English Vocabulary Mastery Profile of STIS Harsy Central Lombok Students

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi profil penguasaan kosakata bahasa Inggris mahasiswa semester lima di Program Studi Hukum Keluarga di STIS Harsy, Lombok Tengah. Tujuan utamanya adalah untuk mengidentifikasi tingkat penguasaan kosakata mahasiswa, karena kosakata merupakan fondasi utama untuk keterampilan bahasa yang produktif. Dengan menggunakan metode penelitian deskriptif, penelitian ini mengevaluasi keterampilan kosakata semua mahasiswa dalam kelompok tertentu melalui tes penguasaan kosakata pilihan ganda. Hasil penelitian mengkategorikan penguasaan kosakata mahasiswa menjadi tiga tingkat: "Tidak Baik" (43,33%), "Buruk" (30,00%), dan "Baik" (26,67%). Sebagian besar mahasiswa dalam kategori "Tidak Baik" menyoroti perlunya intervensi instruksional untuk meningkatkan pengetahuan kosakata, yang penting untuk komunikasi yang efektif dalam lingkungan akademis. Kesimpulan menunjukkan bahwa metode pengajaran yang terarah, termasuk instruksi eksplisit, pembelajaran kooperatif, dan perangkat digital, direkomendasikan untuk mengatasi kekurangan kosakata. Menerapkan strategi ini dapat mendorong perolehan kosakata secara mandiri dan meningkatkan keterampilan bahasa secara keseluruhan, sehingga memungkinkan mahasiswa untuk berpartisipasi lebih aktif dalam konteks akademis.
Keyword: Penguasaan Kosakata; Kemampuan Bahasa Inggris; Studi Deskriptif; Strategi Pembelajaran; Akuisisi Bahasa

ABSTRACT

This study explores the English vocabulary mastery profile of fifth-semester students in the Family Law Program at STIS Harsy, Central Lombok. The primary objective is to identify students' vocabulary proficiency levels, as vocabulary is a key foundation for productive language skills. Using a descriptive research method, the study evaluates the vocabulary skills of all students within the specified group through a multiple-choice vocabulary mastery test. Results categorize student vocabulary proficiency into three levels: "Not Good" (43.33%), "Poor" (30.00%), and "Good" (26.67%). The significant portion of students in the "Not Good" category highlights the need for instructional interventions to enhance vocabulary knowledge, essential for effective communication in academic settings. Conclusions indicate that targeted teaching methods, including explicit instruction, cooperative learning, and digital tools, are recommended to address vocabulary deficiencies. Implementing these strategies can foster independent vocabulary acquisition and improve overall language skills, enabling students to participate more actively in academic contexts.
Keyword*: Vocabulary Mastery; English Proficiency; Descriptive Study; Instructional Strategies; Language Acquisition

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1.   INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary mastery is essential in learning English, serving as a foundational component for effective communication and comprehension across all language skills listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Without

sufficient vocabulary, students struggle to form sentences that convey their intended ideas. The research problem centers on the limited vocabulary skills among students learning English as a foreign language. Many students face difficulties in understanding and using English vocabulary effectively, whether in academic settings or casual conversation. This issue indicates that although students may have studied grammar and sentence structure, they still feel constrained in expressing complex and nuanced ideas.

This limited vocabulary negatively impacts students' productive language skills, such as speaking and writing. A lack of vocabulary proficiency restricts their ability to articulate ideas accurately and also hinders their comprehension when reading texts or listening to conversations in English. Prior research shows that strong vocabulary knowledge correlates highly with academic success and overall language proficiency (Nguyen, 2023; Wei, 2021). This underscores the necessity of vocabulary as a central element within language curricula.

Recent studies further reveal that effective vocabulary learning strategies can significantly enhance language learning outcomes, equipping students with tools to engage with complex texts and participate in meaningful dialogues (Tsamratulaeni, 2023; Wei, 2021; Zainal, 2023). Additionally, suitable vocabulary learning strategies allow students to adopt methods tailored to their learning styles, thereby improving motivation and overall language acquisition success (Alahmad, 2020).

