

**IMPROVING STUDENT'S VOCABULARY THROUGH
REALIA AT THE EIGHT GRADERS OF
MTS ISLAHIYAH KALITIDU**

SKRIPSI



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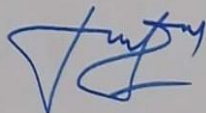
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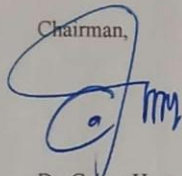
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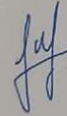
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MOTTO

Revisi adalah bukti bahwa dosen masih peduli.

Tak semua jalan terasa mudah, tak semua usaha langsung berubah,
namun selama kaki masih melangkah harapan akan selalu punya arah.

(لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا)

“Allah tidak membebani seseorang melainkan sesuai dengan kesanggupannya.”

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Is the result of my own original work, and all sources of information used have been clearly cited in the reference list according to the scientific and academic code of ethics. I am aware that if any violations of scholarly ethics regarding to the authenticity of this work are found, **I personally** accept the consequences in accordance with the applicable regulations and am prepared to bear legal sanctions.

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All praise and gratitude be to Allah SWT for His blessings, guidance, and mercy, which enabled the researcher to complete this undergraduate thesis entitled **"Improving Students' Vocabulary through Realia at the Eighth Graders of MTs Islahiyah Kalitidu."** This skripsi is submitted as one of the requirements for obtaining a Bachelor's Degree in the English Education Department, Faculty of Languages and Arts Education, IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro.

The researcher realizes that this thesis could not have been completed without the support, guidance, and encouragement of many people. Therefore, the researcher would like to express sincere gratitude to:

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The researcher realizes that this thesis is not perfect. Therefore, any suggestions and criticisms for its improvement are greatly appreciated. The researcher hopes that this thesis will be useful for teachers, students, future researchers, and other readers.

Bojonegoro, _____ 2026

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ABSTRACT

Rozaq Muhamad Miftahur. 2026. Improving Student's Vocabulary Through Realia at The Eight Graders of Mts Islahiyah Kalitidu. Skripsi, English Education Department, Faculty of Language and Arts Education, IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro, Advisor (1) Dr. Moh. Fuadul Matin, S.S., M.Pd., (II) Chyntia Heru Woro P., S.Pd., M.Pd.

Keywords: realia facial expressions, vocabulary mastery, classroom action research.

This study aims to improve the English vocabulary mastery of eighth-grade students at MTs Islahiyah Kalitidu through the use of realia facial expressions. This study used the Classroom Action Research (CAR) method, implemented in two cycles. Each cycle included planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. The subjects were 20 students. Data were collected through tests, observations, interviews, and documentation, then analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The results showed that the use of realia facial expressions improved students' vocabulary mastery. The average student score increased from 35.00 in the preliminary study to 43.50 in Cycle I and 77.50 in Cycle II. The number of students meeting the Minimum Completion Criteria (KKM) also increased. Furthermore, students became more active, motivated, and enthusiastic during the learning process. Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the use of realia facial expressions is effective in improving students' English vocabulary mastery and makes the learning process more active and engaging.

ABSTRAK

Rozaq Muhamad Miftahur. 2026. Improving Student's Vocabulary Through Realia at The Eight Graders of Mts Islahiyah Kalitidu. Skripsi, English Education Department, Faculty of Language and Arts Education, IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro, Advisor (I) Dr. Moh. Fuadul Matin, S.S., M.Pd., (II) Chyntia Heru Woro P., S.Pd., M.Pd.

Kata kunci: realia facial expressions, vocabulary mastery, classroom action research.

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata bahasa Inggris siswa kelas VIII MTs Islahiyah Kalitidu melalui penggunaan realia facial expressions. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode Penelitian Tindakan Kelas (PTK) yang dilaksanakan dalam dua siklus. Setiap siklus meliputi tahap perencanaan, pelaksanaan, observasi, dan refleksi. Subjek penelitian ini adalah 20 siswa. Data dikumpulkan melalui tes, observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis secara kuantitatif dan kualitatif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan realia facial expressions dapat meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata siswa. Nilai rata-rata siswa meningkat dari 35,00 pada studi pendahuluan menjadi 43,50 pada Siklus I dan 77,50 pada Siklus II. Jumlah siswa yang mencapai Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal (KKM) juga meningkat. Selain itu, siswa menjadi lebih aktif, lebih termotivasi, dan lebih antusias selama proses pembelajaran. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian, dapat disimpulkan bahwa penggunaan realia facial expressions efektif untuk meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata bahasa Inggris siswa dan membuat proses pembelajaran menjadi lebih aktif serta menarik.

