



## EFL Teacher's Beliefs on the Use of Word Mapping Strategy in Vocabulary Learning

Mega Putri Rosalina<sup>1</sup>, Sarjaniah Zur<sup>2</sup>, Azwar Abidin<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Students of English Education Department, IAIN Kendari, Indonesia

<sup>2,3</sup>English Education Department, IAIN Kendari, Indonesia

Corresponding email: [sarjaniahzur@iainkendari.ac.id](mailto:sarjaniahzur@iainkendari.ac.id)

### Article info

Submitted : 11 May 2023  
Revised : 02 March 2024  
Accepted : 20 March 2024

### ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the beliefs of the lecturer when applying the use of word mapping strategy in vocabulary learning. This study used qualitative research with explanatory case studies. The data of this study was obtained from reflection and interviews with one participant. The participant is an English lecturer at one of the universities in Kendari in the academic year 2021/2022. In analyzing the data, the researcher collects the data, prepares data for analysis, codes the data, and describes it to be used in the research paper. Further, the following reveals how the data analysis process is obtained through reflections and lecture interview answers. To analyze the data, the researcher used thematic analysis. Moreover, the result of the reflection and interview sessions found three themes about teachers' beliefs. They are word mapping as an appropriate strategy in vocabulary learning; word mapping strategy builds students' awareness in learning vocabulary; word mapping as a strategy in classroom management. This study implies that the use of teacher's beliefs by using a word mapping strategy could give understanding to the teacher how to do quality teaching and make students feel enthusiastic by the interesting media in learning vocabulary.

**Keywords:** *Teacher's beliefs, Vocabulary learning, Word mapping strategy,*

### INTRODUCTION

Most language learners believe that learning vocabulary is difficult, and many have had trouble remembering large quantities of vocabulary or applying it correctly (Schmitt, 2010). Thus, remembering words, or more accurately storing words in memory, is one of the most significant aspects of learning vocabulary. Memory strategies are specific Mnemonic devices that assist learners in transferring knowledge to long-term memory for storing and recovering it from long-term memory when required (Hsiao and Oxford, 2002). As a result, vocabulary is an important component of language abilities and provides the basis for how well learners interact with one another. However, vocabulary is a collection of terms that serve as the fundamental building elements for the creation of sentences (Zimmerman, 2007). There is no language without words, hence vocabulary is a component of language. Words are the basis of language, and thus the establishment of conversation (Bowen & Marks, 2002). So, learning English with a large vocabulary is suggested because increased vocabulary is a crucial mechanism in the learning process and for realizing everyday actions.



The word mapping approach promotes students' deeper comprehension of words by depicting different connections between and among words (Antonacci & O'Callaghan, 2012). Several authors believe that strategies are essential for successful learning in English instruction because they can engage students in the learning process and help them improve their abilities. The results obtained by employing a learning strategy will be superior to those obtained by not employing a learning strategy. Word mapping is the strategy that involves the students deepening their thinking about the related word of one word or word focus (Penton, Glenn, & English, 2004). Moreover, students learn about words through mapping because it helps them examine the characteristics of the word concepts, categorize words, and see relationships among words that are similar as well as those that may be unique (Bauman, 2004). Also, Utami (2017) argues that word mapping is a visual organizer strategy that can help students to develop their vocabulary list. According to those opinions, the researchers believe that word maps can inspire students to consider words in new ways.

