

# EFL TEACHERS' BELIEFS AND PRACTICES IN TEACHING VOCABULARY TO 10<sup>th</sup> AND 11<sup>th</sup> GRADERS AT PHAN CHAU TRINH HIGH SCHOOL, DANANG CITY

NIỀM TIN VÀ CÁCH DẠY TỪ VỰNG CỦA GIÁO VIÊN TIẾNG ANH CHO  
HỌC SINH LỚP 10 VÀ 11 TẠI TRƯỜNG THPT PHAN CHÂU TRINH, ĐÀ NẴNG

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**Abstract** - Vocabulary is an important aspect of language learning. This research aims to explore English language teachers' beliefs and practices in vocabulary teaching at Phan Chau Trinh High School, Danang. Through the qualitative data collected via questionnaire, interview and classroom observation, the findings indicated that teachers' beliefs influence their classroom practices during vocabulary teaching. The study also reveals a positive correlation between teachers' own interest and the effectiveness of their vocabulary teaching practices. Despite certain beliefs held by the teachers, different limitations arose, hindering the seamless vocabulary instruction. This shows that maintaining a constant alignment between what teachers believe and what they do in practical contexts is not always possible.

**Key words** - Teacher cognition; teacher beliefs; vocabulary teaching; classroom practices

## 1. Background to the Study

In the modern era marked by rapid advancements in science and technology, coupled with the prevailing trend towards globalization and worldwide integration, English has emerged as an increasingly pivotal international language. In the process of learning a language, vocabulary is clearly important for as it underpins all other language skills. Proficiency in vocabulary not only acts as a catalyst for elevated language usage but also accelerates the journey to fluency for learners. Furthermore, the beliefs held by teachers play a pivotal role in understanding and enhancing the instructional process. These beliefs intricately guide language teachers, influencing their teaching strategies as they navigate the challenges of daily language education, thereby shaping the learning environment for language learners and impacting their motivation. In other words, teacher practices determine the success of teaching as well as the effectiveness of student learning. Compared with the teachers' implicit cognitive process, teachers' practices and consequent outcomes, according to Clark and Peterson, are more discernable [1]. With constant adjustments under the real teaching context, teacher practices will henceforth bring new teacher reflections and facilitate the maturity of teacher thinking.

Teaching vocabulary, especially English, may reveal certain challenges. First, English has extreme diversity of vocabulary, which means it can be challenging for teachers to help students learn and acquire new words. In addition,

**Tóm tắt** - Từ vựng là một cấu phần quan trọng đối với việc học tiếng. Nghiên cứu này nhằm tìm hiểu niềm tin và thực tiễn dạy từ vựng của giáo viên tiếng Anh tại trường THPT Phan Châu Trinh, Đà Nẵng. Qua dữ liệu thu thập từ bảng hỏi, phỏng vấn và quan sát lớp học, nghiên cứu đã phát hiện rằng niềm tin của giáo viên ảnh hưởng đến việc thực hành giảng dạy từ vựng trong lớp học. Nghiên cứu còn cho thấy mối tương quan tích cực giữa quan tâm của giáo viên với hiệu quả của việc dạy từ vựng. Tuy vậy, vẫn còn nhiều khó khăn cho việc triển khai liên mạch các hoạt động dạy từ vựng. Điều này cho thấy đảm bảo sự liên kết liên tục giữa niềm tin và thực tiễn dạy học không phải lúc nào cũng khả thi.

**Từ khóa** - Nhận thức giáo viên; niềm tin giáo viên; việc dạy từ vựng; thực hành giảng dạy trong lớp

such common methods as the direct method or the audio-lingual method emphasize the importance of teaching grammatical structures instead of vocabulary. Realizing that vocabulary is important yet noting a lack of emphasis in the classroom context, this study attempts to examine the EFL teachers' beliefs and practices related to vocabulary instruction. It looks at how the beliefs shaped by the EFL teachers could inform their practices in vocabulary teaching and have an impact on vocabulary acquisition by 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders in a high school (i.e., Phan Chau Trinh High School) in Danang City. The findings from this research are hoped to reveal valuable insights into shaping effective strategies for enhanced vocabulary learning in the classroom, and for better teaching and learning experience.

The study thus aims to seek answers to the following research questions:

(1) What are EFL teachers' beliefs in teaching vocabulary to 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders in Phan Chau Trinh High School, Danang City?

