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FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE: MEMORY STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE IDIOM LEARNING

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ABSTRACT:
LEARNING IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS IS A CRITICAL COMPONENT OF LANGUAGE MASTERY, YET THEIR NON-LITERAL MEANINGS OFTEN PRESENT DIFFICULTIES FOR LANGUAGE LEARNERS. THIS ARTICLE EXPLORES COGNITIVE-BASED MEMORY TECHNIQUES—VISUALIZATION, CONTEXTUAL LEARNING, REPETITION, AND MNEMONIC STRATEGIES—THAT CAN SIGNIFICANTLY ENHANCE THE RETENTION AND COMPREHENSION OF IDIOMATIC PHRASES. GROUNDED IN COGNITIVE PSYCHOLOGY, THE STRATEGIES LEVERAGE IMAGERY, ASSOCIATION, SPATIAL MEMORY, AND REPETITION TO DEEPEN SEMANTIC PROCESSING AND LONG-TERM RECALL BY TRANSFORMING ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONS INTO MEMORABLE MENTAL REPRESENTATIONS AND PERSONALIZED EXPERIENCES.
TO ASSESS THE PRACTICAL EFFECTIVENESS OF THESE STRATEGIES, A CLASSROOM EXPERIMENT WAS CONDUCTED WITH INTERMEDIATE ENGLISH LEARNERS. PARTICIPANTS WERE DIVIDED INTO THREE GROUPS, EACH INTRODUCED TO THE IDIOM "ONCE IN A BLUE MOON" USING A DIFFERENT INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACH: VISUALIZATION, CONTEXTUAL STORYTELLING, AND REPETITION WITH RETRIEVAL PRACTICE. RESULTS SHOWED THAT VISUALIZATION SUPPORTED STRONG INITIAL RECALL BUT WEAKENED OVER TIME, WHILE CONTEXTUAL LEARNING FOSTERED LONG-TERM RETENTION AND FLEXIBLE LANGUAGE USE. REPETITION AND RETRIEVAL PRACTICE MAINTAINED CONSISTENT FACTUAL RETENTION BUT LIMITED CREATIVE APPLICATION.
THESE FINDINGS EMPHASIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF A BLENDED INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACH THAT COMBINES VISUALIZATION FOR INITIAL ENCODING, REPETITION FOR MEMORY CONSOLIDATION, AND CONTEXTUAL LEARNING FOR DEEPER UNDERSTANDING. THE PAPER ALSO HIGHLIGHTS THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN SUPPORTING THESE STRATEGIES, OFFERING TOOLS FOR STRUCTURED REVIEW AND INTERACTIVE LEARNING. BY INTEGRATING COGNITIVE STRATEGIES WITH PRACTICAL CLASSROOM TECHNIQUES, EDUCATORS CAN PROMOTE BOTH RETENTION AND COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE, EMPOWERING LEARNERS TO USE IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS WITH GREATER CONFIDENCE AND CULTURAL SENSITIVITY.

KEY WORDS: IDIOMS, MEMORY TECHNIQUES, VISUALIZATION AND IMAGERY, METHOD OF LOCI, LANGUAGE LEARNING, KEYWORD METHOD, CONTEXTUAL LEARNING, MNEMONIC STRATEGIES

INTRODUCTION

Idiomatic expressions and phrases are essential for language fluency, yet their non-literal meanings often make them challenging for learners to master. Traditional memorization

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methods frequently fall short in helping students retain and use idioms effectively. Instead, incorporating memory techniques such as visualization, contextual learning, and mnemonic strategies can enhance both comprehension and recall [1].

Research has shown that techniques like the **keyword method**, introduced by Atkinson and Raugh [2], and the **method of loci**, analyzed in depth by Bower [3], significantly strengthen retention by making use of the brain's ability to form associations and process imagery. These methods leverage dual coding principles [4] to create strong mental links between form and meaning. Furthermore, contextual exposure, repetition, and active retrieval [5] have been proven to improve memory consolidation over time. Technological tools, such as mobile apps for language learning [6], now offer innovative ways to integrate these strategies into second-language acquisition.

This article explores these evidence-based strategies, demonstrating their effectiveness in teaching idioms and figurative phrases, and provides practical insights for educators and learners alike. Drawing on foundational research in cognitive psychology [7] and second-language vocabulary retention [8], we aim to bridge the gap between theory and practice in idiom learning.

