and retention [3], there is still a lack of studies about Vietnamese non-English majors, especially in memorizing three aspects: form, meaning, and use individually.

As a result, the present study aims to investigate the

Tóm tắt - Nghiên cứu này so sánh hiệu quả của nhật ký từ vựng và danh sách từ trong việc giúp sinh viên không chuyên Anh tại một trường đại học ở Đà Nẵng ghi nhớ hình thức, nghĩa và cách dùng từ. Nghiên cứu gồm 62 sinh viên năm hai, chia thành nhóm thực nghiệm dùng nhật ký từ vựng và nhóm đối chứng dùng danh sách từ. Hai mươi từ mục tiêu được chọn qua bài kiểm tra đầu vào. Can thiệp kéo dài sáu tuần, gồm bài kiểm tra sau thực nghiệm và bài kiểm tra trì hoãn sau bốn tuần. Nhóm thực nghiệm đạt điểm trung bình cao hơn và độ lệch chuẩn thấp hơn. Nhật ký từ vựng cải thiện khả năng nhớ có gợi ý về hình thức từ, nhớ chủ động về nghĩa, và kiến thức tiếp nhận về cách dùng từ. Kết quả cho thấy nhật ký từ vựng hiệu quả hơn danh sách từ trong việc phát triển năng lực ngôn ngữ lâu dài.

Từ khóa - Nhật ký từ vựng; ghi nhớ từ vựng; hình thức- ý nghĩa- cách dùng; xử lý sâu; tính tự chủ trong học tập

effectiveness of vocabulary journals in improving vocabulary retention among non-English majors at a university in Da Nang. To achieve this aim, the study addresses the following research question:

To what extent does the use of vocabulary journals by non-English majors improve their retention of word form, meaning, and use, compared to word lists?

2. Literature review

2.1. Nation's Framework of Vocabulary Knowledge

Vocabulary knowledge was divided into three main areas: form, meaning, and use [4]. Form refers to the written and spoken expression of words, while meaning involves understanding the semantic content and expression of concept. The use of words is related to grammar, word usage and pragmatics and it reflects the language's practical applications. It is essential to develop all three dimensions: form, meaning, use for effective communication and vocabulary retention. Each dimension contains receptive knowledge and productive knowledge. Receptive vocabulary knowledge is the ability to recognize and understand a word when it is encountered in listening or reading. Receptive knowledge involves perceiving the form of a word and retrieving its meaning when people hear or see it. However, productive vocabulary knowledge

is the ability to recall and produce a word suitably in speaking or writing [4]. This knowledge requires learners to use the words correctly in a grammatical and meaningful context. Receptive and productive knowledge are divided into subcomponents, as presented in Table 1 [4].

Table 1. *Components of vocabulary knowledge*

Form	Spoken	R	What does the word sound like?
		P	How is the word pronounced?
	Written	R	What does the word look like?
		P	How is the word written and spelled?
	Word parts	R	What parts are recognizable in this word?
		P	What words parts are needed to express meaning?
Meaning	Form and meaning	R	What meaning does this word form signal?
		P	What word form can be used to express this meaning?
	Concepts and references	R	What is included in the concept?
		P	What items can the concept refer to?
	Associations	R	What others words does this word make us think of?
		P	What other words could we use instead of this one?
Use	Grammatical functions	R	In what patterns does the word occur?
		P	In what patterns must we use this word?
	collocations	R	What words or types of word occur with this one?
		P	What words or types of words must we use with this one?
	Constraints on use	R	Where, when and how often would we meet this word?
		P	Where, when and how often can we use this word?

Note. R = receptive, P = productive

In the spectrum of knowledge of form-meaning links, form recall is the most demanding while recognition knowledge is the least demanding, with no significant difference in the degree of difficulty between form recognition and meaning recognition [5, 6]. Following Nation's framework, word form was assessed through a cued productive task. By providing the initial letter, the study measures the learners' ability to retrieve the correct lexical form from memory while minimizing ambiguity in responses, a method commonly referred to as cued recall. The selection of specific assessment types for each dimension is grounded in the incremental nature of vocabulary depth. According to Nation's framework, form and meaning are fundamental components that can be effectively measured through cued-recall and productive tasks to ensure learners have established a basic lexical link. However, word use (including collocations and constraints) represents a higher level of mastery that often develops receptively before it can be produced accurately in free expression [4]. Given the proficiency level of non-English majors, a receptive format for use allows for an objective evaluation of their ability to recognize correct contextual patterns without the confounding variable of general grammatical competence. This approach ensures a principled alignment with Nation's framework while

maintaining the reliability of the assessment across all three dimensions.

