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The Application of Semiotic Analysis in English Language Learning at Vocational High Schools for Health: A Case Study in a Small Class with 10 Students

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Abstrak

Artikel ini memiliki tujuan memberikan pandangan tentang penerapan semiotik analis dalam mata pelajaran Bahasa inggris di SMK Kesehatan yang menggunakan studi kasus 10 orang peserta didik. Fokus penelitian diarahkan pada penggunaan tanda-tanda visual dan verbal, seperti gambar instruksional, simbol medis, dan teks prosedural berbahasa Inggris, dalam pembelajaran prosedur medis dasar, yaitu pengukuran tekanan darah dan pemasangan infus. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi langsung terhadap aktivitas pembelajaran, analisis bahan ajar, serta wawancara dengan siswa untuk menggali pemahaman dan pengalaman mereka dalam memaknai materi pembelajaran. Hasil penelitian memberikan hasil bahwa gambar, simbol, dan teks instruksional berfungsi sebagai tanda semiotik yang efektif dalam membantu siswa memahami prosedur medis yang kompleks. Tanda-tanda tersebut tidak hanya mempermudah pemahaman konsep dan langkah-langkah medis, tetapi juga menghubungkan pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris dengan praktik profesional di bidang kesehatan. Selain itu, pembelajaran berbasis semiotik turut berkontribusi dalam membentuk identitas profesional siswa sebagai calon tenaga kesehatan.

Kata kunci: Semiotik, Pembelajaran, Bahasa Inggris, Kelas Kecil

Abstract

This article aims to provide insight into the application of semiotic analysis in English language courses at a health vocational school using a case study of 10 students. The research focuses on the use of visual and verbal signs, such as instructional pictures, medical symbols, and English procedural texts, in teaching basic medical procedures, namely blood pressure measurement and IV drip insertion. This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through direct observation of learning activities, analysis of teaching materials, and interviews with students to explore their understanding and experiences in interpreting the learning material. The results show that images, symbols, and instructional texts function as effective semiotic signs in helping students understand complex medical procedures. These signs not only facilitate understanding of medical concepts and steps but also connect English learning with professional practice in the health sector. In addition, semiotic-based learning contributes to shaping students' professional identities as future health workers.

***Keywords**: Semiotics, Learning, English, Small Classes.*

Introduction

English language learning in schools encompasses a wide range of material that students must master, particularly for vocational high school students specializing in the health sector. In this context, English learning is not solely focused on vocabulary mastery or memorization of terms, but also emphasizes contextual understanding and the ability to apply the language in real-world situations. Students are required to be able to use English actively and functionally according to the needs of the medical world, both in hospital settings and in healthcare practices outside of formal medical facilities.

English language proficiency is a crucial aspect in the healthcare sector because most medical terminology, scientific literature, medical device instructions, and standard operating procedures often use English terms or borrowed terms from foreign languages. English learning in vocational health schools is aimed at ensuring students not only understand the meaning of medical terms but also use them appropriately in professional communication, such as when reading medical records, understanding device instructions, communicating with foreign healthcare professionals, and providing services to international patients.

The application of English in the medical world can be understood through the introduction and use of various foreign medical terms commonly used in everyday healthcare practice. Contextual and practice-based learning is key to enabling students to connect English language materials with the needs of the healthcare profession, so that their language competencies truly support their readiness to face the world of work in the medical field. One approach that can be used to analyze learning materials is through semiotic analysis. In this learning process, students not only learn medical terms verbally, but also interact with medical symbols, anatomical images, and instructional texts that shape their understanding of medical procedures.

This article will apply semiotic analysis to explore how images, symbols, and texts in learning materials can help students understand and master new medical concepts they have learned, such as measuring blood pressure and inserting an IV.