(2) What are the teachers' practices in teaching vocabulary to 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders in Phan Chau Trinh High School, Danang City?

## 2. Theoretical Background

### 2.1. Defining Vocabulary

According to Alizadeh, the term "vocabulary" elicits various definitions depending on different perspectives [2].

Broadly, it can be construed as the comprehension of words and their meanings. Alternately, one may define vocabulary as a compiled list of words arranged in alphabetical order, each accompanied by its definition. A word, in most linguistic analyses, is described as a set of properties or features, with each word encompassing its meaning, register, association, collocation, grammatical behavior, written form (spelling), spoken form (pronunciation) and frequency. Proficiency in a word is not only to learn its meaning but also to learn other aspects, which are collectively referred to, in Schmitt's terms, as "word knowledge" [3].

## ***2.2. Defining Teachers' Belief and Practices***

There may be varying definitions of what is meant by teachers' belief and what it is like when these beliefs are realized in practical contexts. For Guerra and Wubbena, beliefs are "powerful filters" that shape how an individual sees the world, other people and oneself [4, p.70]. Yet, beliefs are unobservable constructs that must be inferred from what a person says or does [5], and these inferences are driven by a particular set of assumptions about beliefs. In other words, beliefs are judgments and evaluations that are made about oneself, others and the world around.

## ***2.3. Language Teacher Cognition and Classroom Practices***

Throughout literature, the concept of teacher cognition has been a complex one. It is a strong theme across different disciplines, and the research paradigm is to understand what constitutes cognition and to argue its importance for effective pedagogy and teacher development [6]. By observing what teachers do and say in their professional context, one can make sense of what they think and how that thinking is displayed in their practice.

Overall, the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices suggests that theory and practice are not separated. This means any attempt to change teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning would have consequences for their actual teaching in classrooms. In other words, teachers can be encouraged to stay up-to-date with theories of learning in order to establish beliefs that can lead to their best practice in the classroom [7], [8].

## ***2.4. Vocabulary in Language Teaching and Learning***

Vocabulary has long assumed a prominent place in any course of language learning. According to Tozcu and Coady, vocabulary learning assists learners in acquiring the language through facilitating their reading comprehension, thus fostering their reading proficiency [9]. Proficiency in vocabulary empowers students to swiftly identify the meaning of words in a myriad of contexts. Mastering vocabulary also allows students to communicate in English and have a strong desire to read books in English. Therefore, mastery of vocabulary is a good start in the journey towards developing English language skills. For language teaching, vocabulary assumes a pivotal role as it forms the cornerstone upon which students construct their ability to comprehend and convey ideas. Without a vocabulary repertoire, students encounter barriers in understanding and communicating ideas. As students

develop greater fluency and expression in English, it is significant for them to acquire more productive vocabulary knowledge and to develop their own personal vocabulary learning strategies.

Some traditional techniques, however, still exist for teaching vocabulary. These techniques, according to Gairns and Redman, can be classified into three categories: visual, verbal and translation. While visual techniques concern visual memory, verbal ones are made up of illustrative situations, synonyms and definitions, contrasts and opposites, scales, and examples. Translation is then considered as an effective way to convey meaning [10]. Understanding these different aspects of vocabulary teaching can lay the foundation for the researcher to look more deeply into how EFL teachers perceive vocabulary teaching and in what way their perceptions can inform the actual practices of vocabulary instruction in the classroom.

## **3. Research Methodology**

### ***3.1. Research Design and Setting***

#### ***3.1.1. Research Design and Methods***

To address the research aims regarding EFL teachers' beliefs and practices in teaching vocabulary to tenth and eleventh graders at Phan Chau Trinh High School in Danang City, this study adopts a mainly qualitative method with supplementary quantifiable data. The primary data collection tools include interviews, questionnaires, and classroom observations. These methods are chosen to capture the depth and breadth of EFL teachers' beliefs and practices in teaching vocabulary, providing a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Interviews allow for in-depth exploration of teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and instructional strategies, providing rich qualitative data on their experiences and perspectives. Questionnaires, on the other hand, enable the collection of more quantitative data, allowing for the generalization of findings as regards EFL teachers' perceptions at Phan Chau Trinh High School. Classroom observations also provide valuable insights into teachers' actual instructional practices, complementing the self-reported data from interviews and questionnaires.