Cued productive knowledge of form refers to the learner's ability to recall and produce the written or spoken form of a word when prompted by meaning, context, or a specific initial-letter cue [6]. Productive knowledge of meaning involves knowing word meaning and can select the correct meaning in a context and use it correctly in speech or writing [4]. Receptive knowledge of use allows learners to interpret meaning not only from the word but also in a sentence [4].

2.2. Vocabulary Retention

Vocabulary retention is the ability of a learner to remember and apply vocabulary after a period of time. The retention of vocabulary knowledge plays a vital role in language development, and helps learners to achieve effective retention through repeated exposure to words across different contexts [1]. When learners contextualize the meaning of words through activities such as making example sentences, Deep Processing will be created [7]. This leads to more stable and lasting memory traces rather than shallow memorization. Achieving long-term retention will help students to counteract the effects of the forgetting curve [8] so it is essential when using spaced repetition tools like vocabulary journals for keeping memory traces strong and helping students remember words better and longer. Furthermore, the level of personal engagement with vocabulary items during learning tasks is important in vocabulary acquisition and retention [9, 10]. When learners personalize their vocabulary acquisition, they will establish stronger cognitive associations with words.

2.3. Vocabulary Journals and Word Lists in Vocabulary Learning

Vocabulary journal is an effective vocabulary method to allow students to create their personalized journals for recording new words, which makes learning vocabulary more engaging. Learners use vocabulary journals to record the words with their meanings and any other aspects of the word such as part of speech, word forms, collocates, synonyms, antonyms, and perhaps a context sentence [2]. A vocabulary journal can be designed following theoretical frameworks. Firstly, Nation's model of vocabulary knowledge emphasizes knowing a word relates to mastering its form, meaning, and use [4]. Secondly, the Levels of Processing theory [7] suggest that people remember information processed at a deeper semantic level better than material processed superficially. Next, vocabulary journals align with the Involvement Load Hypothesis [9, 10]. The learning outcomes are better when doing the task with higher levels of "search" and "evaluation". In addition to its cognitive benefits, the vocabulary journal can be considered as a learning strategy which promotes learner autonomy and self-regulated learning. By asking students to record meanings, create example sentences, and personal notes, the journal encourages active monitoring and reflection on vocabulary learning. This process allows learners to control their learning, organize lexical knowledge, and assess their own progress over time. Therefore, vocabulary journals also foster metacognitive awareness and learner independence.

Word lists are used commonly in foreign language classrooms. Word lists involve pairing a target L2 word with its L1 translation or a brief definition [4]. This method focuses on creating an initial link between the form and meaning of a word without the presence of a communicative context. Because of the reliance on word lists, learners can acquire a large number of words in a very short time [4]. However, word lists also have significant limitations. The problem is the lack of context. Students can only learn single words in the word lists, they may remember their meaning but do not know how to use them in a sentence or conversation. Learning from word lists often involves rote memorization which is considered as a shallow level of processing. Word lists are often ineffective for long-term retention because without deep engagement or spaced repetition, the memory of these words will follow the forgetting curve and be forgotten after a few weeks.

2.4. Research Gaps

Although the use of vocabulary journals has been widely promoted [2], there are still significant gaps. Most studies have been conducted with young learners or English majors, leaving Vietnamese non-English majors, who often rely on passive and exam-driven learning [11]. Furthermore, current research frequently concentrates on students' comprehension of word meaning [12] rather than evaluating their capacity to retain form, meaning, and usage over time [4]. Few studies conduct delayed post-tests [1]. While some Vietnamese studies [13] have explored the use of vocabulary journals, they tend to emphasize vocabulary acquisition without considering dimensions of vocabulary knowledge or retention over time. To address this gap, the present study investigates how vocabulary journals affect three dimensions of vocabulary including form, meaning, and use among non-English majors. In addition, it evaluates both immediate and delayed retention so it can offer a more comprehensive understanding of the way vocabulary journals contribute to short-term acquisition and retention over time of vocabulary knowledge.