Semiotic analysis is a useful tool for understanding how visual and verbal signs function in shaping students' understanding. In this context, anatomical images, medical symbols, and medical terms in learning texts can be analyzed to explore how they shape meaning and help students understand complex learning materials.This article aims to apply semiotics theory in analyzing English learning materials in a vocational school of health with a small class of 10 students. Interpreting the implicit messages in journalistic photos requires the ability to understand and interpret the meanings contained in the various visual signs present. This interpretive process is known as semiotics. The study of semiotics was first popularized by Ferdinand de Saussure. According to Saussure, as quoted in Wijaya (2014), the term semiotics comes from the Greek sēmeion, meaning sign, while in the French tradition it is known as la sémiologie. Semiotics, or semiology, is a scientific discipline that studies the function and role of signs in human social life.

Semiotics is essentially the process of assigning meaning to signs or messages, including visual signs contained in a photograph (Hoed, 2014: 5). Humans use symbols as a means to express ideas, ideology, culture, identity, and as a tool for understanding their environment and ecosystem. Based on this understanding, a branch of science specifically studying signs and symbols developed, known as semiotics (Ilmi & Islam, 2021). According to Charles Sanders Peirce, a sign is something that can be perceived through the senses, refers to a specific object, and is capable of representing the relationship between the sign and its recipient, resulting in an interpretation process (Ambarini & Umaya, 2010). Semiotics is the study of signs and how they produce meaning. Ferdinand de Saussure, in his theory, revealed that signs consist of two elements: the signifier and the signified. The signifier is the physical form of the sign, such as an image or word, while the signified is the meaning contained in the sign.

In the context of medical learning at the Health Vocational School, medical symbols, procedural images, and instructional texts act as signifiers that shape students' understanding of these medical concepts. Using Roland Barthes' theory, we can examine how symbols or images in medical learning not only carry literal meanings

but also deeper values about the medical profession and medical procedures themselves.

Reseacrh Question

Based on the background above, the problem formulation in this research is as follows:

1. How do medical images and symbols function as visual cues in helping students understand medical procedures in English language learning at Vocational High Schools in Health?

2. How do English instructional texts serve as verbal cues in building students' understanding of medical procedural terms and steps?

3. How does the use of visual and verbal cues in English language learning materials shape students' understanding and professional identity as future healthcare workers?

Research Objectives

The objectives of this research are:

1. To explain the function of medical images and symbols as visual cues to help students understand medical procedures in English language learning at Vocational High Schools in Health?

2. To explain how English instructional texts serve as verbal cues in building students' understanding of medical procedure terms and steps.

3. To explain how the use of visual and verbal cues in English language learning materials shapes students' understanding and professional identity as future healthcare workers.

Benefits of the Research

This research is expected to provide the following benefits:

Teoritis Benefits: This research is expected to contribute to the development of semiotic studies in English language education, particularly in English language learning in Vocational High Schools for Health. The results can be used as a new reference for understanding the function of visual and verbal signs in constructing meaning and understanding students' understanding of medical procedures.

Practical Benefits

For School Teachers, This research is expected to serve as a reference source for teachers, particularly English teachers in health vocational high schools, in understanding the role of visual and verbal signs through a semiotic approach in the learning process. The results can assist teachers in designing more contextual teaching materials by effectively utilizing images, medical symbols, and instructional texts to enhance students' understanding of English-language medical terms and procedures. Furthermore, this research can encourage teachers to develop more communicative and meaningful learning strategies in accordance with the characteristics of vocational learning.

For Researchers, this research is expected to provide theoretical and methodological contributions to semiotic studies, particularly in the context of English language learning in health vocational education. The findings of this study can serve as a reference for future research examining the use of visual and verbal signs in language learning, both in the health field and other areas of expertise. Furthermore, this study can open up opportunities for further research with a more in-depth approach or using a different semiotic perspective..

Method

Research Type
This research uses a qualitative approach using a case study at a Health Vocational High School (SMKS Kesehatan). The qualitative approach was chosen because this research aims to deeply understand the process of interpreting visual and verbal signs in English learning at the vocational high school. The case study design was used to rigorously analyze the application of semiotic analysis in a small class context, allowing the researcher to obtain a comprehensive picture of the phenomenon under study.