In modern language learning, innovative methods such as digital applications, language-learning platforms, and mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) tools have been increasingly adopted to facilitate vocabulary acquisition. These technologies often include gamification elements, which can boost students' motivation and engagement in learning vocabulary (Ludwig, 2018; Quyen, 2022; Zainal, 2023). Social media, too, plays a crucial role, exposing students to authentic language use and enriching their vocabulary through contextualized language encounters (Arumugam et al., 2022; Wannas & Hassan, 2023)

Approaches like storytelling have also proven effective for vocabulary instruction, as they create memorable contexts that aid in the retention and understanding of new words (Amalia, 2018; Margarita del Socorro Centeno Centeno et al., 2021). Additionally, multimedia resources such as videos and music offer visual and auditory stimuli that enhance vocabulary acquisition, making the learning process more comprehensive (Anggaira et al., 2022).

Furthermore, vocabulary mastery goes beyond mere recognition of words and involves understanding their contextual applications. This pragmatic aspect is crucial for developing communicative competence, as learners must be able to select and apply words that convey intended meanings accurately within specific contexts (I Gusti Ngurah Bagus Yoga Widiadnya, 2023; Pornpongtechavanich et al., 2021; Vedadi et al., 2018).

This research contributes to the literature by emphasizing the importance of vocabulary mastery as a foundation for productive language skills within the context of foreign language education at the tertiary level. While prior studies have explored vocabulary teaching methods or general language learning strategies, there remains a gap in the literature regarding the direct relationship between vocabulary knowledge and students' productive language skills within academic settings. This study aims to fill this gap, offering valuable insights for curriculum development and English teaching methodologies.

The purpose of this research is to identify the challenges students face in mastering English vocabulary and to develop effective strategies to support vocabulary acquisition. Additionally, this study aims to examine the extent to which vocabulary mastery influences productive language skills, particularly in speaking and writing. By gaining a deeper understanding of the factors affecting vocabulary acquisition, this study seeks to provide guidance for English instructors in designing more efficient and targeted learning approaches.

Overall, vocabulary is a crucial component of language proficiency for students. Limited vocabulary impedes language learning, making it more challenging and slowing progress in foreign language mastery. This research intends to deepen understanding of effective vocabulary learning strategies, incorporating technology-based and collaborative approaches. By employing innovative teaching methods such as digital tools, storytelling, and collaborative learning practices, students are expected to develop a more independent vocabulary acquisition process, enhancing their English language use in various communicative contexts.

With improved vocabulary skills, students are expected to develop stronger language abilities in speaking, reading, writing, and listening, preparing them to actively participate in academic and professional environments where English is the primary language.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

Based on the research problem, the appropriate method to apply is the descriptive method. Nawawi (1991:63) defines "the descriptive method as a problem-solving procedure that investigates by describing or illustrating the condition or object of research (individuals, institutions, society, etc.) in the present time based on observable facts as they are." In this method, the research does not aim to test hypotheses, explain variable relationships, or make predictions; rather, it focuses on presenting factual data.

The descriptive method was selected because this study aims to provide an overview of the vocabulary proficiency of fifth-semester students in the Family Law Program at STIS HARSY in Central Lombok. This approach allows the researcher to accurately describe the level of vocabulary mastery among students, which is essential for supporting their language skills in an academic context.

The research population consists of all fifth-semester students in the Family Law Program, grouped in a single class. This approach aligns with (Arikunto, 2011) recommendation that, if there are 30 or more students, it is better to include the entire population in the study, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of the population's characteristics.

To gather data on the students' vocabulary proficiency, the data collection instrument used in this study is a vocabulary mastery test. This test is designed as an objective multiple-choice format with 20 questions to specifically measure students' vocabulary skills.