1. VISUALIZATION AND IMAGERY

Among the various memory techniques explored, *Visualization and Imagery* is presented first because it serves as a foundational strategy in idiom learning. This technique leverages the brain's capacity to create and recall vivid mental images, making them effective tools for engaging with abstract and non-literal language. Paivio's Dual Coding Theory [4] emphasizes that information encoded both visually and verbally strengthens memory retention by activating multiple cognitive pathways. Similarly, Gibbs and O'Brien [9] argue that the metaphorical motivation inherent in idiomatic expressions can be effectively accessed and internalized through mental imagery, allowing learners to form deeper conceptual understandings of figurative language. When learners visualize idioms in tangible and often exaggerated ways, they create stronger semantic associations, which facilitate deeper comprehension and recall [2], [4], [9].

Starting with *Visualization and Imagery* provides a stepping stone for more advanced strategies, such as the keyword method or the method of loci. Its simplicity and intuitive appeal make it an ideal entry point for learners, setting the stage for deeper exploration of idiomatic expressions through other memory-enhancing techniques.

Visualization is a powerful memory technique that leverages the brain's ability to process and store information through mental imagery. By creating vivid, often exaggerated mental scenes that represent an idiom's figurative meaning, learners can establish stronger cognitive links between the phrase and its intended message. For example, imagining someone literally spilling a can of beans can serve as a visual anchor for understanding and recalling the idiom *"spill the beans,"* meaning to reveal a secret.

To remember the idiom *"kick the bucket"* (meaning to die), a learner could visualize a cartoon figure literally kicking a bucket so hard that they comically fall backward, emphasizing the idea of an abrupt end. This exaggerated mental image not only highlights the phrase's non-literal meaning but also engages humor, which is known to further enhance memory retention through emotional connections [4].

For the idiom *"hold your horses"* (meaning to wait or be patient), a learner might imagine someone physically trying to hold back a group of energetic horses tugging on reins. The visual of physical restraint mirrors the concept of controlling impulses, reinforcing the meaning of

patience through both mental imagery and conceptual alignment with the idiom's core message, as supported by Atkinson and Raugh's findings on mnemonic strategies [2].

These examples build on the idea that the brain retains abstract language more effectively when paired with striking visual representations. Like *"spill the beans,"* both *"kick the bucket"* and *"hold your horses"* create strong mental anchors by linking exaggerated scenarios to the figurative meanings of idioms. This multisensory encoding process aligns with Paivio's Dual Coding Theory [4], which emphasizes the benefits of combining visual and verbal information for enhanced memory retention. Similarly, studies [2] have shown that visualizing abstract ideas, like idiomatic expressions, can activate imagery processing regions in the brain, facilitating recall.

Educators can integrate this technique into language learning by encouraging students to draw, describe, or imagine scenarios that encapsulate an idiom's meaning. This approach not only aids memory but also engages learners creatively, making the process more enjoyable and impactful.

2. KEYWORD METHOD

The keyword method is a mnemonic strategy that enhances the learning of idioms and phrases, especially in second-language acquisition. This technique involves selecting a familiar word, or "keyword," that either phonetically resembles or conceptually relates to a part of the idiom. Learners then create a mental image linking the keyword to the idiom's meaning, forming a memorable cognitive association.

For instance, to learn the idiom *"let the cat out of the bag"* (meaning to reveal a secret), a learner might focus on the word *cat* and visualize someone accidentally opening a bag, allowing a cat to jump out, symbolizing the unintended disclosure of information. Similarly, to remember the expression *"break the ice"* (meaning to start a conversation or reduce tension in a social setting), a learner could focus on the word *ice* and imagine a frozen lake where people are standing silently. Suddenly, someone breaks the ice with a hammer, and the people begin talking and laughing as the ice cracks, illustrating the beginning of interaction. Another example could be the idiom *"hit the nail on the head"* (describing being precise or identifying a problem exactly). A learner might focus on the word *nail* and picture a person striking a nail perfectly with a hammer, emphasizing accuracy.

This dual association—combining sound and visual imagery—simplifies the abstract nature of idiomatic expressions while strengthening retention. The keyword method's effectiveness lies in its dual coding approach, which engages both verbal and visual memory pathways. Atkinson and Raugh [2] demonstrated that this method significantly improves vocabulary retention by creating multiple mental pathways for information storage and recall. By transforming abstract language into word-image pairs, the keyword method offers an effective and engaging strategy for both learners and educators aiming to simplify the learning of complex idiomatic expressions.