Teachers the above arguments, it can be concluded that research on teachers' beliefs has a significant influence on teacher information on the way they prepare for class and the types of decisions taken in classroom teaching practice. Qomariyah and Navisah (2020) investigated the impact of word mapping techniques on students' vocabulary mastery based on an earlier study. When the instructor used the word mapping technique, the pupils became interested, according to the researchers. The instructor not only concentrated on the content but also encouraged students to be more interactive in the teaching and learning process. Karendra et al. (2016) investigated whether there was a statistically significant increase in the student's language knowledge following instruction using a word mapping approach. The findings revealed that using a word mapping approach to educate students allows them to quickly develop their vocabulary and comprehend the text. As a consequence of the fact that many teachers used the word mapping strategy in vocabulary learning, the researcher will concentrate on teachers' views about using the word mapping strategy in vocabulary learning.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This study used qualitative research with explanatory case studies. Exploratory case studies are to explore any phenomenon in the data which serves as a point of interest to the researcher (Yin, 1984) and aim to explore a natural phenomenon in teaching about the beliefs of teachers on the use of word mapping in vocabulary learning that can be found through reflection and interviews. According to Creswell (2007), qualitative research is a process of knowledge based on unique and methodical traditions of inquiry that investigate a social or human problem. Explanatory case studies are widely utilized to undertake causal investigations. In other words, researchers are looking for elements that may have led to certain occurrences. The case study is a one-of-a-kind method of observing any natural phenomenon that occurs in a collection of data (Yin, 1984). As a result, this study will include the disclosure of views, values, explanations, and comprehension.

## RESULT

This study found three themes, and the first theme is word mapping is an appropriate strategy in vocabulary learning, having three sub-themes: the strategy is easy to implement, the strategy is fun to implement, and the strategy could motivate students in learning vocabulary. The second theme is a word mapping strategy to build students' awareness in learning vocabulary, having four sub-themes: building students' creativity in learning vocabulary, building students' interest in learning vocabulary, building students' interaction in learning vocabulary, and building students' motivation in learning vocabulary, and the third themes is word mapping as a strategy in online classroom management, having three sub-themes: class management becomes more-well organized, giving feedback become easier, and the learning process becomes more entertaining.

### **Word Mapping is an Appropriate Strategy in Teaching Vocabulary**

#### a. The Strategy is Easy to Implement.

Word mapping is one of the learning techniques that can encourage students to actively explore the relationship of each word. In other words, learning vocabulary becomes easier by using a word mapping strategy. This can be seen from the teacher's reflection answers to the first question (Q1) as follows:

*"Learning vocabulary will be simpler if it is done easily and enjoyably, one of which is by using this word mapping."*

According to the data above, students prefer learning methods that are simple to understand and do not require them to memorize a large amount of difficult vocabulary, so during the learning process, teachers look for ways to make vocabulary learning in class more effective and simpler to understand, so she chose a word mapping strategy in learning vocabulary.

#### b. The strategy is fun to implement.

When learning vocabulary, students are taught to associate or map words with illustrations or pictures. In other words, students will find the use of illustration or image media as a strategy in this simple learning entertaining and enjoyable. Because in addition to expanding vocabulary, students' learning motivation improves, and students understand the meaning of the vocabulary they are learning, making them active in the learning process in class and changing their perspective that vocabulary learning is more than just memorizing vocabulary. This is evident from the teacher's responses as follows:

*"Changed her view that learning vocabulary can be done in a fun way (learning is fun)."*

From the statement above, it is concluded that learning vocabulary in a fun way makes it easier for students to understand the meaning of the vocabulary they have learned.

#### c. The strategy could Motivate Students to Learning Vocabulary.

One of the teacher's responsibilities should be to ensure that students learn successfully. Aside from teaching, the teacher must understand the types of activities and conditions in the classroom and research the level of student learning abilities, particularly in vocabulary learning. If a student's vocabulary ability level is low, it indicates that the student is having difficulties with learning motivation. The teacher



must select an appropriate strategy for increasing student learning motivation in this case. Implementing strategies could help students increase their vocabulary. As a result, in the teacher's vocabulary learning, the teacher selects and employs a word-mapping strategy to motivate student learning. According to the teacher's reflection response:

*"Motivate to be more creative in learning."*

Based on the statement above, it can be concluded that if students have good motivation, they can be more creative in learning, especially in learning vocabulary.