#### ***3.1.2. Research Setting and Participants***

The research was conducted at Phan Chau Trinh High School, a prestigious public institution situated in Danang City. With an enrolment of around 4000 students distributed across 93 classes, the school serves as a prominent educational hub in the city. Among these classes, 87 classes prioritize English as the first foreign language, while six classes have it as the second foreign language. In terms of questionnaires, eight teachers were selected. For the interview and observation, there were three EFL teachers from this school engaged in teaching 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders. These teachers are of different ages, different levels of teaching experience and pedagogical expertise, thus representing the population of EFL teachers in Danang. Table 1 shows the profile of these teachers.

**Table 1.** Profile of research participants for interview and observation

Teacher	Gender	Qualification	Years of Experience
Teacher 1	Female	Master's degree in English Language	25 years
Teacher 2	Female	Bachelor's degree in English Language Teaching	15 years
Teacher 3	Female	Bachelor's degree in English Language Teaching	3 years

### 3.2. Preamble of the English Textbooks Adopted by Phan Chau Trinh High School

Phan Chau Trinh High School adopts *Global Success* textbooks for its 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders. These textbooks share common features regarding vocabulary presentation and practice, with each book including a comprehensive glossary at the end, facilitating easy reference for students. As for instructional activities, these textbooks incorporate various engaging exercises. Indeed, students are presented with tasks like matching words with their definitions, completing texts using specific words or phrases, filling in sentences with the correct form of words, associating words with corresponding pictures, and choosing the correct word to complete sentences from a given pair.

As for assessment methods, the quizzes are administered regularly at the end of each unit in their course books. They are outlined in the Teacher's Book, predominantly consisting of multiple-choice questions, encompassing three parts: grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. In the vocabulary part, students engage in tasks such as identifying the correct word from multiple options, completing sentences with compound words, choosing appropriate words based on given definitions, filling in sentences with the correct words, and rectifying errors identified in underlined sentences.

### 3.3. Data Collection

Triangulation of data was used for this research. First, questionnaires were delivered to the sample teachers to explore their perspectives and beliefs of teaching vocabulary. Class observation was then used to uncover the teachers' practices in classrooms regarding delivering vocabulary content. This was followed by interviews with these teachers to probe to more depth how the teachers' beliefs have shaped their practices and in what ways.

#### 3.3.1. Procedure

The data collected for this piece of research took place during a 3-month practicum experienced by the researcher at Phan Chau Trinh High School. During this time, the researcher had observations of English classes under the instruction of some teachers at this school, which means having exposure to the English classes and chances for interaction with the English teachers.

#### 3.3.2. Observation

The utilization of observation in the research revealed insights into teachers' practices in vocabulary instruction across the three classes, complementing the self-reported data obtained through interviews and questionnaires. Each

of these three teachers maintained a schedule of twelve periods per week, teaching a total of four classes, including two 10<sup>th</sup> grade and two 11<sup>th</sup> grade classes. The duration of each period is 45 minutes, with English classes being scheduled for three periods per week. The researcher attended two periods of 10<sup>th</sup> grade and two of 11<sup>th</sup> grade taught by each teacher every week. The observations were conducted over the course of one month.

#### 3.3.3. Interview

Retrospective interview was employed to conduct interviews with three teachers teaching 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders at Phan Chau Trinh High School. During the interviews, the researcher showed recorded videos of her classroom observation to gain insights into the teachers' actual vocabulary teaching practices and the reasons behind their instructional choices. The interviews were conducted in teaching rooms and classes during the ten-minute break time. These interviews can allow more in-depth exploration of the teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and instructional strategies, providing rich qualitative data to be collected on their experiences and perspectives.

#### 3.3.4. Questionnaires

Based on Mardali and Siyyari, the questionnaire was developed and used for surveying the EFL teachers' beliefs and practices, exploring difficulties that they face up to in vocabulary teaching to tenth and eleventh grades [5]. There were four sections with 20 questions in total: section 1 for personal information; section 2 designed for unearthing teachers' beliefs in vocabulary teaching; section 3 to examine teachers' practices in vocabulary teaching; and section 4 designed to learn about difficulties encountered by the teachers and solutions suggested for improved teaching practices. The six other questions aim to uncover the beliefs of teachers on their self-perceived practices. Google Form was used to make questionnaires and the survey links were administered via Zalo for participants to complete the survey. This administration of the questionnaires enables some quantifiable data to be collected, assisting the generalization of findings on the perceptions held by EFL teachers at Phan Chau Trinh High School regarding vocabulary instruction.

