

**AN ANALYSIS OF TEACHERS' BELIEFS AND PRACTICES
IN VOCABULARY TEACHING AT JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS
GUNUANG OMEH**

THESIS

*Submitted as Partial Fulfillment of the Replacement to Obtain Bachelor of
Education (B.Ed.) in English Language Education*



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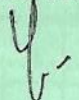
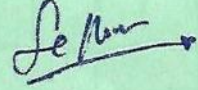
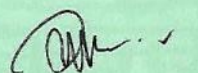
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Vocabulary Teaching at Junior High Schools Gunuang Omeh**

ABSTRACT

This research aimed to analyze of teacher beliefs and practices in vocabulary teaching at Junior High Schools Gunuang Omeh. The study to find out “What are the teachers’ beliefs in teaching vocabulary?” and “How do the teachers practice their beliefs in teaching vocabulary?”. This research used Graves theory with which teachers’ beliefs and practices in teaching vocabulary are seen, including, providing rich and varied language experiences, teaching individual words explicitly, teaching word-learning strategies, and fostering word consciousness. This research employed qualitative approach. The participants of this study were four English teachers. The instruments of this research were interviews and observations. The result of this research shows that teachers generally hold similar beliefs in four of indicators, except in one aspect. One teacher believes that teachers should teach definition of new words directly to students while others prefer to teach them implicitly. The research also found that in certain aspect, teachers’ beliefs and practices are not aligned. Only two teachers taught vocabulary used various kinds of game. The researcher suggest that teacher should improve the quality of theirs by using games to teach vocabulary. This research can be addition reference for the same field.

Keyword: Teacher Beliefs, Teacher Practices, Vocabulary Teaching, Graves Theory.

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pemahaman dan praktik guru dalam pengajaran kosakata di SMP Gunuang Omeh. Penelitian itu untuk mengetahui “Apa pemahaman guru tentang mengajarkan kosakata?” dan “Bagaimana mereka mempraktekkan pemahaman mereka dalam mengajarkan kosakata?”. Penelitian ini menggunakan teori Graves yang melihat keyakinan dan praktik guru dalam mengajar kosa kata, termasuk, memberikan pengalaman berbahasa yang kaya dan beragam, mengajarkan kata-kata individual secara eksplisit, mengajarkan strategi pembelajaran kata, dan menumbuhkan kesadaran kata. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif. Partisipan penelitian ini adalah empat guru bahasa Inggris. Instrumen penelitian ini adalah wawancara dan observasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa guru secara umum mempunyai keyakinan yang sama pada empat indikator, kecuali pada satu aspek. Seorang guru percaya bahwa guru harus mengajarkan definisi kata-kata baru secara langsung kepada siswa sementara yang lain lebih suka mengajarkannya secara implisit. Penelitian ini juga menemukan bahwa dalam aspek tertentu, keyakinan dan praktik guru tidak sejalan. Hanya dua orang guru yang mengajarkan kosa kata menggunakan berbagai macam *games*. Peneliti menyarankan agar guru meningkatkan kualitas mereka dengan menggunakan *games* untuk mengajar kosa kata. Penelitian ini dapat menjadi referensi tambahan untuk bidang yang sama.

Kata Kunci : Pemahaman guru, Praktik Guru, Pengajaran Kosakata, Teori Graves.

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The Writer

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Research

Vocabulary refers to the words that an individual knows and uses in a language or communication system. According to (Crystal, 2003) English as a Foreign Language is defined as the study of English by individuals who live in countries where English is not the primary language. It is a language that is learned as a second or additional language and is not used as the medium of instruction in schools. English as a Foreign Language is often taught in formal settings such as language schools, colleges, and universities to provide learners with the ability to communicate effectively in English.