### **Word Mapping Strategy Build Students' Awareness in Learning Vocabulary**

#### **a. Building Students' Creativity in Learning Vocabulary**

In teaching, the teacher uses a word mapping strategy to make the learning process interesting and make students not feel bored during the learning process. If, in the learning process, students feel comfortable, they will find it easier to develop creative minds. In accordance, Word Mapping will make students more interested and enjoyable in the learning process. This argument is also supported by the teacher's answer in the Q2 reflection, which stated:

*"Developing creative thinking activities through mind mapping by looking at various aspects, points of view, or from all directions."*

Based on the statement above, it can be concluded that the teacher chooses this word-mapping strategy because, in learning, the teacher believes that word mapping can build students' creativity in learning vocabulary.

#### **b. Building Students' Interest in Learning Vocabulary**

Students are always interested and like new ways of learning, so teachers need to apply brainstorming to their students to stimulate their creative thinking skills. Brainstorming is an effective strategy for developing creative thinking skills. One type of brainstorming that is chosen to be applied is the word mapping strategy. The application of this word mapping strategy will make students curious and enthusiastic about doing it. This can raise students' learning motivation and interest in learning vocabulary, as seen in the teacher's reflection answer (Q2):

*"Stimulates students' awareness and desire to learn. Students will be more interested in learning vocabulary by using fun strategies."*

From the question above, it can be concluded that one of the factors in choosing this strategy to be applied in the classroom is the teacher's belief that the word mapping strategy can build students' interest in learning vocabulary.

#### **c. Building Students' Interaction in Learning Vocabulary**

Word mapping strategies are usually used in groups or individually. However, in applying this strategy in the classroom, the teacher chose to apply it by dividing students into groups. Word mapping strategy may be used in a small group, large group, or individually. The division of students into groups is intended so that in doing word mapping, students can communicate with each other and collaborate and be concluded that one of the factors influencing the teacher's decision to use the word mapping strategy in the classroom is the teacher's belief that word mapping can increase student interaction and collaboration. As in the teacher's reflection answer:

*"Using a vocabulary learning approach with word mapping can lead to students learning jointly, as they can debate and participate in mapping their ideas."*

Based on the opinions demonstrated above, it can be concluded that one of the factors influencing the teacher's decision to use the word mapping strategy in the classroom is the teacher's belief that word mapping can increase student interaction and collaboration

d. Building Students' Motivation in learning vocabulary

A teacher must be aware of the circumstances as well as the conditions or atmosphere in the classroom. Each student's personality must be recognized by the teacher. So that when students are distracted, teachers can use strategies to arouse students' enthusiasm and motivation to learn. Especially when it comes to learning vocabulary, learning vocabulary, in the same way makes students feel fed up sometimes. This frequently prevents students from developing their ideas in their thinking. The teacher employs a word mapping strategy in vocabulary learning to increase students' learning motivation. As in the teacher's reflections question four as follows:

*"Could motivate and grow individuals' awareness in acquiring vocabulary."*

Based on the two statements above, it can be concluded that the teacher chose a word mapping strategy because the teacher believes that it can motivate students to develop their learning motivation and improve their vocabulary mastery skills

### **Word Mapping as a Strategy in Classroom Management**

a. Class management becomes more well organized.

The knowledge and skills taught by the teacher must be in accordance with the desired goals. Therefore, teachers must ensure that they have good faith in the program being implemented. The use of word mapping in the classroom makes it easy for teachers to direct their students because of the structured nature of word mapping; The effectiveness of the class after using word mapping is supported by the teacher's reflection on the 3rd question (Q3):

*"Class management becomes more focused."*

From the answers above, it can be concluded that by using word mapping by existing procedures, class conditions can be well-directed and controlled.

b. Giving feedback becomes easier.