#### 3.3.5. Data Analysis

The triangulation of data necessitates the analysis of data from three sources. With the recorded videos from the respondents and through their responses to the interview questions, the researchers could uncover what their beliefs regarding vocabulary instruction were and how these beliefs informed instructional practices during different periods. These responses were thus the primary source of qualitative data for scrutinizing the teachers' beliefs.

From the questionnaire, some quantifiable data were gathered to help with the generalization of the teachers' beliefs and practices in vocabulary teaching to 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders in the research school. These responses provided valuable insights into the researcher's analysis of the shared assumptions on vocabulary instructions of these EFL teachers. Besides, records of class observation were used to analyze the way that the sample participants

delivered vocabulary lessons, students' motivation, and effects of their teaching styles on students' acquisition of vocabulary. They are also the source that the researchers utilized for comparing the teachers' beliefs and practices.

### 3.3.6. Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity can be ensured by means of rich data collected from authentic classroom settings and real-time teacher interviews. The vocabulary lessons uncovered for the research are taken from "Grade 10 and 11 Global Success" - the official textbooks by Vietnam Education Publisher and Pearson. This also contributes to the reliability and validity of the research, and so does the utilization of the questionnaires to survey teacher's beliefs and practices, enabling the comparison amongst individual participants' beliefs and practices.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1. Teachers' Beliefs About Vocabulary Teaching

To gain insights into the teachers' beliefs about vocabulary teaching, the questionnaires were designed with six statements related to different aspects of vocabulary teaching. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with each statement by selecting one of the two response options: "Agree" or "Disagree". The responses were then tabulated and analyzed to identify trends and patterns.

Table 2 shows the teachers' responses to survey questionnaires regarding their beliefs in teaching vocabulary to EFL students of grade 10 and 11 in the researched high school.

**Table 2. Teacher's Teaching Vocabulary Beliefs**

Assumptions about Vocabulary Teaching	Teachers' Responses			
	Agree		Disagree	
	Freq. (= n)	(= %)	Freq. (= n)	(= %)
1. Teachers should present vocabulary to learners before expecting them to use it.	8	100	-	-
2. During lessons, a focus on vocabulary should come after communicative tasks, not before.	7	87.5	1	12.5
3. In a communicative approach to English language teaching, vocabulary should not be taught directly.	4	50	4	50
4. In teaching vocabulary, a teacher's main role is to explain the rules.	5	62.5	3	37.5
5. Formal vocabulary teaching does not help learners become more fluent.	-	-	8	100
6. It is necessary to use flexible vocabulary teaching methods based on the topic of the units.	8	100	-	-

### 4.2. Teachers' Practices in Vocabulary Teaching

To delve into the practices of EFL teachers in teaching vocabulary, the questionnaires were tailored to assess their instructional approaches and strategies. Five statements were crafted to probe different dimensions of vocabulary teaching practices. The teachers were asked to indicate whether they implement each practice or not by selecting either "Yes" or "No." The responses were meticulously recorded and analyzed to discern prevalent practices and potential variations among educators. Table 3 presents the compiled responses from the surveyed teachers regarding their instructional practices in teaching vocabulary to grade 10 and 11 EFL students at the investigated high school.

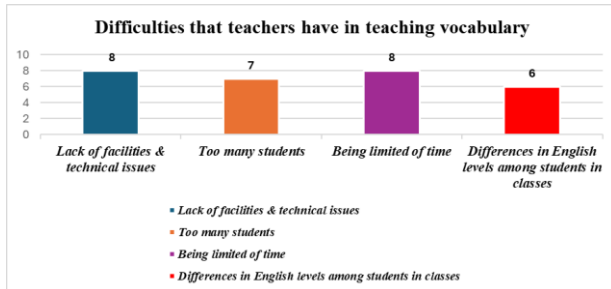
**Table 3. Teacher's Teaching Vocabulary Practices**

