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**The Implementation of “Mastering Vocabulary before Teaching”: A Case Study
in Intensive English Course of Language and Culture Development Center
(PBB)**

THESIS

Presented to
English Education Department of *Tarbiyah* Faculty of
***Syekh Nurjati* State Institute for Islamic Studies**
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By

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ABSTRACT

SUUCIANALISMY: THE IMPLEMENTATION OF “MASTERING VOCABULARY BEFORE TEACHING” A CASE STUDY IN INTENSIVE ENGLISH COURSE OF LANGUAGE AND CULTURE DEVELOPMENT CENTER

The English teaching as foreign language in Indonesia was done through decades by using Grammar-Translation method. The objective, the content and the evaluation of the teaching were mostly dominated by structure and reading. Rote learning is one of the basic principles of Grammar-Translation method. The main characteristic of rote learning is listed bilingual vocabulary memorization. According to some theorist, rote learning only provides students superficial and short-term learning words. So, it is considered less effective for improving students vocabulary acquisition in order to build their communicative skill.

In contrary, the Language and Culture Development Center of *Syekh Nurjati* State Institute uses the rote learning to be used by students in intensive English course. This situation is necessary to be questioned since the development of language teaching has a very significant development in producing both new and modern methods, techniques and strategies for teaching vocabulary.

The research is mainly conducted by qualitative methodology research. It aims to investigate the implementation of the concept of ‘Mastering Vocabulary Before Teaching’ by rote vocabulary learning in the intensive English Course program of Language and Culture Development Center (PBB) of *Syekh Nurjati* State Institute for Islamic Studies Cirebon.

The researcher found that the students feel difficult to memorize the vocabulary. Not only they feel difficult, but also the students did not interest to do the memorization. In other side, because the rote learning only contribute superficial vocabulary understanding, thus, rote learning does not significantly help the students to reach the goal of the implementation of “Mastering Vocabulary before Teaching”.

Further, here are some problems in the vocabulary selection that affect strongly to the effectiveness of the vocabulary learning. The problems contribute negatively to the students motivation to meorize the vocabulary.

The vocabulary enrichment and evaluation in classroom are employed to help the students’ memorization. There are various techniques used by the lecturers for the vocabulary enrichment activities and evaluation. The research found it helps the students vocabulary learning.

The researcher found that the rote learning did not help the students to acquire vocabulary significantly. The students only recognize words not to master the vocabulary. And because the rote learning is projected as the obligatory task so the students have low appreciation and motivation to memorize the vocabulary.



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PREFACE

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Cirebon, July 18th 2012

Writer



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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews the background of the research, the identification of the problems, the questions of the research, the aims and the significance of the research. The background of the research rises up the crucial issues which are highlighted by the researcher as the basic important reasons in attempting the research and several ideas which triggered the interest of the researcher to investigate the case. Previous research concerning issues on teaching and learning vocabulary are discussed. The distinction between the present research and the previous research is reviewed in this section. Next, the identification of problems highlights certain points of identification which show that the problems exist. The questions of the research presents the questions which are attempted to be investigated. The aims of the research shows the specific goals of the research. Finally, the significance of the research presents the benefits of the research.

A. The Background of The Problem

Since the imperium of West grasped the control of politics, economy, social and education tightly, English becomes a very important language in the world. It is called “The Global Language” (Crystal, 2003). The use of English spreads widely throughout countries in various ways and fields such as politics, diplomacy, international trade, travel, safety, industry, commerce, science, technology, media and

of course education (Crystal 2003, pp 78-114). It signs the significant role of English in the world's social interaction and communication.

The situation gives a significant influence to many countries include Indonesia. According to Dardjowidjojo, after declared the independence on August 17th, 1945, Indonesia began to develop the social life through politics, economy and education development. In 1989, Indonesia decided that English is the first important foreign language to be taught, because it has international status (cited by Lauder 2008, vol 12 no 1, p10). The international status of English is characterized by its wide speakers around the world as estimated by Crystal, approximately in 2,000 people there are 1,500 million English speakers consist of 329 million native speakers (L1), 430 million second language speakers (L2) and about 750 million speakers as foreign language speakers (Crystal 2003, p59). It became the logic reason why Indonesia chose English as the first most important foreign language. Indonesia has some important purposive reasons for the use of English as noted by Dardjowidjojo, Huda, Simatupang and Renandya (cited in Lauder 2008, pp 12-13). Some of the purposive reasons are:

1. As international communication tool
2. As a media through scientific knowledge and new technology
3. As a source of vocabulary for the development and modernization of Indonesia
4. As media to access wide intellectual horizon



The purpose then demanded Indonesia people to be competent in English. The demand is the most important prerequisite to be involved in global community. It affects the regulation of education of Indonesia. English language has been becoming compulsory to be taught in Junior High School up to university level. It reflects on the Regulation of National Education Standard of Indonesia Government Regulation (PPRI) number 19 of 2005 section 70, that English language is one of the compulsory lesson which must be examined in National Examination (UN). And at University level, on section 9 poin 2, stated that English language is one of the compulsory subjects that must be taught.