3. Research methodology

3.1. Research design

This study employed a quasi-experimental design to investigate the impacts of vocabulary journals on students' vocabulary acquisition and retention. The research followed a quantitative approach, supplemented by a qualitative component to provide a comprehensive understanding of the intervention. Data collection involved a sequential series of assessments: a pre-test to establish baseline proficiency, a post-test administered immediately after the intervention to measure initial acquisition, and a delayed post-test conducted later to evaluate long-term retention. The study was conducted at a university in Da Nang, utilizing standardized teaching materials aligned with the CEFR B1 proficiency level.

3.2. Participants

The participants for this study consisted of $N = 62$ Vietnamese non-English majors enrolled in a required general English course at a university in Da Nang. These students share a background of learning English throughout high school and are completing English credits to fulfill

university graduation requirements. Due to the availability of existing groups, convenience sampling was employed, involving two intact classes that were willing to participate. As the study was conducted in a natural classroom setting, random assignment at the individual level was not feasible due to institutional and scheduling constraints. This sample is considered representative of the broader population of non-English majors at the university, as they share similar educational backgrounds, proficiency levels, and the same curriculum. The participants were divided into two equal groups: an experimental group ($N = 31$) using vocabulary journals and a control group ($N = 31$) following word list methods. To ensure the initial comparability between the two groups, an independent samples t-test was conducted on the pre-test scores, which indicated no statistically significant difference between them.

3.3. Instruments

A pre-test was administered to assess students' vocabulary before intervention. There are 90 questions, with 30 target words. The test includes: form, meaning and use. Each element is tested individually. There are three sections of the test, each consisting of 30 questions. Part 1, Part 2, and Part 3 must be printed on separate sheets. Each part should be administered one at a time, and the finishing paper of the current part must be collected before the next part is distributed. The order of questions within each part has been shuffled to avoid predictability.

Part 1 measures cued productive recall. Students complete the English word given its Vietnamese equivalent and initial letter, distinguishing this task from free production. The first letter of each target word was provided to ensure that participants produced the specific target words rather than supplying alternative synonyms or semantically appropriate words that were not part of the target vocabulary set. A sample item: đèn pin – f_____.

Part 2 is a productive measure of meaning because it requires learners to recall and produce the Vietnamese equivalent without any external cues. Part 2 uses the L1–L2 translation task (English to Vietnamese). A sample item for this task: Flashlight: đèn pin.

Part 3 evaluates use through multiple-choice sentence completion tasks with carefully controlled stems and distractors to ensure clarity and fairness. A sample item: We need a _____ when the power goes out A. flashlight B. carpet C. teapot D. postcard

The post-test is used to assess short-term vocabulary gains and evaluate the immediate impact of the vocabulary journal on learners' knowledge. The 20 words with the highest error rates across the group from the pre-test were used in the post-test and they followed the same format as the pre-test.

The Delayed Post-test is conducted four weeks after the post-test to assess vocabulary retention. It uses the same assessment instrument as the post test. This test aims to provide insights into the long-term effectiveness of the intervention.

3.4. Target Vocabulary Selection

Target vocabulary were selected based on a 30-word pre-test administered to participants ($N = 62$). Twenty items were chosen from five curriculum units because they

exhibited significant error rates (ranging from 41.9% to 77.4%, $M = 59\%$). This selection process ensures that the target words provide sufficient room for improvement and a suitable level of challenge for learners [14], being neither too familiar nor overly obscure.

3.5. Data collection procedure

Both classes followed the same syllabus and were taught by the same instructor. The data collection process is carried out a 12-week period.

Week 1-Pre-intervention: Both the experimental and control groups complete the pre-test. After the test, students' scores will be analyzed to identify 20 lowest-scoring words which were used as the target vocabulary for the intervention phase.