Time and Place of the Research

This research was conducted in the even semester of the current academic year at a Health Vocational High School (SMKS Kesehatan). The study was conducted in 10th-grade English classes. The selection of the research location was based on its relationship to the research focus, namely English learning related to medical procedures in a health vocational education environment.

Research Target and Subjects

The target of this research is the English learning process that utilizes visual and verbal signs in conveying medical procedures. The research subjects consisted of 10 10th-grade students at the vocational high school (SMKS Kesehatan) who were participating in English learning in small classes. Subjects were selected using a purposive sampling technique, taking into account students' direct involvement in learning medical procedures and the intensity of their interaction with learning media in the form of images, symbols, and instructional text.

Research Procedure

The research procedure was carried out in stages and systematically. The initial stage began with preparation, namely determining the research focus, selecting classes and research subjects, and collecting learning materials used in the teaching and learning process. The next stage was conducting the research in the field through observation of English language lessons covering two medical procedures: blood pressure measurement and IV insertion. At this stage, the researcher directly observed student activities and the use of visual and verbal cues in the lessons. The final stage was collecting additional data through interviews and analysis of the learning materials, which was then followed by the data analysis process.

Research Data and Instruments

The data in this study were qualitative, covering classroom learning activities, the use of medical images and symbols, English instructional texts, and students' opinions and experiences regarding the use of these media. The research instruments used included observation sheets to record learning activities, interview guidelines to explore students' understanding and experiences, and documentation lists to analyze learning materials such as textbooks and instructional images.

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection was conducted using three main techniques. First, direct observation of the English language learning process in the classroom to observe how students interact with visual and verbal signs during the learning of medical procedures. Second, document analysis was conducted on the learning materials used, such as textbooks, images of medical procedures, and medical equipment symbols. Third, interviews were conducted with several students to gain a deeper understanding of their learning experiences and how they interpret the use of images, symbols, and text in learning English.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted using descriptive-analytical techniques. Data obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation were first classified according to the research focus. Then, the data were analyzed using a semiotic perspective to identify and interpret the visual and verbal signs that emerged during the learning process. The analysis process was directed at understanding the relationship between sign use, the learning context, and students' understanding of English-language medical procedures. The results of the analysis were then interpreted to answer the research questions and objectives comprehensively.).

Result and Discussion

Use of Images and Symbols in Teaching Blood Pressure Measurement.

Blood pressure measurement is a fundamental medical skill that plays a crucial role in healthcare, as it is one of the main indicators for assessing a patient's physiological condition. Therefore, mastery of this skill should be provided early to students in Vocational High Schools (SMKs) as part of their preparation for entering the workforce. In the context of English language learning, an introduction to blood pressure measurement not only focuses on understanding the term "blood pressure" but also includes an introduction to the sphygmomanometer and stethoscope, as well as

the correct and sequential procedures for their use. This type of learning aims to integrate language acquisition with practical medical skills.

Process diagrams depicting the stages of blood pressure measurement are used as learning media to help students understand the procedure visually and systematically. These visualizations clearly demonstrate the sequence of steps, from applying the cuff to the patient's arm, to positioning the stethoscope, and finally, to reading the blood pressure reading. Through these visual representations, students can follow the procedure more easily than relying solely on verbal explanations or written text. This is especially important for vocational students, whose learning emphasizes the link between theory and practice.

Images 1. Small Class Practice

A semiotic perspective explains that the use of images of the blood pressure measurement process has a deeper meaning than simply supporting illustrations. These images function as visual markers that carry specific meaning and represent actual medical practice. Each visual element, such as the position of the cuff around the arm, the direction of the moving needle, and the use of a stethoscope to listen to the pulse, are signs that directly refer to specific clinical actions. These signs help students develop a more concrete understanding of medical procedures, while also linking what they see to English terms and instructions.