The demand absorb the government's attention to revive, maintain and improve the English competence of Indonesia people through education. Changes of curriculum has been done by the government across decades in order to improve the quality of English teaching and learning. As stated by Bire that Indonesia had implemented nine curricula from 1958 up to 2006. "The country has implemented nine curricula known as the 1950 curriculum, 1958, 1962, 1968, 1975, 1984, 1994, 2004 and the current one being the 2006 curriculum" (Bire, 2006, p1).

Over decades, in Indonesia, the Grammar Translation method was mostly used for its English teaching curricula, and reading skill for the final objective (Bire 2006, pp 2-10). In the curriculum of 1950 and 1958, although the main objective was reading skill, all the process were conducted by the grammar translation method, and the final evaluation was grammar (Bire 2006, p2). The curriculum of 1962 and 1968 which was known as "a new modified curricula" brought the same objective as



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those in 1950 and 1958. The government chose “Audio-Lingual Approach” to conduct teaching English as foreign language, and it was done only for senior high school level because Indonesia had no appropriate text book to project the approach. When the books were available, they focused on reading orientation and structure (Bire, 2006, pp 2-3). Thus, it repeated the same history. In addition, the history of education in Indonesia which tended to be classic affected to the learning process they were conducted. As stated by Bire:

This is due to the fact that the teachers at schools throughout the country were products of the old fashioned curriculum, grammar translation methodological approach. Naturally the way they teach would reflect and replicate what they themselves have learnt. It is noticeable that there were some teachers who chose to use direct method. However, they were faced with difficulties at the end of academic year because materials for final examination was based on structure and reading oriented (Bire, 2006, p4).

Rudiyanto found that the innovative idea of the teaching method came out in 1975, it was “Eclectic Approach” (cited in Bire, 2006). The idea was hugely supported by the government. They argued that the evaluation of the previous years curricula was not beneficial in empowering the English competence. From Nababan’s observation which is cited by Bire showed that the government also improved the teaching objectives. They covered speaking skill to be gained and improved (cited in Bire, 2006, p5). The objectives covered these points:

1. Effective reading ability
2. Ability to understand spoken ability
3. Writing ability



4. Speaking ability

The government made guidance for Indonesia teacher to design the lesson plan. It was made sequentially in the curriculum materials. Tomlinson described the characteristics of the materials from curriculum of 1975. Those were basically characterized by reading and structure (cited in Bire 2006, pp 5-6).

1. Information in *Bahasa Indonesia* (Indonesian language) about English grammar and vocabulary.
2. Focused on controlled practice of structure
3. Focus on language form
4. Text contrived to illustrate language points
5. Activities made as easy as possible for the learner
6. Many activities testing the practice points of a unit
7. No use made of authentic materials
8. No materials designed to develop communication skills
9. No discovery activities
10. Focus on increasing the students knowledge of perspective grammar and vocabulary
11. Translation frequently used as aid to learning
12. Most English texts and examples in semi-formal, neutral expository style
13. Topic and linguistic content entirely prescribed by the curriculum
14. No existence reading or listening

As the previous period, the curriculum of 1975 drew the same result. And during the period, the teachers realized that the objective outcome was far from the expectation. The reality showed that the English proficiency of Indonesian students was not satisfying (Bire, 2006, p7). The government tried to set a better objective outcome since the curriculum of 1975 was still dominated by “structure”. The regulation is written in the Education and Culture Department of Indonesia year 1986.