Weeks 2 to 7- Intervention: The Experimental Group worked with 20 words taken from the pre-test. They used a template including Word, Meaning, Example Sentence, Part of Speech and Personal Notes sections. However, in the control group, students learned target vocabulary through teacher-provided word lists containing English words and Vietnamese meanings. During each session, students reviewed the lists and completed follow-up exercises such as matching words with meanings, gap-fill tasks, and vocabulary review activities under teacher supervision. Both groups were allocated the same amount of instructional and practice time throughout the six-week intervention in order to minimize the potential influence of time-on-task effects.

Week 8- Post- intervention: Both groups complete the post-test immediately after the intervention period. It follows the same format as the pre-test.

Week 12 - Delayed Post-Test Administration: A final test is administered to both groups four weeks after the intervention period. This test evaluates the vocabulary retention durability and the effects of vocabulary journals.

3.6. Data analysis

To ensure the initial equivalence of the two groups, the researcher will use an Independent Samples t-test to analyze the Pre-test scores. A result of $p > .050$ will be required to confirm that there is no statistically significant difference in vocabulary knowledge between the Experimental and Control groups at the beginning of the intervention. This proves that any future progress in the Post-test is caused by the vocabulary journal, and not because one group was already better than the other. Test scores from the pre-test, post-test, and delayed post-test will be analyzed using descriptive statistics to summarize student performance. In order to assess the impact of the intervention, independent-samples t-tests will be used to compare mean scores between the experimental and control groups on the post-test and delayed post-test. Additionally, a paired-samples t-test will be used to compare post-test and delayed post-test results in terms of assessing the retention of vocabulary over time.

4. Findings and discussion

Pre-test results confirmed the homogeneity of the two groups ($N=31$) across all dimensions ($p > .050$), which ensures a fair baseline for comparison.

Table 2. Independent Samples t-test Results for Pre-test Scores in Form, Meaning, and Use

	Group	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
Form	Control	6.520	4.150	-0.990	60.000	.327	0.250
	Exp.	7.520	3.800				
Meaning	Control	8.290	4.220	-0.760	60.000	.450	0.190
	Exp.	9.100	4.130				
Use	Control	9.100	1.830	1.600	45.530	.116	0.410
	Exp.	7.970	3.470				

Note: All scores are based on 20 target vocabulary items used in the intervention phase. Maximum score for each aspect is 20.

The independent samples t-tests indicate that the experimental group ($N = 31$) significantly outperformed the control group ($N = 31$) across three dimensions: form, meaning, and use. This superior performance was sustained from the post-test through the delayed post-test, suggesting that journals are more effective for initial acquisition and retention over time than word lists.

Table 3. Independent Samples t-test Results for Post-test and Delayed post-test Scores in Form, Meaning, and Use

			<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
Form	Posttest	Exp	13.870	3.120	-2.620	60.000	.011	0.670
		Control	11.550	3.820				
	Delayed	Exp	10.320	3.220	-2.050	60.000	.045	0.520
		Control	8.520	3.700				
Meaning	Posttest	Exp	17.100	2.800	-2.420	55.560	.019	0.620
		Control	15.060	3.740				
	Delayed	Exp	13.810	3.340	-7.000	44.560	<.001	1.780
		Control	9.100	1.700				
Use	Posttest	Exp	13.580	3.590	-3.200	43.600	.003	0.810
		Control	11.290	1.760				
	Delayed	Exp.	10.710	3.580	-2.270	42.880	.029	0.580
		Control	9.100	1.700				

Note: Maximum score for each aspect is 20

The superiority in Form retention can be explained by the structure of vocabulary journals, which learners have to actively record and review the spelling and pronunciation of words. While the control group only viewed word forms, experimental students manually transcribed words and phonetic symbols, creating a double encoding effect. help students recognize spelling structures better than the surface-level processing of word lists. This aligns with [2], who found that those using journals performed in form tests better than those using word lists. According to The Involvement Load Hypothesis [9, 10], higher search and evaluation tasks supported learners to recall vocabulary better. When students search for the correct pronunciations and take note, they interact with words more than they simply read a list of words. Furthermore, when learners could recall word forms, they have a higher level of awareness and demonstrate differences in how long word memories last.