Learning a language is often associated with constructing an excellent sentence to speak and excellent sentence to write. Many people think that they want to speak fluently and interact with each other in the language they are learning. However, they rarely think that what is more important to learn and develop is the vocabulary of the language. Moreover, mastering a large vocabulary is the primary tool for constructing sentences and speaking fluently. Vocabulary is the basis for developing the ability to learn a foreign language. Learning a foreign language will be difficult if learners do not learn the vocabulary of that language, and vocabulary is an integral part of language, and the center of communicative competence (Rohmatillah, 2017).

Vocabulary is all the words know or use in a specific language (Hornby, 2006). According to Richards and Renadya (2002), the ability to use vocabulary effectively is a fundamental aspect of language proficiency that serves as the

foundation for learners' speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. Furthermore, Hatch & Brown (1995) define vocabulary as a compilation of words used in a given language, which are utilized by speakers of that language. It can either be in the form of a list or a set of terms. Based on the definition given above, vocabulary consists of all the words people use to communicate with one another and are familiar with in a language. Vocabulary is the most important asset for acquiring sentence structure and other language skills.

Having a strong vocabulary is essential for a variety of reasons. Firstly, it allows individuals to express themselves better in writing. A good vocabulary is a prerequisite for good writing. With a good range of words, individuals are able to create more varied and interesting sentences, making their writing more engaging and impressive. This can be particularly useful for students, as well as professionals who need to write reports or other documents. In the words of Bloom (1997), an American literary critic, "The best style is the style you don't notice. A good writer can create a world with a few well-chosen words." The idea emphasizes the importance of subtle and seamless writing that doesn't draw undue attention to itself. It highlights the art of conveying depth, emotion, and imagery through concise and impactful language, a hallmark of true literary mastery.

Secondly, a strong vocabulary is often associated with communication skill. Having a good vocabulary allows individuals to express themselves more effectively. They are able to use the right words in the right context, making their message clearer and more precise. This is especially important in situations such as job interviews, where a good vocabulary can make a significant difference in the way an individual is perceived. According to Crystal (2003), a renowned

linguist, "Vocabulary is central to all communication. Without adequate vocabulary, we can't communicate effectively." The importance of vocabulary in communication cannot be overstated. It serves as the cornerstone of practical expression and understanding. With a sufficient vocabulary, our ability to convey ideas, emotions, and information is greatly improved.

Thirdly, a strong vocabulary can be beneficial as it improves confidence. Having a good vocabulary can boost an individual's confidence in their ability to communicate effectively. This can lead to improved self-esteem and a more positive outlook on life. In addition, individuals with a good vocabulary are often more respected and admired, which can also boost their confidence. As linguist Pinker (2014) explains, "Having a good vocabulary is like having a key to a treasure trove. It can unlock doors to new knowledge, new experiences, and new opportunities". Possessing a solid vocabulary is akin to holding a key to a treasure trove, capable of unlocking doors to novel knowledge, fresh experiences, and unexplored opportunities.

Lastly, a solid vocabulary can also help build a strong personal brand. Communicating one's ideas, thoughts, and opinions effectively helps one stand out in a crowded field and helps build credibility and trust with others. According to a study by Education First (EF) English Proficiency Index (EPI) in 2018, it is found that vocabulary size is the single most crucial factor that contributes to language proficiency. It also stated that having a large vocabulary can help people communicate more effectively, understand more complex texts, and make them more employable.

There are many ways to teach vocabulary to students that teachers at school can apply, such as using games, song, pictures, cognates, and so on. The research conducted by Saeed and Neyadi, (2007), the evidence demonstrates that playing games offers learners with understandable input as they interact in a group, providing a chance for them to clarify the meanings of words in context. In addition, utilizing games improves students' motivation to learn vocabulary by exposing them to innovative teaching methods that vary from the traditional approach of vocabulary drilling. Moreover, teaching vocabulary through song is also possible.

The use of song in teaching vocabulary can be found in the research conducted by Abidin et al., (2011). The result of their research shows that the experimental group experienced the experimental group showed a notable advancement in their proficiency in vocabulary when compared to the control group. The next way to teach vocabulary is through pictures.