Dalam kurikulum 1975, ternyata struktur yang menjadi pusat perhatian dan inti kurikulum. Semua penyajian pelajaran berkisar sekitar struktur itu. Untuk mewujudkan pendekatan komunikatif diatas, dalam kurikulum ini penguasaan/ dominasi struktur dilepaskan dan bahasa Inggris disajikan sebagai alat komunikasi secara ilmiah (cited in Bire 2006, 7)

“Apparently, in 1975 curriculum, structure was the core of the curriculum. The entire lesson surrounded by the structure. In order to implement the ‘communicative approach,’ the structure domination is abandoned and English language is taught as a tool for authentic communication.” (author’s translation)

Finally, big change happened in the implementation of the curriculum of 1984. The government realized that the use of English language for communication is the prime need, so that English language teaching in Indonesia tended to use communicative approach. As stated by Bire:

A literature review of the national high school basic curriculum shows that the TEFL in Indonesia prior to 1984 was grammar-translation oriented, that is, teaching of English was not communication oriented. The ministry of Education and Culture recognized the inefficiency of the 1975 curriculum and officially implemented a new policy to replace that curriculum. Accordingly, the government of Indonesia changed the practical teaching of English in Indonesia to



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concentrate more on both form and function in communication
(Bire 2006, 9)

The curriculum then started to be improved based on the prime need, that was to improve the communicative English language skill. The word “communicative” was ongoing highlighted. According to Littlewood, Communicative Approach can be identified by these characteristics: 1) It demands the learners ability to use the language in real communication. It concentrates the use and the appropriateness rather than the structures. 2) The approach places a high value on “authentic” language and “authentic” communicative behaviour. 3) Communicative approach focuses on how language is learned and gives weight to sub-conscious acquisition of language. 4) It proposes a wide range of teaching and learning activities. 5) Teacher’s role is crucial in monitoring the student’s activities (cited in Bire 2006, p9).

Since the period, the use of Grammar Translation method is replaced by the communicative approach. The Grammar Translation method is considered an old fashion method and less effective to fullfill the needs to be competent in communication skill. According to Richards and Rodgers, one of the important features of this method is memorizing words and their meaning. As they stated “...selecting vocabulary based-solely from the reading text, and words are taught through bilingual word lists, dictionary study, verb conjugation and grammatical paradigm should be committed to memorization” (Richard and Rodgers, 2002) .This is also supported by Freeman. She pointed out that the fundamental purpose of this method is to be able to read the target language literature. The primary area of



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language emphasized are reading and writing. The method gives less attention to speaking and listening. Memorization is one of the fundamental techniques used. The students are asked to memorize lists of target language vocabulary words and their native language equivalents (Freeman, 2000)

This point is the prime and the interesting point which triggers the researcher to investigate the implementation of “Mastering Vocabulary before Teaching” in the intensive English course of Culture and Language Center institution of *Syekh Nurjati* State Institute for Islamic Studies Cirebon. In the implementation, the course obligates the students to memorize some selected words and the translation of the words. In the researcher’s view the case is important to be investigated since she assumed that memorizing vocabulary or words is considered less effective to improve the students’ communicative skill. And as the earlier elaboration we have, vocabulary memorization is an old way of learning language that was considered less effective. Remembering that vocabulary memorization is one of the features of the Grammar Translation method, that, in the previous discussion it was regarded ineffective to help the students’ to build their communicative skill. And as emphasized before, that the communicative skill is the prime goal which is expected to be reached by Indonesian students. Interestingly, according to some researchers and theorists, memorizing vocabulary is criticized as a shallow learning strategy which provides only superficial and short-term learning words. Schmitt pointed out that the most popular strategy of learning vocabulary is simple memorization. He emphasized that this strategy is relatively shallow and less effective than the other deeper strategies



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(Schmitt, 2000). Those critics strongly triggered the researcher's interest to know why the Language and Culture Development Center, that, in the researcher view is the professional institution decided to implement the vocabulary memorization? The question does not stop until that point. Further, the researcher feels necessary to know, how is the implementation? And other questions that necessarily to be answered to get a comprehensive understanding about the implementation of "Mastering Vocabulary before Teaching" in intensive English course of Language and Culture Development Center.

Thus, the research does not focus only to investigate the vocabulary memorization of the "Mastering Vocabulary before Teaching", but indeed, the research is designed to investigate the whole implementation. In the researcher perspective, to get the comprehensive understanding about the case, the researcher needs to know the complete and the real reality of the case investigated. It is accordance with the principle of the qualitative methodology research, specifically a *case study*. The depth investigation, careful and complete observation toward the case investigated are the characteristics of a case study research that play significantly in order to gain a holistic insight about the case (Kothari, 2004).

Finally, after investigating the implementation of the "Mastering Vocabulary before Teaching", the findings is contrasted and confirmed to the theories of vocabulary teaching and learning. The researcher believes that it is important to know how the implementation of "Mastering Vocabulary before Teaching" deals with the principle of vocabulary teaching and learning.