PREFACE

This undergraduate thesis, entitled "*Improving Students' Vocabulary through Realia at the Eighth Graders of MTs Islahiyah Kalitidu*," is submitted as one of the requirements for obtaining the Bachelor's Degree in English Education at the Faculty of Language and Arts Education, IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro. This study aims to improve students' English vocabulary mastery through the use of realia as a teaching medium. The researcher chose this topic because vocabulary is an important part of learning English, and realia can help students understand new words more easily through realia facial expressions. This research used Classroom Action Research to improve the teaching and learning process in the classroom. During this study, the researcher learned how to plan lessons, carry out classroom activities, collect research data, and evaluate the results of the learning process. The researcher would like to express sincere gratitude to the thesis supervisors for their guidance, advice, and support throughout this study. The researcher also thanks all lecturers of the English Education Study Program, the principal, the English teacher, and the eighth-grade students of MTs Islahiyah Kalitidu for their cooperation and participation in this research. Special thanks are given to the researcher's parents, family, and friends for their prayers, encouragement, and continuous support. The researcher realizes that this thesis is still not perfect. Therefore, any suggestions and constructive comments will be greatly appreciated. It is hoped that this thesis will be useful for teachers, students, future researchers, and other readers who are interested in English language teaching, especially vocabulary learning through the use of realia facial expressions

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of study

English is one of the international languages that plays a strategic role in various aspects of life, particularly in the fields of science, technology, communication, and education. As a language widely used in the global context, proficiency in English is considered an essential competence that learners need in order to keep up with the times and adapt to global demands. In the current era of globalization and digitalization, according to Leung, C. (2023), English language proficiency not only plays a role in providing access to information sources and technology but also facilitates cross-cultural communication and international collaboration in education and research. Therefore, English is taught as a foreign language (English as a Foreign Language/EFL) in Indonesia from primary education to higher education, with the aim of enabling learners not only to master linguistic theory but also to communicate actively and contextually in real learning situations and social life.

In English language learning, vocabulary plays a very important role. Vocabulary serves as the main foundation for mastering the four language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Without adequate vocabulary mastery, learners will experience difficulties in understanding texts, conveying ideas, and expressing thoughts both orally and in written form. Berliani N. A. and Katemba C. V. (2021) emphasize that vocabulary is a core element in language learning because it functions as the primary tool for communication. Therefore, the success of English language learning is largely determined by the level of learners'

vocabulary mastery.

Ideally, eighth-grade students of Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) are expected to master English vocabulary in accordance with the basic competencies outlined in the curriculum and to achieve the Minimum Mastery Criteria (KKM) set by the school. Vocabulary learning should be carried out in an active, contextual, and meaningful manner so that students do not merely memorize vocabulary but also understand its meaning and use in the context of everyday life. Meaningful learning helps students store vocabulary in long-term memory and use it appropriately in various communicative situations as well as in teaching and learning activities (Ahmadova K., 2025).

However, based on empirical conditions in the field, students' mastery of English vocabulary is still relatively low, particularly at the Madrasah Tsanawiyah level. The results of initial observations and information obtained from the English teacher at MTs Islahiyah Kalitidu indicate that most eighth-grade students experience difficulties in memorizing, understanding, and using English vocabulary appropriately. Students tend to memorize vocabulary mechanically without a clear understanding of its meaning and contextual use, causing the learned vocabulary to be easily forgotten. Previous research findings reveal that low vocabulary mastery is a common problem in English language learning at the junior secondary school level, which has implications for students' limited ability to use the language both productively and receptively. Such studies indicate that more innovative and contextual learning strategies need to be implemented to improve students' vocabulary comprehension more effectively (Muftia, I., et al. 2025). Furthermore, low vocabulary mastery negatively affects students' self-confidence in speaking

English and results in low participation and activeness during the learning process (Kamsinah et al., 2021).