The research carried out by Aldhonita (2015), indicates that utilizing pictures is a thrilling approach to assist pupils in comprehending the significance of words, as well as to improve their pronunciation and spelling skills. Employing images can be an effective tool for engaging students in the presented vocabulary.

Furthermore, vocabulary can be taught using cognates. The research conducted by Tonzar et al., (2009), shares the study showed that using pictures to learn L2 words was more effective than using words alone, but the results depended on cognate status and age of learning. Cognates were found to aid in the acquisition of L2 words. However, this effect diminished with increased exposure

to the language. Additionally, the effectiveness of the word-based method was enhanced for cognate words in older children.

Regardless of the availability of various methods that teachers might employ in teaching vocabulary, a wide range of studies found that numerous students still experience vocabulary shortage and or get problems in making use of the vocabulary they have already acquired. The research conducted by (Nursyamsiah, 2021) at SMP Negeri 3 Agrabinta Cianjur, found that vocabulary mastery was still low. This is based on the results of students' pre-cycle tests and post tests on family material, out of 22 students, only 2 students scored above the KKM (63) and 20 students scored below the KKM. Furthermore, numerous students still experience vocabulary shortage, the research conducted by (Zainuddin, 2021) show that students at Cokroaminoto Middle School still lacked an understanding of English vocabulary. This causes students to be unable to respond properly and correctly when the teacher gives stimulus questions at the beginning of learning. Besides that, the students' ignorance in using the dictionary to look up the meaning of words is also a causal factor so that every word they want to know is dominated by asking directly to the teacher. Research conducted by (Anggraeni, 2021) found that class VII students of SMP Negeri 8 Penajam Paser Utara had difficulties in mastering vocabulary and reading vocabulary. This is because English is a foreign language learned by students whose structure and format are different from their mother tongue and everyday language used by students. and or get problems in making use of the vocabulary they have already acquired. The next research conducted by Dewati (2020) at SMPN 1

Karangobar, tell that learners interest in participating in learning English is still lacking so that it affects the level of mastery of English vocabulary.

There might be some questions appear related to the above phenomena, like how is vocabulary actually taught in the class?; why do teachers prefer that way?; how much do the teachers know about the methods?; or, if the teachers have sufficient knowledge about the methods, are there any attempts done to apply them in the classroom?. The answers to these questions might have a link to what teachers believe to be true in their teaching.

Belief is confidence in the ability of when the teacher teaches to overcome difficulties in teaching. According to Richardson (1996), belief is a term used to describe one's psychological understanding, premises, or propositions about the world, which are perceived to be true. Belief makes the teachers handle every situation in classroom practice and gives the teachers confidence to hold the classroom activity.

Based on the research previous experiences in the classroom, the research conducted by Wafa (2016), show that found one discrepancy namely teachers' beliefs about classroom procedure. The research conducted by Saputra et al., (2020) show the same results, the relationship between their practice and beliefs, not all of their beliefs are implemented in the classroom due to several factors such as student factors, time constraints, and school obligations. Teacher's beliefs are sometimes not reflected in their practices that can lead to a number of challenges and issues. For example, a teacher may believe that students learn best through hands-on, experiential activities, but she or he may not implement such activities in the classroom due to time constraints or a lack of resources. This can

result in a mismatch between the teacher's beliefs and the actual classroom practices.

Another example could be when a teacher believes in a student-centered approach to learning, where the focus is on individualized instruction and personalized learning, but may implement a more traditional, teacher-centered approach in the classroom. This can lead to frustration and disengagement among students who may feel that their needs and interests are not being met. It is important for teachers to reflect on their beliefs and practices and to work towards aligning the two in order to create a more effective and engaging learning environment for their students. This may involve professional development, collaboration with colleagues, and a willingness to experiment with new strategies and approaches. By doing so, teachers can better meet the diverse needs of their students and help them achieve their full potential.