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The researcher believes that the case is important to be seriously investigated since the Language and Culture Development Center holds the important role in the development of the quality of IAIN Syekh Nurjati Cirebon. The institution is responsible for improving the students' languages skills, in this case the English language skills. As we discussed earlier, the ability to use English language for communication include writing, listening, reading and speaking is the prime goal of English teaching and learning in Indonesia. Thus, when the institution used inappropriate methods, techniques or strategies in the teaching English, not only the students of IAIN Syekh Nurjati will be the victims of the loss of teaching effectiveness or quality, but also the other next Indonesian students, remembering that most of IAIN Syekh Nurjati Cirebon students are English Education students who will be responsible for the teaching English of Indonesian schools.

Further, the reason why the researcher chose vocabulary as the basic object of the research is her assumption that vocabulary is the essential element of languages and it is supported by Harmer, he stated *"If language structures make up the skeleton of language, then it is vocabulary that provides the vital organs and the flesh"* (Cited by Joklovà, 2009 p7). In using Joklovà's term, vocabulary is the cornerstone of languages. Without vocabulary, any language could not exist (Joklovà, 2009 p7). To use a language communicatively and meaningfully, one must master the vocabularies of the language.

Allen (1983) in her book *"Techniques in Teaching Vocabulary"* wrote that big change happened after the past twentieth century where vocabulary was neglected



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because it was considered had been too much emphasized in language learning, thus, some specialist in methodology of teaching language feared students would make mistakes if too many words learned before they mastered the grammatical rules (pp 1-3). The change showed a huge interest from teachers and scholars towards vocabulary. The attention toward vocabulary was rising up since they realized that vocabulary is very important to gain a successful communication. About this, she wrote “Through research scholars are finding that lexical problems frequently interfere with communication; *communication breaks down when people do not use the right words* [emphasis added] ” (Allen, 1983, p5). These facts support the researcher to do the research on a discussion about vocabulary, as the sacred item of language teaching and learning.

There have been abundant research dealt with the vocabulary issues. Number researchers give high attention mainly to the discussion about teaching and learning vocabulary (Keshavarz & Astahneh, 2004; Yu-Ling, 2005; Brown et al, 2008; Lawson & Subekti, 2007; Kweon and Kim, 2008; Godev 2009; Rapaport et al, 2000; Sánchez, 2010; Sydroenko, 2010; Joklovà, 2009; Dai, 2011). It indicates that vocabulary is important for any language class.

The previous research about vocabulary is abundant. There are numerous Indonesian researchers dealt with this issue (Saumy, 2002; Kasirun, 2004; Marliyanti, 2004; Durrahman, 2004; Fatimah 2005; Wahyuningsih 2005; Nurhayati 2006; Nurdiningsih 2006; Asminingrum 2010). The research mostly experimental research. Those research dealt with the quantitative methodology research. The researchers worked



with particular teaching methodologies for teaching vocabulary then they applied the methodology in a their research object (students in chosen schools) to know the influence or the result of the comparison between two methodologies used toward students' vocabulary acquisition. So they used quantitative and statistical analyses to discuss the research. The researchers less discussed about the principles of vocabulary teaching and learning theories, and how it deals with the students' vocabulary acquisition. The discussion of the previous research mainly elaborated the effect or the comparison in using particular methodology resulted from the statistical data that are completed. They did not critically discussed the result with some basic principles and theories of vocabulary acquisition as well as learning and teaching vocabulary.

Different with the previous research, this research is a case study. The researcher worked with qualitative methodology of research. The researcher did not employ the research with particular methodology of teaching or learning vocabulary, but indeed, she investigated the teaching and learning vocabulary that has been running in a particular English language course. The researcher did not give any experimental work in a class but she observed the run of the teaching and learning in class. The qualitative analyses was used in discussing the case. The researcher dealt with the data mainly acquired from observation, interview and questionnaire. The researcher then critically discussed the data by using triangulation technique where the data are confirmed with basic principles of vocabulary acquisition, teaching and learning vocabulary.



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Thus, since the main goal of the research is to understand the implementation of ‘Mastering Vocabulary before Teaching’ comprehensively. To get the holistic view and understanding about the case, the researcher needs to answer these questions “What does the ‘Mastering Vocabulary before Teaching’ mean? How is the implementation of ‘Mastering Vocabulary before Teaching’ in the teaching process? Why the intensive English course of Culture and Language Development Center implement the ‘Mastering Vocabulary before Teaching’? What are the goals expected? How does the implementation deal with the principles of vocabulary acquisition, and teaching also learning vocabulary? And what is the students and the lecturer opinion about the impementation of “Mastering Vocabulary before Teaching?” Finally, to answer these questions, the researcher did the research undertitle *“The Implementation of “Mastering Vocabulary before Teaching”: A Case Study in Intensive English Course of Language and Culture Development Center (PBB)”*

B. The Identification of The Problem

There are some important points which identify the existence of the problems and the crucial points which trigger that the problems needs to be investigated. The implementation of ‘Mastering Vocabulary before Teaching’ by the Language and Culture Development Center in the intensive English program use the memorization or rote vocabulary learning. The rote vocabulary learning is criticized less effective because it only contributes superficial vocabulary mastery.