3. METHOD OF LOCI

The method of loci, often referred to as the *memory palace technique*, is a spatial memory strategy that involves associating pieces of information with specific locations within a familiar environment. Its origins can be traced back to ancient Greece, where it was first described by the poet Simonides of Ceos around the 5th century BCE. According to historical accounts, Simonides developed the technique after a tragic event where a banquet hall collapsed, killing the guests inside. By mentally reconstructing the positions where each guest had been seated, he was able to identify the victims based on their physical locations. This discovery led to the

realization that spatial memory could be harnessed for structured recall of information, giving birth to the method of loci.

The method utilizes the brain's natural capacity for spatial navigation and memory recall, enhancing retention by linking information to mental imagery of physical spaces. When applied to the learning of idiomatic expressions, the method of loci allows learners to place each idiom in a distinct mental space, creating strong cognitive associations. For example, to remember the idiom *"walk on eggshells"* (meaning to act with extreme caution to avoid conflict), a learner could imagine the hallway of their memory palace covered in fragile eggshells, requiring careful, deliberate steps to emphasize the need for caution. Similarly, the idiom *"burn the midnight oil"* (referring to staying up late working or studying) could be visualized in a study room with a dimly lit oil lamp still burning while someone works late into the night. Another example could be *"bite off more than you can chew"* (meaning to take on more than one can handle), where a learner envisions a dining table with someone struggling to eat a comically oversized meal, representing the concept of overwhelming oneself.

By mentally revisiting these personalized locations, learners reinforce the idiom's meaning and improve long-term retention through repeated mental interaction with the visual scene. Empirical research has demonstrated the effectiveness of this technique, particularly for memorizing abstract or unrelated information. Bower [3] found that participants who applied the method of loci recalled significantly more items than those using conventional rote memorization techniques. The success of this method lies in the combination of vivid mental imagery and spatial organization, both of which engage multiple cognitive processes, making information retrieval more intuitive and reliable.

From a pedagogical perspective, the method of loci can be integrated into language teaching by guiding students through the creation of their own memory palaces. Educators can encourage learners to assign idiomatic expressions to specific, familiar locations within their homes or other well-known environments, allowing them to build personal connections with the expressions they are learning. This technique is particularly valuable for teaching abstract or culturally specific idioms, as it transforms challenging language patterns into accessible, visual experiences. The spatial and imaginative components not only aid memory retention but also make the learning process more interactive, engaging, and effective for a wide range of learners.

4. CONTEXTUAL LEARNING

Contextual learning involves understanding and memorizing idioms by embedding them in meaningful usage scenarios, which enhances both comprehension and long-term retention. Rather than learning idioms in isolation, this approach allows learners to encounter expressions in authentic contexts such as narratives, dialogues, and real-life situations, providing essential semantic cues for grasping both the figurative meaning and appropriate usage. For example, presenting the idiom *"cut corners"* (meaning to do something in a rushed or careless way) in a conversation about poorly completed work helps learners connect the phrase with the concept of compromising quality. The idiom *"a blessing in disguise"* (something that seems bad or unlucky at first but results in something good later) becomes easier to understand when presented within a narrative context. For example, a story where a character unexpectedly loses their job but later discovers a more fulfilling career can help clarify the phrase's meaning. The contrast between the initial setback and the positive outcome reinforces the idea that what seems unfortunate at first may lead to something beneficial, making the figurative language both clearer and more memorable. Another example could involve the phrase *"throw in the towel"* (to give up or admit defeat after struggling to succeed). This expression can be

effectively illustrated through a sports narrative where a boxer, overwhelmed and unable to continue fighting, signals surrender by having their coach physically toss a towel into the ring. This visual reinforces the idiom's origin and clarifies its use in situations where someone stops trying after facing significant challenges.

By grounding idiomatic expressions in contexts where their meanings naturally unfold, learners process language more deeply and are better equipped to recall and apply it in real-life situations. Nation [10] emphasizes that contextual learning fosters deeper cognitive engagement by requiring learners to process language in its functional and meaningful form, rather than as disconnected units of vocabulary. Additionally, Boers, Eyckmans, and Stengers [1] demonstrated that idioms presented in context-rich stories and dialogues led to significantly higher retention rates compared to decontextualized memorization, further reinforcing the importance of this approach in language instruction.