However, based on a preliminary field survey, students' mastery of English vocabulary is still relatively low, as indicated by the fact that most students have not yet achieved the Minimum Mastery Criteria (KKM). During the learning process, students also tend to be passive, show low enthusiasm, and avoid using English vocabulary when asked to participate in discussions or answer questions. This condition reflects a gap between the ideal conditions of English language learning and the reality occurring in the eighth-grade classrooms of MTs Islahiyah Kalitidu. Previous research findings state that low vocabulary mastery is often correlated with limited student engagement in classroom interaction and active learning, resulting in low learning motivation and minimal participation in English language activities. Therefore, more contextual and engaging vocabulary learning strategies are needed to address this problem and improve students' engagement and learning outcomes (Utami, K. C. et al., 2024).

One of the factors contributing to students' low vocabulary mastery is the dominant use of conventional teaching methods and instructional media in English language learning. The classroom learning process tends to rely heavily on lecture-based methods and textbooks as the primary learning resources. In practice, teachers more frequently deliver the material orally, while students merely take notes and memorize vocabulary from textbooks without active involvement in the learning process. This monotonous and less varied instructional approach potentially causes students to become easily bored, less motivated, and less actively engaged in learning activities, which in turn affects their overall vocabulary

mastery. Previous studies indicate that a combination of more contextual, interactive, and varied learning strategies has a positive effect on students' vocabulary comprehension and engagement in English language learning (Mulis, 2025).

Instructional media play an important role in supporting the success of the learning process, as they function as a means of delivering material in a way that is easier for students to understand. The appropriate use of instructional media can help teachers explain abstract concepts more concretely, increase students' learning motivation, and create a more interactive and enjoyable learning atmosphere. Therefore, teachers need to have the ability to select and utilize instructional media that are appropriate to students' characteristics and learning objectives (Sartika et al., 2020).

One instructional medium that is effective in vocabulary learning is realia facial expressions. Realia in this study refers to authentic teaching media represented through facial expressions that illustrate emotions such as happy, sad, angry, surprised, tired, afraid, and disappointed found in students' surrounding environment. The use of realia allows students to learn through direct experience by observing, touching, and manipulating realia facial expressions, making the meaning of vocabulary more concrete and easier to understand (Setianingsih et al., 2021).

The use of realia facial expressions in English language learning is aligned with the principles of contextual learning theory, which emphasizes the importance of linking learning materials to students' real-life experiences. A contextual learning approach helps students understand vocabulary more meaningfully

because the material being learned is directly connected to their everyday situations and experiences, making learning more relevant. This view is consistent with Bhatti et al. (2021), who state that their research shows realia to be an effective instructional guide in improving students' vocabulary skills through relevant real-life activities.

In addition, the use of realia also supports a teaching vocabulary approach that engages multiple senses in the learning process, as the realia facial expressions used in the classroom allow students to associate vocabulary with direct sensory experiences. This approach not only helps students gain a more comprehensive understanding of vocabulary meanings but also enhances their engagement, motivation, and memory retention. Previous research indicates that using realia facial expressions in vocabulary learning provides meaningful, experience-based learning, making the learning process more effective and relevant for students (Sitepu, S. B., & Kurniawati, L. A., 2021).

Various previous studies have shown that the use of realia has a positive impact on improving students' vocabulary mastery. The use of realia can significantly enhance students' vocabulary skills because it encourages them to be more active and motivated during the learning process. Rahmayani (2023) also states that vocabulary learning through realia significantly improves students' understanding and retention of vocabulary, as the learning process becomes more enjoyable and engaging. The use of realia combined with innovative methods, such as the Three-Period Lesson, has been proven to significantly increase students' vocabulary scores (Muliyah et al., 2023).

Although various studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of using realia

in significantly improving students' English vocabulary mastery, its implementation in the learning practices at MTs Islahiyah Kalitidu is still not optimal. Teachers tend to choose conventional teaching methods, which are considered more practical and easier to apply, even though the school environment provides various expressions that could potentially be used as instructional media. Previous research indicates that the use of realia facial expressions in vocabulary learning can enhance student engagement, enrich teaching vocabulary experiences, and lead to more meaningful improvements in students' vocabulary mastery (Patmi, R. I. U., & Sabaruddin, S., 2023).

Classroom Action Research (CAR) is considered an appropriate approach to address students' vocabulary mastery problems. This approach aims to improve the quality of learning through cycles of planning, action implementation, observation, and reflection. By using CAR, teachers can identify problems occurring in the learning process, implement actions such as the use of realia as instructional media, and evaluate the effectiveness of these actions in continuously improving students' vocabulary mastery.