Statements	Teachers' Responses			
	Yes		No	
	Freq. (= n)	(= %)	Freq. (= n)	(= %)
1. I explain the vocabulary rules to my students so that they can use the language more effectively.	8	100	-	-
2. I provide my students with exercises to practice vocabulary structures and help them develop fluency in using vocabulary.	8	100	-	-
3. I ask my students to practice new words repeatedly.	6	75	2	25
4. Sometimes I provide students with extra vocabulary to help them with some difficult exercise and to develop their speaking skill.	6	75	2	25
5. I often teach vocabulary before a communicative approach and correct my learners' spoken vocabulary errors in English speaking periods.	8	100	-	-

### 4.3. Challenges faced by EFL Teachers in Teaching Vocabulary to Tenth and Eleventh Graders at Phan Châu Trinh High School

Upon delving deeper into the discussion of findings regarding vocabulary teaching at Phan Chau Trinh High School, it becomes imperative to address the challenges encountered by the teachers in this domain. Despite the efforts invested in selecting appropriate English textbooks, implementing vocabulary presentation strategies, and aligning instructional practices with teachers' beliefs, it is essential to recognize the obstacles faced by the teachers for effective vocabulary instruction. Figure 1 shows various challenges confronted by the teachers in terms of vocabulary teaching. These range from limited facilities as

well as time constraints for effective delivery of vocabulary instruction, as recorded by all the teachers in the survey. Problems regarding large class size or different language proficiency levels of the students were quoted by seven and six out of eight respondents respectively. These provide some insight into the complexities of language instruction and offering avenues for further research and professional development initiatives.



**Figure 1.** Challenges EFL teachers face in teaching vocabulary to 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders

#### 4.4. Results from Interviews with EFL Teachers Participants

The interviews were conducted during the ten-minute break time in the staff rooms. After watching the recording videos, the researcher asked some questions to explore and elaborate on the reasons why they used certain vocabulary teaching methods, their beliefs as well as practices.

##### 4.4.1. The Role of Vocabulary in SLA

All teacher participants agree that vocabulary has a key role in language learning and teaching. They believe that it is important to add more collocations because they think it is essential for students to know which words go together. In their responses, teaching vocabulary is deemed important because students need to improve such skills as building sentences, improving vocabulary range as well as extending their ideas while speaking and writing,

##### 4.4.2. Views and Beliefs on Vocabulary Teaching

All the participants clearly explained the reason why they used different vocabulary teaching methods in their instruction and agreed that vocabulary should be taught in context and with real-life examples supported by visuals, songs, or films. In their view, “knowing a word” means knowing how to use it in a meaningful context. The top three recommendations commonly suggested by the teachers to students included reading books, engaging with words, and keeping a record of the learnt vocabulary. The teachers added that they often introduced additional vocabulary related to highlighted words during classroom instruction. While all the teachers frequently incorporated the use of online tools for vocabulary teaching, two of them commented that these tools primarily grasped the students’ attention without directly affecting their learning. In contrast, one of the teachers showed favor of teaching vocabulary in chunks.

When it comes to how the participants’ beliefs on vocabulary teaching are shaped, the most typical answer is attributed to their personal learning and teaching experiences. However, the interviewed teachers also acknowledged a myriad of external factors coming from

video sources available on YouTube, teacher forums, seminars and journal articles, all of which contribute to shaping their beliefs regarding vocabulary teaching. For example, when being asked: “How has your belief in vocabulary teaching been shaped?”, Teacher 1 had this to say: “When I was young, I often observed the ways other teachers were teaching while trying to remember what they had said. Thanks to the development of the Internet, updating new knowledge has become easier, I now often go to Violet forum, a big educational forum for teachers to exchange information about teaching. I also watch videos about teaching vocabulary on YouTube. Therefore, my belief on vocabulary teaching is always acknowledged and renewed to adapt to the new general curriculum”.

However, all the teachers agreed that the teaching in the classroom was not enough, and students were generally expected to practice and recycle the vocabulary at home by using the most suitable strategies. Some of the typical practices adopted by the teacher participants are (i) asking Wh-questions; (ii) using gamification tools; (iii) asking the students to explain what a word means in their own words; (iv) doing traditional True/False; (v) fill-in-the-blanks; and (vi) matching activities in the textbooks.

The materials preferred by the teacher participants were pieces of paper and pens, online tools, mobile phones, course books, the online practice offered by several publications, reading books, and worksheets. When it comes to designing class activities for vocabulary development, the participants mentioned several factors which affect the design of vocabulary development activities such as students’ levels and age, relevance and familiarity of the topic, the CEFR level of the words, and preparation of extra vocabulary for students.