Educators can implement contextual learning by embedding idioms in diverse teaching strategies, such as storytelling, role-playing activities, and situational learning exercises. For instance, presenting a fictional narrative where a character *"pulls someone's leg"* (jokes or teases) could clarify the expression's playful nature, while group activities in which students craft short stories featuring multiple idioms reinforce retention through collaborative practice. Encouraging students to create their own sentences or personal anecdotes using idiomatic expressions also personalizes the learning process, making it more meaningful and impactful.

Contextual learning not only aids memory retention but also equips learners with the ability to use idioms naturally and appropriately in communication, enhancing both language fluency and cultural competence. By embedding figurative language in authentic contexts, students can better appreciate the richness of idiomatic expressions while developing the skills necessary for effective language use in everyday conversation.

5. REPETITION AND RETRIEVAL PRACTICE

Repetition and retrieval practice are fundamental strategies for reinforcing the learning of idiomatic expressions and ensuring long-term retention and language fluency. Repetition involves consistent exposure to idioms over time, while retrieval practice focuses on actively recalling information, both of which strengthen memory consolidation by repeatedly accessing learned material. Together, these approaches create stronger neural connections, making it easier for learners to retrieve expressions when needed.

Spaced repetition, a well-researched memory technique, involves reviewing information at progressively longer intervals to optimize retention. For instance, a learner could review a set of idiomatic expressions daily at first, gradually increasing the intervals to every few days, weeks, or months. Revisiting the idiom *"add fuel to the fire"* (meaning to worsen a situation) periodically helps ensure the expression remains accessible in long-term memory, particularly when it reappears in real-life contexts. This strategic spacing prevents the typical forgetting curve described by Ebbinghaus [11] and strengthens the recall process by reactivating memory traces over time.

Complementary to repetition, *retrieval practice* emphasizes active recall, where learners attempt to retrieve information from memory without immediate prompts. Techniques such as self-quizzing, peer teaching, and sentence creation with target idioms can greatly enhance retention compared to passive review. For example, a student might be asked to recall the idiom *"hit the ground running"* (to start a task with energy and momentum) and use it correctly in a sentence without referring to notes. The *testing effect*, as demonstrated by Roediger and Butler [5], highlights how frequent recall strengthens memory by deepening the neural pathways involved in information retrieval.

Educators can implement repetition and retrieval practice effectively through both traditional and digital tools. Flashcards remain a classic method for spaced repetition, while apps like Anki and Quizlet draw upon algorithms to automate the process and adjust review schedules based on learner performance. Additionally, collaborative classroom strategies such as quiz-based games, peer testing, and storytelling competitions using idioms can make the retrieval process engaging while reinforcing memory recall.

By integrating repetition and retrieval techniques into idiom instruction, learners not only develop the ability to recall expressions accurately but also build the confidence to use them fluently in real-world conversations. These strategies transform passive memorization into active language mastery, forming a solid foundation for effective communication.

6. ASSOCIATIVE MNEMONICS

Associative mnemonics involve linking idiomatic expressions to personal experiences, familiar concepts, or relatable scenarios to create meaningful memory associations. This technique harnesses on the brain's natural ability to form and retrieve connections by anchoring abstract language in concrete, emotionally significant contexts. By personalizing language learning, associative mnemonics simplify abstract idiomatic expressions, making them easier to understand and recall.

For example, a learner trying to memorize the idiom *"barking up the wrong tree"* (pursuing a mistaken line of action) might associate it with a personal memory of searching for lost keys in the wrong drawer, emphasizing the idea of looking for something in the wrong place. Similarly, the idiom *"a piece of cake"* (meaning something very easy) could be connected to the learner's experience of baking a cake with minimal effort, reinforcing the idea of simplicity. Another example might be *"cry over spilled milk"* (lamenting something irreversible), which could be tied to the experience of accidentally breaking a phone screen and feeling regret afterward.

Research supports the effectiveness of associative mnemonics in memory retention. McDermott and Roediger [12] demonstrated that connecting new information to familiar concepts significantly improves both memory encoding and long-term retrieval. The emotional and personal relevance generated through these associations activates existing neural pathways, making the idiomatic expression more memorable and intuitive to recall.