If the word mapping strategy is implemented correctly, the teacher will provide feedback on what each group has done. Feedback is an important portion of the education and learning process. Feedback is used to correct deficiencies and as a form of interaction between students and teachers. Giving feedback after implementing the word mapping strategy becomes easier if the word mapping procedure recommended by the experts is followed. This viewpoint is supported by the teacher's response to the third reflection question (Q3), which is as follows:

*"Giving feedback is also much easier because the delivery of feedback is given in groups."*



Based on the preceding statement, it can be stated that using the word mapping strategy makes feedback delivery easier because it is delivered in groups rather than individually, which takes a long time.

c. The learning process becomes more entertaining.

Of course, the teacher has prepared tools, media, and learning methods that will be used in the classroom before beginning the learning process so that the learning process becomes more organized and directed. However, students feel fed up and sometimes do not become focused when following the ongoing learning process, so the teacher must choose an interesting strategy so that the learning process becomes more fun and less rigid. So, when teaching vocabulary, the teacher employs a word mapping strategy to get students active and focused on participating in learning. Following is the teacher's response to the fourth question of the interview:

*"Could be an enjoyable method to understand vocabulary."*

As a result, one of the teacher's beliefs in using the word mapping strategy for vocabulary learning is that students can nicely learn vocabulary in a nice way. In other words, the teacher's emphasis is not on whether students have or increase their vocabulary through this word mapping strategy but rather on how they learn vocabulary.

## DISCUSSION

In the findings section, it was found that there were three reasons; the first was the strategy easy to implement. To develop students' ability to learn vocabulary, the teacher chose to use a word mapping strategy to make students understand the vocabulary being studied and also the relationship of words to each other. This is in line with Antonacci & O'Callaghan (2012), who stated that the word mapping strategy is a strategy to promote the students' deeper understanding of words by depicting varying relationships between and among words. In implementing the word mapping strategy in the classroom, the teacher displays a video/image to provide guidance or an example as instruction in making words. It'd mean the learning way becomes fun, which corresponds to the beliefs of a teacher using a word mapping strategy in vocabulary learning. According to the guide, Thornbury (2002) shows real objects, such as showing pictures and explaining to them what is happening in the picture or things in the picture. Also, Penton, Glenn, & English (2004) stated that word maps are visual illustrations of word meanings organized to show relationships with other related words. So that the way students learn vocabulary is not just memorizing vocabulary; based on this statement, it can be said that learning vocabulary with a word mapping strategy is fun. Furthermore, because of the easy and fun nature of word mapping, the teacher believes that this strategy can motivate students to learn vocabulary.

The second theme showed word mapping can build students' awareness in learning vocabulary. The word mapping strategy can stimulate students' interest in finding and learning vocabulary, as well as make them active in learning. Through this opinion, it can be said that students' interest in word mapping can build students awareness to learn vocabulary. Also, Graves (2006) states that the word mapping strategy is appropriate for students, especially in learning vocabulary, because it provides cooperative learning that can improve the students in a group to find out the



correct answer. In other words, group learning will build interaction among students, so awareness and motivation to learn will also increase.

Learning styles that are just like that make teachers want to apply this strategy of word mapping. Teachers must choose teaching methods that make students interested and not feel bored during learning so that they can be more active and creative, so teachers must be good at seeing students' situations and conditions in class. If, in the learning process, students feel comfortable, they will find it easier to develop creative minds. In addition, the implementation of word mapping is carried out in groups. Graves (2006) stated that word mapping strategy might be used in a small group, large group, or individually so that students can interact with other students and conduct discussions and collaborate, and make them improve their thinking skills to become more creative.

The third theme demonstrated word mapping as a strategy for classroom management. There are three beliefs in using a word mapping strategy to manage the class: class management becomes more organized, giving feedback becomes easier, and the learning process becomes more entertaining. These beliefs also have a significant influence on classroom methods (Basturkmen et al., 2012 ;). Their practices emerge as the result of their beliefs in teaching, so teachers have to improve their teaching gradually to attain better teaching. It means that teachers cannot just merely rely on the practices without any attempts to expand them.