**Figure 2.** Some vocabulary instructional activities for 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders during classroom observations

#### 4.5. EFL Teachers’ Vocabulary Instructional Practices

Based on the classroom observation notes, the English lessons at the school do not have a specific vocabulary section. Instead, students only focus on vocabulary acquisition throughout the unit by engaging in the short activities mentioned above. They also study keywords before delving into a reading passage.

In terms of the approaches employed by the teacher participants in handling vocabulary during their lessons, almost all introduce vocabulary before reaching the main lesson in each period. These teachers exhibit a tendency to blend three main methods: Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), Game-Based Teaching (GBT), and

Grammar Translation method (GTM) for vocabulary instruction. In each period, the teachers provide students with 5-8 new words. To check their use of vocabulary, the teachers often have students do exercises after noting down vocabulary in their notebooks. Most of the new words are from the glossary inserted in the textbook *Global Success*.

More specifically, Teacher 1 employed English equivalents to teach new words, often resorting to the method of matching words with pictures to infer the meanings of new terms. She then corrected and integrated elements of GTM to teach vocabulary. Furthermore, she preferred to give synonyms of the newly learned words in order to offer more comprehensive definitions. For example, in the reading section in Unit 2 “*Generation Gap*”, in the 11th-grade *Global Success* textbook, she added on the word “rent” with its synonym “hire” to augment the new vocabulary to her students. She also occasionally introduced new vocabulary related to the highlighted words in the course book. She added that while explaining new vocabulary, she incorporated real-life examples to facilitate understanding. Hence, most students in her class often remembered how new words are pronounced and well handled the vocabulary exercises in only a few minutes. When observing this class, it seems that most students concentrated on vocabulary learning; however, the reduplication of using vocabulary exercises sometimes made students bored.

Teacher 2 often adopted the matching task with new words being matched with definitions or pictures as a strategy to deduce the meaning of new words. Subsequently, she verified and provided the explicit definitions of the identified words. This teacher usually sufficed with the vocabulary exercises in the course book. For instance, in an activity, she asked her students to guess and match the meanings of the highlighted words and then listened to check the answers. In another lesson, however, the teacher did a storytelling activity that was not included in the course book. She showed a picture of a man walking on a road and asked the students to come up with and write a short story related to the picture. She also did not give extra words related to the highlighted vocabulary in the course book. What is clear from the second teacher is that she resorted to a variety of vocabulary teaching methods. This explains why most of her students were very motivated to learn and the class atmosphere, as observed, was vibrant in her vocabulary lesson. Thanks to the flexibility of designing vocabulary exercises, the students became more active. However, certain extra words taught during the class period were quite difficult, which caused confusion amongst many students, not to mention the fact that some students did not concentrate on studying.

Teacher 3 used quiz game websites such as Blooket, Quizzes, Kahoot or crosswords to engage students in guessing the meanings of new words. After that, she introduced new vocabulary using explaining the meaning in the first language, following the GTM. Sometimes, she adopted the TBLT techniques in teaching vocabulary by giving students handouts with tasks relating to vocabulary acquisition. Next, she asked students to listen to tapes to

tick the words that they hear. After showing the right answers, she had her students match new words with definitions. Finally, she showed vocabulary and required students to note down in their notebooks and repeated. It is Teacher 3 who designed a crossword puzzle related to the topic “ASIAN and Vietnam”, and who gave students handouts about definitions to guess new words and find the key terms or terminologies. Finally, she wrote new words with Vietnamese equivalents on the board and read aloud. Students listened and repeated.

As can be observed, Teacher 3 frequently assigned all vocabulary exercises in the course book as homework and expected her students to study the words by themselves and practiced the vocabulary in the classroom. She sometimes gave extra words as synonyms or asked the students to give examples of similar words like “variety” and “diversity”. In the classes of Teacher 3, most students were active and dynamic during the lessons, especially in the vocabulary learning session as they were awarded good marks. However, some students said that they felt bored because the teacher overused such game websites like Blooket or Quizzes in her vocabulary lessons.