Educators can incorporate associative mnemonics in language instruction by encouraging students to relate idioms to their personal experiences and real-life situations. For instance, learners could share personal stories where they have "missed the boat" (failed to take advantage of an opportunity) or felt they were "walking on thin ice" (being in a risky situation). Group activities where students match idioms with life events or collaborative storytelling where idioms are incorporated into shared narratives can further enhance this approach. Journaling exercises where students describe their daily routines using idiomatic language also reinforce these personal connections, as repeated exposure to personalized content solidifies memory retention.

By linking idiomatic expressions to familiar experiences, associative mnemonics not only enhance memory but also deepen learner engagement and motivation. The emotional resonance created through personal connections makes language more relatable, ensuring learners retain and use idiomatic expressions naturally in conversation.

7. USE OF TECHNOLOGY

The integration of *technology* in language learning has transformed the way idioms and phrases are taught and retained, offering dynamic tools that make language acquisition more

interactive and effective. Digital platforms and applications that incorporate mnemonic strategies provide learners with structured practice opportunities, blending repetition, imagery, and context to optimize retention and comprehension of idiomatic expressions.

Spaced repetition apps, such as Anki and Quizlet, use algorithms to strategically space review sessions, ensuring idioms are reinforced at optimal intervals to promote long-term retention. For instance, learners might create flashcards with the idiom *"burn the candle at both ends"* (working excessively) on one side and a visual or example sentence on the other, reviewing the cards at progressively longer intervals based on performance. This technique is based on the spacing effect, which, as Ebbinghaus [11] demonstrated, suggests that information is better retained when reviewed at gradually increasing intervals rather than through massed practice.

Beyond repetition, technology also facilitates mnemonic strategies through interactive imagery and gamification. Platforms like Memrise incorporate animations and playful visuals, such as depicting the idiom *"raining cats and dogs"* with animated cats and dogs falling from the sky, enhancing both visual memory and engagement. Gamified elements, such as point systems, leaderboards, and challenges, further motivate learners to remain consistent in their language practice.

Contextual exposure is another advantage of digital tools, with platforms like Duolingo and FluentU embedding idiomatic expressions in authentic dialogues, videos, and cultural contexts. Encountering idioms such as *"hit the books"* (to begin studying intensely) in a video clip where a student begins studying for an exam helps reinforce both meaning and appropriate usage. This contextualized approach mirrors the principles of natural language acquisition, where learners absorb language through repeated exposure in meaningful situations.

Research underscores the efficacy of technology-driven language learning. Godwin-Jones [6] highlighted that digital tools not only boost learner motivation through interactivity but also improve retention by incorporating effective strategies such as spaced repetition, visualization, and contextual learning. These findings align with cognitive theories emphasizing multimodal learning, where combining visual, auditory, and interactive elements enhances memory consolidation.

As suggested in language education research [6, 10], educators can integrate technology into idiom instruction by encouraging students to use spaced repetition apps for regular review, assigning multimedia resources like podcasts or short films featuring idiomatic expressions in context, and promoting collaborative projects where learners create and share digital flashcards or quizzes. Such practices support learner autonomy while reinforcing idiomatic language use through varied sensory inputs and interactive engagement.

By making use of the diverse capabilities of modern educational technology, language learners gain access to personalized, flexible, and engaging tools that make idiom learning both effective and enjoyable. These resources not only enhance retention but also foster greater language fluency, ensuring that learners can confidently apply idiomatic expressions in real-world conversations.

8. CLASSROOM STUDY ON IDIOM LEARNING

The theoretical foundations presented in this article emphasize the effectiveness of various memory techniques—such as visualization, contextual learning, and repetition—in enhancing the retention and comprehension of idiomatic expressions.

To better understand how memory strategies impact the retention of idiomatic expressions, I conducted a classroom experiment with a group of intermediate English learners.

The aim was to explore whether different instructional techniques influenced the learners' ability to both recall and apply idioms effectively in conversation.

The participants were divided into three groups, each introduced to the same set of 10 idiomatic expressions using a distinct teaching approach. The idioms were carefully chosen to reflect a range of everyday phrases unfamiliar to the learners, such as *"hit the roof"* (to become very angry), *"let the cat out of the bag"* (to reveal a secret), *"once in a blue moon"* (something that happens very rarely). These idioms, along with their meanings, were selected and adapted from the *Oxford Dictionary of English Idioms* [13].