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The students of the intensive English language is the students who learn in university level that they are tangibly demanded to be competent in using English communicatively. Here are the listed points of the identification of the problems:

1. The Language and Culture Development Center implement the concept of “Mastering Vocabulary before Teaching” by obligating the students to memorize the listed words and their translation.
2. Words memorization or rote vocabulary learning is regarded as a superficial technique which is less effective to be used to master vocabulary
3. The students of the intensive English language are the university students who are demanded to be competent in using English communicatively

C. The Research Questions

To understand the case of the implementation of “Mastering Vocabulary before Teaching” comprehensively, the researcher needs to answer the following questions:

1. What does ‘Mastering Vocabulary Before Teaching’ mean?
2. The Language and Culture Development Center Institution implemented the ‘Mastering Vocabulary before Teaching’. What is the background?
3. What are the expected goals?
4. How is the implementation of “Mastering Vocabulary before Teaching”?
5. How is the vocabulary teaching process in the classroom?



6. How is the vocabulary evaluation accomplished?
7. What is the students' opinion?
8. What is the lecturers' opinion?

D. The Aims of the Research

The research is attempted to investigate the implementation of 'Mastering Vocabulary before Teaching' in intensive English course of the Language and Culture Development Center of Syekh Nurjati State Institute of Islamic Studies Cirebon in order to get a holistic insight about the implementation. To have a comprehensive understanding about the case, the researchers needs to:

1. Find out the meaning of "Mastering Vocabulary Before Teaching"
2. Find out the the background of the implementation of "Mastering Vocabulary before Teaching"
3. Find out the goals of the implementation of "Mastering Vocabulary before Teaching".
4. Observe the implementation of "Mastering Vocabulary before Teaching"
5. Observe the vocabulary teaching process in the classroom
6. Observe the vocabulary evaluation.
7. Find out the opinion of the students about the implementation of "Mastering Vocabulary before Teaching".



8. Find out the opinion of the lecturers about the implementation of “Mastering Vocabulary before Teaching”.

E. The Significance of the Research

The research mainly intended to investigate the implementation of “Mastering Vocabulary before Teaching” in intensive English course of the Language and Culture Development Center (PBB). The result are the descriptions of the entire implementation of the technique and how it deals with the principles of vocabulary teaching according to some theorists. Thus, the results of the research contribute the significance theoretically and practically.

Firstly, theoretically the significance of this research contributes to the teaching team of Language and Culture Development Center and the lecturers. The main result of the research is such an evaluation of a course program. Thus, the member of the team teaching and the lecturers can use the result as the teaching view ar reference to be applied or not to be applied in the teaching process, particulary vocabulary teaching process. And for the policy makers of Language and Culture Center Institution of *IAIN Syekh Nurjati Cirebon*, the result of the research can be used as guideline in determining, applying, and designing the system and/or language teaching methodology pragmatically, effectively and wisely.

Secondly, for the lecturers of English Education Department, theoretically the research gives an overview of teaching and learning vocabulary to be used as reference of their teaching methods. Techniques and strategies. And it also presents



the students opinion of teaching methods, that can be useful for the lecturers as point of consideration in using teaching English strategies concerning with the students' pshycological aspects.

Thirdly, for the English Department students, the research can be useful for their reference in supporting their thesis reference concerning with teaching and learning vocabulary. It is also contribut to motivate them, to be a good English teacher, remembering that the result of the research presents the theory of teaching and learning vocabulary.

F. The Clarification of Key Terms

In this thesis writing, the writer used the term “rote learning” or “rote vocabulary learning” interchangeably for the same meaning. And the term “rote learning” is used primarily in representing or describing the “vocabulary memorization”. In vocabulary learning field, the term “rote learning” is more popular and commonly used by theorists and researchers to explain the way of learning vocabulary by repetition and memorization (Schmitt, 2000; Milton, 2009; Gairns & Redman, 1986; Thornburry, 2002; Schmitt & Michael McCarthy, 2001; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). Memorizing words and their meaning by repetition is the feature of rote learning, thus here, the term rote learning or rote vocabulary learning in this thesis writing is used primarily.





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