The symbols for the sphygmomanometer and stethoscope can be categorized as iconic signs because they bear a direct resemblance to the objects they represent. The presence of these symbols in learning materials helps students recognize and remember the functions of medical equipment more effectively. Furthermore, these symbols also carry professional meanings that connect students to the world of work in the healthcare sector. By learning and understanding these symbols, students not only learn English but also begin to develop a sense of their professional identity as future healthcare professionals.

In an experiment with a class of 10 children, the use of instructional images provided a wider space for interaction and in-depth discussion. Teachers can invite students to observe each stage shown in the images and then relate them to medical terms in English. Students also have the opportunity to ask questions, discuss the functions of equipment, and practice using medical terms directly in real-life contexts. This kind of interaction creates a more active and participatory learning environment, thus optimizing comprehension.

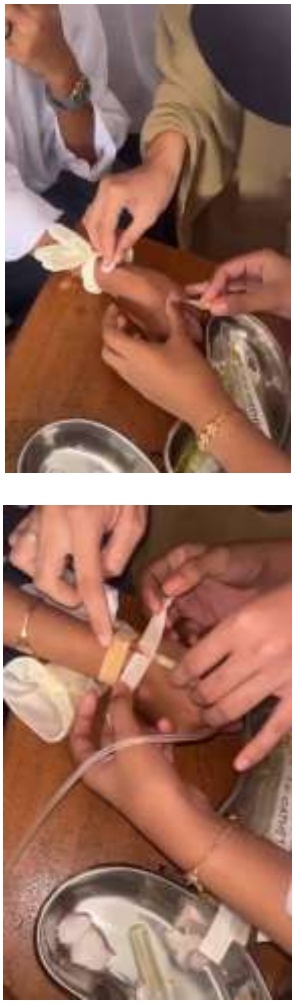
Images 2. Blood Pressure

Discussions taking place in small classes allow students to understand how medical language is used coherently and systematically to explain procedures. Students not only memorize terms but also learn how to structure procedural explanations in English with the correct sequence and clear meaning. Through this process, English is understood as a professional communication tool that functions to explain medical procedures accurately and responsibly. In light of this, instructional images in blood pressure measurement lessons serve not only as supporting visual aids but also as important semiotic tools. They help students understand the relationship between language, signs, and medical practice in an integrated manner. This approach makes English learning in Health Vocational High Schools more contextual, meaningful, and relevant to the needs of the

workplace, while also supporting the development of students' linguistic and professional competencies in the health sector.

Symbols and Images in Learning How to Insert an IV

Intravenous infusion is a crucial medical procedure introduced to tenth-grade students at Health Vocational High Schools as part of their basic health skills course. In English, this material emphasizes not only mastery of medical vocabulary but also understanding the correct IV procedure according to medical standards. Students learn how to administer an IV to a patient, observing proper technique, a systematic sequence of steps, and the use of appropriate medical equipment.



Images 3. Infusion Practice

The image depicts a live medical procedure being performed by students, likely within the context of a health vocational high school. One student's hand is seen holding or preparing an arm, while another student observes or assists with the process. This situation suggests a hands-on learning activity that emphasizes basic medical skills, such as blood pressure measurement or preparation for minor medical procedures, typically taught in the early stages of health education.

From a semiotic perspective, this image not only captures physical activity but also represents a sign system rich in meaning. The hand holding the patient's arm serves as a signifier of professional medical action, while the resulting meaning (the signified) is the concept of care, thoroughness, and responsibility in healthcare practice. The hand position, the use of cotton or medical instruments, and the student's focus of attention serve as visual cues representing a correct and standardized medical procedure.

The images included in the learning materials play a crucial role in explaining the stages of the IV procedure. These visualizations demonstrate the steps involved, from selecting the appropriate IV needle, determining the location of the insertion in the vein, inserting the needle, and ensuring the smooth flow of IV fluids. Another perspective suggests that various medical symbols, such as images of IV needles, tubes, and IV fluid bags, are used to clarify instructions, enabling students to understand each stage of the procedure more concretely.