Instructional Methods and Observations

To examine the impact of different instructional strategies on idiom retention and usage, the idiom *"once in a blue moon"* was introduced across three learner groups, each using a distinct memory technique. This idiom, chosen for its metaphorical nature, provided an opportunity to assess how various teaching strategies influence both immediate recall and long-term retention.

The first group engaged in visualization and mental imagery, where learners created exaggerated mental images to represent the idiom's meaning. For *"once in a blue moon"* participants visualized a night sky featuring a large, glowing blue moon appearing unexpectedly, emphasizing the rarity of the event. This technique aimed to create a strong visual link between the phrase and its figurative meaning. Learners in this group performed best on the short-term recall test (a quiz administered immediately after the instructional phase), where they accurately defined the idiom and recalled its meaning. However, performance declined slightly in the delayed recall test (a follow-up conducted two weeks later without review), indicating that while vivid imagery aids initial memory formation, it may require reinforcement for sustained retention.

The second group participated in contextual learning and storytelling, where the idiom was embedded in a short narrative for deeper understanding. Learners read a story about a reclusive artist who *"once in a blue moon"* held an exhibition, emphasizing both the rarity of the event and the idiom's situational use. Afterward, students created their own short narratives featuring the idiom, such as describing a family member who only visits *"once in a blue moon."* This group scored slightly lower than the visualization group on the initial recall test, but they outperformed both other groups on the delayed test, suggesting that presenting idioms in meaningful contexts promotes deeper semantic encoding and long-term retention.

The third group engaged in repetition and retrieval practice, where *"once in a blue moon"* was introduced through flashcards and repetitive drills with minimal context. Learners repeatedly reviewed the idiom's definition and usage across multiple sessions, focusing on repeated exposure and self-testing. This group maintained consistent recall across both the initial and delayed tests, demonstrating effective factual retention. However, when asked to apply the idiom in original sentences, participants in this group showed less creativity and flexibility compared to those in the storytelling group, indicating that repetition alone supports memorization but may not facilitate deeper understanding or language flexibility.

Key Findings and Pedagogical Insights

The findings from the *"once in a blue moon"* experiment revealed that each instructional method offers unique advantages and limitations when teaching idiomatic expressions. Visualization and mental imagery proved highly effective for short-term recall, as the vivid mental association with a rare blue moon created strong initial memory links. However, retention declined over time, suggesting that while mental imagery is powerful for initial

encoding, it requires supplementary strategies to maintain long-term recall. Contextual learning and storytelling, on the other hand, promoted deeper semantic understanding and long-term retention, as learners who engaged with idioms in meaningful narratives were better able to recall and apply the expression in creative tasks weeks after instruction. Repetition and retrieval practice ensured stable retention across both the initial and delayed tests but limited learners' ability to apply the idiom flexibly in new contexts, indicating a focus on rote memorization rather than conceptual depth. These results suggest that a blended instructional approach—introducing idioms through visualization for initial retention, reinforcing them through spaced repetition, and solidifying understanding with contextual storytelling—may be the most effective strategy for both memorization and practical language use. Educators should consider integrating multiple cognitive strategies to promote both retention and communicative competence in idiomatic language instruction.

CONCLUSION

Mastering idiomatic expressions is crucial for achieving language proficiency, as idioms often convey cultural values, figurative meanings, and conversational depth that go beyond literal language. This study explored the effectiveness of cognitive-based memory strategies—visualization, contextual learning, repetition, and mnemonic techniques—for enhancing idiom retention and comprehension. Theoretical insights and a classroom experiment demonstrated how each strategy targets different cognitive processes, such as dual coding, semantic association, and active recall, contributing to a more comprehensive memory framework.

The classroom study revealed that visualization effectively supported initial recall by creating vivid mental associations, while contextual learning promoted deeper semantic understanding and long-term retention. Repetition and retrieval practice proved valuable for memory stability but lacked the depth necessary for flexible language use. These findings underscore the importance of a blended instructional approach, combining visualization for initial encoding, repetition for memory reinforcement, and contextual learning for practical application.

Moreover, the integration of technology, such as spaced repetition apps and multimedia tools, further enhances these strategies by offering dynamic, personalized, and accessible language practice. By adopting a multifaceted instructional model, educators can create engaging learning environments where idiomatic expressions are not only memorized but also internalized for confident use in real-world communication. Ultimately, the application of these memory techniques bridges the gap between theoretical language instruction and practical fluency, equipping learners with both linguistic accuracy and cultural competence.

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