For Meaning acquisition, vocabulary journals require "Deep Processing" [7] by asking students to contextualize words through creating examples. When the word list

provided students with direct semantic equivalence between L1 and L2 encouraging rote memorization, the vocabulary journal required students to combine meanings and contextual examples to foster a deeper understanding of the words. This process integrates new words into the students' existing semantic network and helps students remember the word meaning over time. Another important factor is learner involvement. As Walters and Bozkurt [2] demonstrated, students who keep a vocabulary journal achieve better results because they are actively involved in the learning process rather than only read a list passively. Vocabulary journals require learner active participation which increases cognitive investment. In contrast, the control group may have relied more on passive review strategies. There is a small difference between two groups in the post-test, suggesting that both methods can support short-term meaning acquisition. However, the gap in the delayed post-test indicated the limitations of word lists in promoting word knowledge over time.

Table 4. Paired Samples *t*-test Results for Vocabulary Form, Meaning, Use (Within-group comparison)

		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Note</i>	<i>d</i>
Control	Form	Pre vs. Post	5.030	0.800	-35.240	30.000	<.001	Gain 6.330
		Post vs. Delayed	3.030	0.320	53.680	30.000	<.001	Loss 9.640
Exp.	Form	Pre vs. Post	6.360	1.620	-21.790	30.000	<.001	Gain 4.010
		Post vs. Delayed	3.550	1.120	17.630	30.000	<.001	Loss 4.210
Control	Meaning	Pre vs. Post	6.770	1.690	-22.350	30.000	<.001	Gain 0.710
		Post vs. Delayed	3.360	0.800	23.410	30.000	<.001	Loss 2.320
Exp.	Meaning	Pre vs. Post	8.000	1.480	-30.030	30.000	<.001	Gain 3.910
		Post vs. Delayed	3.290	0.690	26.450	30.000	<.001	Loss 3.170
Control	Use	Pre vs. Post	3.000	4.230	-3.950	30.000	<.001	Gain 5.390
		Post vs. Delayed	2.190	0.950	12.910	30.000	<.001	Loss 4.750
Exp.	Use	Pre vs. Post	5.610	1.090	-28.790	30.000	<.001	Gain 5.170
		Post vs. Delayed	2.870	0.340	46.910	30.000	<.001	Loss 8.430

In terms of Use, the findings support Schmitt's [14] view that receptive knowledge of word usage typically develops before productive ability. Students tend to have better recall abilities when they are able to create new contexts for words [4]. Although the test was receptive, writing sentences in the journal helped the Experiment group better recognize the correct use in the multiple-choice questions. This may be explained that creating example sentences requires deeper semantic processing, as learners must integrate word meanings into specific contexts. This strengthens the links between form, meaning, and usage, helping students better identify correct patterns in receptive tests. Consequently, generating sentences facilitates a successful transfer of knowledge from productive practice to receptive recognition. Rahmawati et al. [12] also reported similarly that about 80% students showed improvement in applying new vocabulary effectively after using a vocabulary journal. In contrast, students in the control group struggled to choose the answers in the use test because they may have lacked sufficient contextual information. Even if students know the

meaning of a word, they may still struggle to use it since they have never used that word in a real-life context. The finding suggests that vocabulary journals can enhance learners' implicit knowledge of how to use the word even they are not required to produce productive output.

The paired samples *t*-tests showed that both groups made significant progress from the pre-test to the post-test in all three areas: form, meaning, and use, which means that the vocabulary journal and the word list methods were effective for immediate vocabulary acquisition. However, a comparison between post-test and delayed post-test scores showed a significant decrease for both groups across all dimensions suggesting that while students successfully acquired the target vocabulary during the intervention, a degree of attrition was inevitable over time. However, the experimental group's retention remained statistically superior to the control group.