Based on semiotic analysis, these medical images and symbols serve as visual markers that assist students in interpreting relatively complex medical procedures. These visual signs not only represent medical tools and procedures but also convey professional meanings related to clinical practice in the healthcare world. Through these images and symbols, students can associate the tools and stages of the IV procedure with English medical terms, such as IV needle, infusion fluid, and insertion site. Thus, the use of visual media in English learning not only facilitates understanding of medical procedures but also strengthens the connection between language, signs, and the medical practices they will encounter in the workplace.

Instructional Texts in English

English language learning materials in Vocational High Schools for Health clearly demonstrate the crucial role of instructional texts in explaining various medical procedures to students. These texts are written in English and specifically designed to support students'

understanding of the basic medical practices they will encounter in the workplace. These instructional texts contain various technical medical terms with specific meanings, making understanding these terms essential for students to follow and carry out medical procedures correctly. Some examples of terms frequently used in learning materials include blood pressure, systolic blood pressure, diastolic blood pressure, and infusion, which are used to describe blood pressure measurement and IV administration.

The use of instructional texts in English not only aims to improve students' language skills but also to familiarize them with professional medical discourse. In the medical world, English serves as a working language used to explain medical procedures in a systematic and standardized manner. Instructional texts are typically structured in the form of commands or procedural sentences, such as "place the cuff around the patient's arm" or "ensure the infusion fluid flows properly." This language structure reflects the characteristics of medical communication, which emphasizes clarity, precision, and a logical sequence of steps.

A semiotic perspective explains that instructional texts can be understood as a collection of verbal signs that convey meaning beyond mere literal information. Each medical term functions as a sign referring to a specific concept, action, or condition in medical practice. For example, the terms systolic and diastolic not only indicate blood pressure readings but also represent specific physiological conditions in the human circulatory system. In this light, instructional texts build students' understanding of medical procedures through the relationship between linguistic signs, the objects they refer to, and the context in which they are used.

A semiotic analysis of instructional texts shows that the language structure used helps shape students' understanding of medical procedures. Sentences arranged sequentially reflect a systematic flow of actions. This helps students understand that medical procedures cannot be performed randomly but must follow predetermined stages. In other words, the structure of instructional texts functions as sequential signs that guide students in performing medical procedures correctly. The use of medical terms in English also has a symbolic function. These terms serve as symbols of professionalism and identity within the medical world. When students learn and use terms like infusion, blood pressure, or IV fluid, they are indirectly introduced to the culture and communication practices of healthcare professionals. Through this process, language is understood not only as a communication tool but also as a means of shaping students' professional identities as future healthcare professionals.

In the context of a pilot class, the use of instructional texts in English becomes more effective because it allows for intensive interaction between teacher and students. Teachers can explain the meaning of medical terms in more detail, provide examples of their use in practical contexts, and directly correct students' understanding. Students also have more space to ask questions and discuss the meaning of terms or instructions they don't understand. This kind of interaction strengthens the process of interpreting the verbal signs contained in the instructional text.

Through learning in a pilot class, students can more easily connect instructional texts with direct medical practice. When students read or hear instructions in English, they not only imagine the procedure abstractly but can also immediately put it into practice with the aid of available medical equipment and visual media. This process strengthens the connection between verbal signs (instructional text), visual signs (medical images and symbols), and concrete actions (medical practice). From a semiotic perspective, this relationship demonstrates a holistic process of meaning-making, where various types of signs complement each other to build student understanding. Semiotic analysis also shows that students' understanding of instructional texts is inseparable from the social and educational context in which the learning takes place. In Health Vocational Schools, instructional texts are understood not merely as academic texts, but as practical guides that have direct implications for the safety and quality of health services. Seeing this, students tend to pay greater attention to the meaning of terms and instructions contained in the text, because they recognize their relevance to real-world practices.