Based on the description above, the researcher is interested in conducting a study entitled "Improving Students' Vocabulary through Realia at the Eighth Graders of MTs Islahiyah Kalitidu." This study is expected to enhance students' vocabulary mastery, increase their engagement and learning motivation, and provide both theoretical and practical contributions to the development of English language teaching, particularly in the context of Madrasah Tsanawiyah and IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro.

B. Formulation of the problem

Based on the background of the study, the researcher identified that students had difficulties in mastering English vocabulary. Therefore, this study focuses on the use of realia through facial expressions to improve students' vocabulary mastery. The research problem is formulated as follows: “How can the implementation of realia using facial expressions improve students' vocabulary mastery?”

C. Objectives of the study

Based on the formulation of the problem, this study aims to investigate the effectiveness of implementing realia using facial expressions in teaching English vocabulary to eighth-grade students. Therefore, the objective of this study is:” To determine how the implementation of realia using facial expressions can improve students' vocabulary mastery.”

D. Significances of the study

This study holds significant theoretical relevance in the development of vocabulary learning at the level. The use of realia facial expressions in vocabulary instruction has been widely researched and proven effective within educational contexts. For instance, Purnamasari, Regina, et al., (2018) found that realia facial expressions can enhance students' understanding of vocabulary meanings as well as their spelling and pronunciation skills.

Realia provide visual and kinesthetic stimuli that enable students to associate vocabulary meanings with realia facial expressions, thereby supporting both comprehension and long-term vocabulary retention. This aligns with the theory of teaching vocabulary, which emphasizes that learning is more effective when it engages multiple senses. Consequently, students acquire vocabulary not only verbally but also through direct interaction with tangible realia facial expressions,

which strengthens the formation of deeper meanings. Research by Trisani et al. (2019) demonstrated that the use of realia facial expressions significantly improves students' vocabulary mastery, as this medium allows them to experience learning in a concrete and contextualized manner, thereby facilitating active engagement and deeper understanding.

Previous studies indicate that the development of strategies and learning media for vocabulary at the Madrasah Tsanawiyah level can enhance students' vocabulary mastery through various systematic approaches and instructional tools. For example, vocabulary teaching strategies employed by English teachers at the SMP level have been shown to contribute to students' vocabulary improvement while offering adaptive alternative learning approaches Qadri, N., et al. (2025)

Furthermore, an analysis of vocabulary learning strategies used by teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Teluk Dalam revealed a variety of effective approaches for enriching vocabulary and facilitating student communication (Duha, 2024). Other research has also identified that structured vocabulary learning strategies can significantly enhance students' vocabulary competence (Aryani & Astutik, 2025).

E. Definition of Terminologies

1. Vocabulary

Vocabulary refers to the set of words that learners need to recognize, understand, and use appropriately to communicate effectively. It serves as a fundamental element of language learning because it enables learners to develop their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. As explained by Budiyan and Sujarwo (2020), a good command of vocabulary contributes significantly to students' ability to acquire and use English in various learning activities.

Furthermore, Ratnaningsih and Clara (2021) emphasize that vocabulary mastery is not limited to knowing the meanings of words but also includes the ability to apply them accurately and appropriately in different communicative situations, both in spoken and written communication.

In this study, vocabulary refers to the English words taught to the eighth-grade students of MTs Islahiyah Kalitidu. The learning materials focus on vocabulary related to everyday realia facial expressions. Vocabulary mastery is reflected in the students' ability to recognize, understand, pronounce, remember, and appropriately use the target words during classroom activities and vocabulary assessments conducted after the implementation of learning through realia facial expressions.

2. Realia

Realia facial expressions refer to the use of authentic realia facial expressions from the learners' surrounding environment as instructional media to provide concrete and meaningful learning experiences. Gobert (2018) explains that realia facial expressions consist of authentic realia facial expressions used in the classroom to create meaningful learning experiences by connecting language with real-life contexts through direct observation and interaction. Similarly, Sari and Abduh (2022) emphasize that realia facial expressions enable students to observe, and explore authentic realia facial expressions, making learning more contextual and easier to understand.

In this study, realia facial expressions refer to the use of real using facial expressions as learning media in teaching English vocabulary. The realia facial expressions are selected from materials that students commonly encounter in their

daily lives, while facial expressions are used to represent vocabulary related to emotions and feelings. Through direct observation and interaction with these learning media, students are expected to connect new vocabulary with real life situations, improve their understanding and retention of vocabulary, and participate more actively throughout the learning process.