The scores of the control group in the delayed post-test dropped significantly in all three aspects because vocabulary acquired through word lists may be more easily forgotten. Without creating examples to put learned words into practical context, students can forget the words easily if they do not review and reinforce them. The initial memorization process in the control group was very passive so the memory traces were easily broken. This can lead to a rapid decline in knowledge. In contrast, the experimental group's scores were much better which is consistent with the Depth of Processing hypothesis by Craik and Lockhart [7]. When a student puts the more effort into learning a word such as finding examples and pronunciation, they will remember it longer. Vocabulary journal puts learners into a process of extensive encoding and repeated retrieval. This can help to slow down the forgetting process and to support retention over time. When students often review their journals, they can improve retrieval practice and strengthen memory consolidation [4]. These results reinforce Le's study [15] on active learning and align with Ebbinghaus's forgetting curve [8], which states that systematic review slows down forgetting. Learners can enhance the habit of self-review and contribute to sustained lexical development when they often use vocabulary journals. Schmitt and Schmitt [16] also emphasized the importance of repeated exposure and personal engagement in vocabulary learning. The retention observed in delayed post-tests matches results from studies in Vietnam. Research using delayed post-tests show that learners can maintain their vocabulary increase over time [17]. This long-term durability is further illuminated when contrasted with English major counterparts in the region, who have been shown to progressively transition away from passive rote memorization toward more cognitively demanding and reflective tactics [18]. In contrast, non-English majors typically remain vulnerable to rapid memory attrition when restricted to conventional word lists. This underscores the necessity of implementing vocabulary journals to strategically guide non-majors toward deeper processing levels, thereby stabilizing their mental lexicon over time. Likewise, repeated exposure to words helps learners remember words in the short term and long term [1]. Ultimately, these findings yield strong evidence that

systematic review through such cognitively engaging tools facilitates the successful consolidation of lexical knowledge into the long-term memory store.

However, several limitations should be noted. Despite pre-test equivalence, the lack of random assignment limits the generalizability of the findings. However, conducting the study within intact classes enhances the ecological validity of the research, as it reflects authentic classroom learning conditions. Additionally, the assessment of word form provided the first letter as a cue, measuring only partial productive knowledge rather than full mastery. Moreover, the six-week intervention may be insufficient to observe significant changes in learning habits. Next, the study sample size was limited to a specific group of students, so that generalizing the results to other students, such as students at several proficiency levels or age. Furthermore, external variables such as extra self-study could not be fully controlled. Finally, while form and meaning were assessed productively, use was evaluated through receptive multiple-choice, which may not reflect students' ability to produce vocabulary freely in communicative contexts.

To expand and refine the findings of this study, future research should focus on diversifying the methodology and the scope. First, studies from six months to one year, combined with multiple delayed post-tests, are necessary to monitor the stability of vocabulary retention. Next, future research should expand the research sample size to include more different groups like language proficiency and age. Methodologically, future studies can use productive tests for the use such as writing or speaking which would provide a more accurate measure of communicative competence. Additionally, another approach is to compare paper-based journals and E-journals which may reveal the impact of digital features on learner motivation and memory. Finally, analyzing the psychological factors related to persistence and cognitive load would provide a more comprehensive understanding of keeping journal process.

5. Conclusion and Implications

This study investigated the effectiveness of vocabulary journals on words retention. Quantitative data revealed that the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group in both post-tests and delayed post-tests. Specifically, journals facilitated better cued productive recall of form and productive meaning knowledge, and improved receptive use through contextualization in example sentences. Overall, vocabulary journals prove to be a superior strategy for long-term acquisition compared to rote memorization.

Teachers should transition from providing static word lists to guiding students in creating personalized vocabulary journals. Emphasis should be placed on contextualized usage such as creating original example sentences, rather than translation. Furthermore, integrating learner autonomy and personalization into the curriculum is essential to enhance student motivation and ensure sustainable linguistic development. For learners, they should recognize that relying on word lists is a shallow approach to acquisition. To enhance retention, they must transition from passive reception to active management of

their vocabulary development through journals. Emphasis should shift from word quantity to the quality of knowledge, specifically the depth of knowledge across form, meaning, and use. By generating original examples and reflecting on personal challenges, students can foster greater autonomy and target their efforts more effectively.

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