The teacher beliefs and practices in vocabulary teaching have been studied by some researchers, such as in the journals written by Mardali & Siyyari (2019), Lu (2017), Pookcharoen (2016), Yuan (2017), Hidayah (2019). Research on teacher beliefs and practices has been conducted in Indonesia by Hidayah, (2019) she conducted research at Islamic Junior High School Pancasila in the academic year 2018/2019. The subject of the study is an English teacher of MTs Satu Atap Pancasila who teaches the nine grades.

Unlike the previous ones, viewing beliefs on teaching vocabulary and teaching experience in general, this research explored teachers' beliefs and practice in four aspects, including providing rich and varied language experiences, fostering word consciousness, teaching individual words explicitly, and teaching

word-learning strategies. The four aspects are the essential components of vocabulary teaching proposed by Graves (2006). The researcher conducted this research at SMP N 01 Gunuang Omeh, and SMP N 02 Gunuang Omeh. The researcher chose to observe teacher beliefs and teaching practices at both SMP N 01 Gunuang Omeh and SMP 2 Gunuang Omeh. During teaching practice at SMA N 01 Gunuang Omeh, the researcher observed that a significant number of students struggled with vocabulary usage and had limited vocabulary skills. The researcher found that most SMA 01 Gunuang Omeh students came from SMP N 01 Gunuang Omeh and SMP N 02 Gunuang Omeh. The researcher wants to see teachers' beliefs and practices in teaching English, especially in teaching vocabulary at SMP N 01 Gunuang Omeh and SMP N 02 Gunuang Omeh.

B. Identification of the Problem

Based on the above background, the problems faced by teachers in teaching vocabulary include limited time, student motivation in learning, interesting learning strategies, and various student abilities. It can be identified the study aims to examine teachers' current methods and strategies in teaching vocabulary, as well as their beliefs and attitudes toward vocabulary instruction.

C. The Limitation of the Problem

To make this research not too broad for the researcher, it needs scope and limitation to limit the discussion. The researchers would like to limit the scope of the problem. There are some limitations of the problem:

1. This study focuses on teacher's beliefs and practices in teaching vocabulary
2. The participants are teachers in SMP N 01 Gunuang Omeh and teacher in SMP N 02 Gunuang Omeh

Finally, by determining those limitations, the study will easier to teachers' beliefs and practices in teaching vocabulary.

D. Research Questions

Based on the formulation of the problems above, the research questions are:

1. What are the teachers' beliefs in teaching vocabulary?
2. How do the teachers practice their beliefs in teaching vocabulary?

E. Purpose of the Research

Based on the research questions above, the purpose of the problems are:

1. To analyze the teacher's beliefs in teaching vocabulary
2. To analyze how the teachers practice their beliefs in teaching vocabulary

F. Significance of the Research

The problem of the research is teacher beliefs and practices in teaching vocabulary. The significance of the research:

1. The teacher: The research provides the information on teacher beliefs and practices in teaching vocabulary. This study is expected to help teacher to find out the solution of the problem.
2. Curriculum makers: This study provides information about whether training is needed for teachers to apply the most effective techniques for teaching vocabulary and also includes information about whether there are curriculum adjustments in the vocabulary learning section at junior high schools.
3. Other researchers: This research is hopefully useful for other researcher as reference to help them perform on the same subject. The information of teacher beliefs and practices in teaching vocabulary can be used as a basic knowledge to develop the ideas for their research.

G. Definition of Key Term

The definition of key term of this research is elaborated as:

1. Vocabulary

Vocabulary refers to the words that an individual knows and uses in a language or communication system.

2. Teacher Beliefs

Teacher beliefs are the personal convictions or assumptions regarding teaching and learning have the potential to significantly impact their instructional methods and choices, these beliefs can significantly influence their teaching practices and decision-making processes.

3. Teacher Practices

Teacher practices refer to the actions, strategies, and methods teachers use to support student learning and development in their classrooms.