This simple and enjoyable word mapping strategy is expected to effectively manage the class, and it has been designed for use by several experts, including (Penton et al., 2004). So that when the class is directed, it is easier to provide information or feedback. Each student's personality must be recognized by the teacher. So that when students are bored, teachers can use strategies to raise students enthusiasm and motivation to learn. This is consistent with the growing recognition of the critical role that language learners' and teachers' cognition plays in mediating their actual behavior and decisions in the learning and teaching process (Borg, 2003).

The results of the teacher's teaching in the classroom are determined by the teacher's beliefs. That is how the teacher's confidence in implementing the word mapping strategy in vocabulary learning to students. In addition, the teacher applies a word mapping strategy, assisting the teacher in the teaching process to provide student learning motivation in finding fun ways to learn, communicating, collaborating, and building student awareness in learning vocabulary. Therefore, teacher beliefs affect the objectives, procedures, materials, interaction patterns in the classroom, roles, and students in learning. The statement (Nation, 2001) sees an Interaction between the teacher and the learners shown when using word mapping or semantic mapping strategy. If the interaction in the classroom goes well, students feel comfortable following the lesson. As stated (Wardani, 2015), Word Mapping will make students more interested and enjoyable in the learning process.

The knowledge and skills taught by the teacher must follow the desired goals. Therefore, teachers must ensure that they have good faith in the program being implemented. The use of word mapping in the classroom makes it easy for teachers to direct their students because of the structured nature of word mapping, which has been regulated by several experts, namely (Penton, Glenn, & English, 2004); using teacher beliefs, Teachers can utilize the instructor as guidelines to implement their



classroom practice and deal with day-to-day teaching challenges. Teacher beliefs also impact teacher teaching attitudes, practices, and policies. Teachers who neglect to investigate their views have unforeseen effects in the classroom, but those who are eager to study their beliefs can use the ideas they have to advance their teaching-learning process.

Therefore, the success of teachers' method of teaching depends on teachers' beliefs. This is consistent with Richards and Lockhart's (2013) notion that teacher belief systems are predicated on the aims and values teachers have about the content and practice of teaching, as well as their knowledge of the systems in which they operate. As a result, teacher beliefs impact their decision-making, including the adoption of certain teaching styles and the selection of specific instructional materials.

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operate. As a result, teacher beliefs impact their decision-making, including the adoption of certain teaching styles and the selection of specific instructional materials.

## CONCLUSION

According to the findings of this paper's research, there are three main teacher beliefs about using word mapping strategies in vocabulary learning. The first theme is word mapping as an appropriate strategy for teaching vocabulary. This theme is divided into three categories: the strategy is easy to implement; the strategy is fun to implement; the strategy could motivate students in learning vocabulary. The second theme is word mapping strategy builds students' awareness of vocabulary learning. There are four categories based on this theme namely building students' creativity in learning vocabulary, building students' interest in learning vocabulary, building students' interaction in learning vocabulary, and building students' motivation in learning vocabulary. The last theme is word mapping as a strategy in classroom management. There are three categories in this theme. The class management becomes more-well organized, giving feedback becomes easier, and the learning process becomes more entertaining. This study reports that teachers' belief in the use of word mapping strategies is very helpful for teachers and also felt by students, which shows positive changes. This strategy is proven to have a fairly good effect, namely by using the word mapping strategy, students can show their interpersonal skills. Besides, the word mapping strategy successfully forces them to change patterns and their perspectives on a theory and a problem in the field from various angles.

Furthermore, the teacher believes that by using a word mapping strategy, students find it very helpful for them in training students thinking skills to be more creative, motivated, and communicative. Also, the word mapping strategy has a positive impact on the teachers because the teacher can manage the class well and convey instructions and feedback more easily. So that the Word mapping strategy convinces the teacher in teaching that it can help the teacher or lecturer and students in carrying out the learning process.

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