Medical Discourse and English Language Learning

By learning medical procedures such as blood pressure measurement and IV drip insertion, students not only gain knowledge of English vocabulary and structure related to the

health sector but also learn how to communicate effectively and competently in a medical context. In this learning process, English serves as a means of communication, used to explain medical procedures, convey instructions, and describe patient conditions clearly and systematically. This further emphasizes that language learning does not stand alone but is integrated with professional practice, which demands accuracy, clarity, and responsibility.

Mastery of medical English is a crucial aspect for students of Health Vocational High Schools (SHSs) as they prepare to enter the workforce, which demands professional communication skills. In the context of healthcare, medical personnel interact not only with patients but also with fellow healthcare workers, both within the same institution and across professions. Therefore, the ability to use appropriate medical language is part of a mandatory professional competency. By learning medical procedures in English, students begin to develop an awareness of their role as future medical professionals, expected to communicate effectively and ethically in various clinical situations.

Images 4. Semiotic practice by doctors

A semiotic perspective provides a new perspective, understanding this learning process as a process of constructing meaning and identity through the use of verbal and visual signs. Medical symbols, technical terms, and instructional texts in English serve as signs that represent the medical world and professional practice within it. When students learn and use these signs, they not only understand their linguistic meaning but also relate them to the values, norms, and culture inherent in the medical profession. In other words, the signs in learning act as a bridge connecting students to the realities of the medical world.

Semiotic analysis helps reveal how English language learning materials can immerse students in the discourse of healthcare professionals. The texts and symbols used in learning not only convey information but also shape students' perspectives on the medical profession as a field with specific communication standards. Through this understanding, students learn that medical language cannot be used haphazardly but must be adapted to the context, purpose, and parties involved in the communication, whether patients or medical colleagues.

In English language learning in healthcare schools, learning English associated with medical procedures contributes to the formation of students' professional identities from an early age. Students begin to position themselves as part of the medical community, which has its own language, symbols, and ways of communicating. This process demonstrates that English language learning is not solely oriented toward mastering linguistic skills, but also toward developing professional attitudes and an understanding of the work culture in the healthcare sector.

In view of this, through a semiotic approach, English language learning in Health Vocational Schools can be understood as a holistic process. This learning not only teaches language skills but also introduces students to the broader medical culture, including the values of professionalism, responsibility, and communication ethics in healthcare. This approach makes English learning more meaningful and relevant to the needs of the workplace, while also supporting students' readiness as future medical professionals who are linguistically and professionally competent.

Conclusion

From the discussion above, it can be concluded that the application of semiotic analysis in English language learning at Health Vocational High Schools demonstrates that images, symbols, and instructional texts play a significant role in helping students understand medical procedures, such as blood pressure measurement and IV drip insertion. These visual

and verbal signs serve as means of meaning, facilitating students' understanding of complex medical concepts and connecting language learning materials to real-life medical practice.

Through a semiotic perspective, it can be understood that medical symbols and English terms not only convey technical information but also shape how students interpret the medical world and their roles within it. This learning process contributes to the formation of students' professional identities as prospective healthcare workers, who are required to use medical language appropriately and responsibly in the context of healthcare services. English, in this case, is not simply a subject but also part of a professional competency that must be mastered.

In the context of the pilot class, the application of semiotic analysis allows for more intensive, dialogic, and focused learning interactions. This provides space for students to discuss, ask questions, and directly relate visual and verbal signs to medical practice. These interactions strengthened students' understanding of the use of medical English and its application in real-world healthcare situations.

Therefore, this study can be viewed holistically, confirming that semiotic analysis has been proven to improve the quality of students' learning experiences by bridging the gap between language skills and practical medical knowledge. This approach makes English learning more contextual, meaningful, and relevant to the needs of the workplace, and prepares students for their future professional roles in the healthcare sector.

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