From the collected data, we can see some similarities between teachers’ beliefs and their practices (Tables 2 and 3). First, all the teachers believed that they had the main role in explaining the vocabulary rules and they did that often in their instruction. Second, they provided students with vocabulary homework and tests. The difference recognised between the teachers’ beliefs and practices is that although they think that vocabulary teaching should be conducted after communicative tasks and formal vocabulary teaching is useless, most of them teach vocabulary before communicative tasks and seem to focus on explicit vocabulary teaching. In addition, the teacher participants’ classroom practices, as suggested by Hunt and Beglar, should be according to the principles [11]. Teachers provide opportunities for incidental learning of vocabulary by assigning short story books to students and they also provide opportunities for intentional learning through the vocabulary practices in the course book. The textbook has the most common word list, and the teachers diagnose which words learners need to study. During their lessons, most participants give the students the chance to elaborate on a word’s meaning using their own words. Students also experiment with guessing from the context before each reading task. In addition, most of the teachers present large vocabulary to the students so that they can successfully use a second language. Therefore, the teachers set high vocabulary targets. Finally, by providing the students with extra online materials, the teachers make sure that their students could maximize their engagement with the use of lexical items.

From the data gathered by means of questionnaires, we can see that the teachers want to have effective ways to encourage students’ vocabulary retention. They are willing to update and acknowledge new methods to create exciting lessons. When it comes to beliefs on the survey, teachers agree that creating an exciting atmosphere for students to practice communication and improving their self-

confidence and independent learning are keys to their teaching vocabulary. This explains why they have adopted a variety of methods in teaching vocabulary. Results from questionnaires and observations also show that most surveyed teachers teach vocabulary at pre-stage of the lessons for the belief that students are equipped with sufficient vocabulary to practice during the lessons. The three main types of practice include using pictures, matching the words with the definitions and game-based teaching. Interestingly, amongst the observed teachers, the elder ones tend to use pictures and the exercise of matching the words with the definitions whereas the younger ones often adopt gamification or animation. Clearly, adopting the communicative approach is the most important aim adhered by the teachers, and thus they often have students make dialogues or sentences with the learnt words. In addition, as for the teachers, role-play helps them to retain the interest and attention of the learners and encourages them to actively engage in classroom activities.

As such, there is a positive correlation between teachers' own beliefs and their classroom practices in vocabulary teaching. However, due to some constraints ranging from using time for mini exams, characteristics of classes, the teachers have shown certain mismatches between their beliefs and what comes in their instruction. This means, it is not realistic to expect all the beliefs held by the teachers to be reflected in their classroom practices. Interestingly, some similarities and differences can be recorded amongst individual EFL teachers regarding how they perceived and delivered vocabulary instruction. Indeed, all the teachers agreed upon the adoption of flexible vocabulary teaching methods based on the topic of the units. They were all inclined to blend flexibly the three methods: TBLT, GBL, and GTM in their vocabulary instruction. Also, they encouraged pair or group discussion on the topics before introducing new vocabulary. When it comes to differences, although the teachers agree that they should present vocabulary to learners before expecting them to use it, they let students match new words with pictures or definitions before presenting vocabulary. Other disagreements can be seen in the way they adhere to formal vocabulary presentation as prompts that assist students in their communicative practice of language production.

## 5. Conclusions

This study looks at the relationship between EFL teachers' beliefs and their practices of vocabulary teaching to 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders at Phan Chau Trinh High School in Danang City. From the triangulated data collected via questionnaire, interview and classroom observation, the study indicates that the teachers give great importance to vocabulary teaching and that they show their expectations in broadening their students' repertoire of vocabulary.

While it is expected that teachers' beliefs and practices

of vocabulary teaching are often aligned with each other, there are some constraints such as time, examinations, and curriculum that can become obstacles for teachers. What has been proved true is that it is the teachers' beliefs that shape their practices in the classroom, and in this case, the instruction of vocabulary. One little change in their beliefs can directly affect their classroom practices. Therefore, it is vital for teachers to stay up to date regarding teaching approaches to implement the best practices in the classroom when it comes to teaching vocabulary.

As an exploratory study, this investigation calls for more extensive research on teacher beliefs and practices that would include classroom observations, questionnaires, and interviews to deepen our understanding of teachers' professed beliefs and enacted practices. The findings of this study might suggest tailoring vocabulary teaching methods to meet the specific needs and characteristics of English learners at the upper-secondary level of education. The findings also necessitate the development of guidelines to assist teachers in the selection of textbooks that include sufficient and relevant vocabulary instructional suggestions. The reported practices might also indicate also a need for more emphasis on innovative vocabulary instruction in teacher preparation programs.

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