3.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research findings indicate that the vocabulary mastery levels of fifth-semester students in the Family Law Program at STIS HARSY, Central Lombok, are distributed across three categories: "Not Good," "Poor," and "Good," with respective percentages of 43.33%, 30.00%, and 26.67%. This distribution reveals that a significant portion of students fall into the "Not Good" category, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to improve vocabulary skills. The data analysis, as presented in Figure 1, emphasizes the overall challenges in vocabulary proficiency among these students, underscoring the importance of enhanced instructional strategies to address this educational gap.
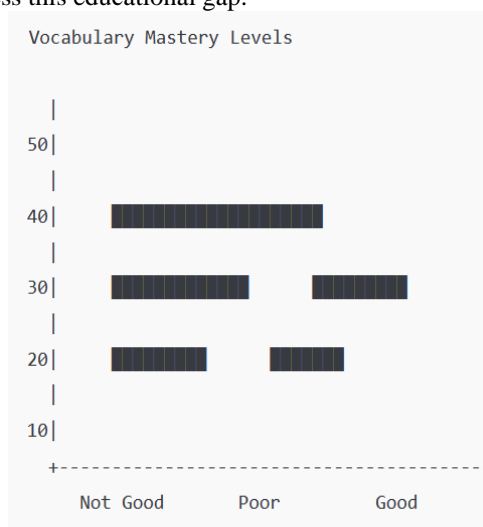

Figure 1. Vocabulary Mastery Level

The data on vocabulary mastery levels among students reveals distinct variations in proficiency, as captured in a clustered column chart format. The chart categorizes students' vocabulary mastery into three levels: "Not Good," "Poor," and "Good," with the respective percentages being 43.33%, 30.00%, and 26.67%. This chart provides a clear visual comparison of students' vocabulary skills across the three proficiency levels, highlighting notable differences in performance. The "Not Good" category stands out with the highest proportion, indicating that 43.33% of the students struggle significantly with vocabulary, thus facing limitations in foundational language skills that likely impact their overall proficiency and ability to express ideas effectively. This category is represented by a tall, prominent column, emphasizing the sizable portion of students in this level.

The "Poor" category, representing 30.00% of the students, illustrates a slightly better but still limited level of vocabulary knowledge. This column is shorter than the "Not Good" category but still prominent, indicating a need for further vocabulary development. Lastly, the "Good" category, the smallest segment at 26.67%, signifies the group of students with adequate vocabulary skills. This group's smaller representation is depicted by the shortest column, underscoring that only a quarter of the students have reached a satisfactory vocabulary mastery level.

The clustered column chart uses distinct colors for each category, such as red for "Not Good," yellow for "Poor," and green for "Good," making it easier to differentiate and interpret the data. This visual analysis underscores the urgent need for targeted vocabulary interventions to support the majority of students struggling with vocabulary. By highlighting these gaps, the chart serves as a compelling tool for educators, helping them prioritize instructional strategies to improve vocabulary proficiency across all levels, especially focusing on those in the "Not Good" and "Poor" categories.

Table 1. Vocabulary Mastery Levels and descriptions

Vocabulary Proficiency Category	Percentage of Students (%)	Proficiency Description
Good	43.33%	Students have adequate vocabulary knowledge for communication in various contexts. Word choice is generally accurate, with a low error rate (3-5%). Usage of synonyms and specific terms is somewhat limited but understandable. Some areas of vocabulary still require improvement.
Poor	30.00%	Students possess only basic and limited vocabulary for specific contexts. Word choice is often inaccurate, with frequent errors (6-10%). Difficulty in using synonyms or technical terms accurately, limiting effective communication.
Not Good	26.67%	Students have very limited vocabulary, making communication challenging. Word choice is often inappropriate for the context (more than 10% error rate). Difficulty in understanding and using basic synonyms or terms, leading to ineffective communication and a need for assistance to improve comprehension.

The analysis of vocabulary proficiency among fifth-semester students in the Family Law Program at STIS HARSY, Central Lombok, reveals notable differences in vocabulary mastery levels. The distribution of students across three categories—"Good" (43.33%), "Poor" (30.00%), and "Not Good" (26.67%)—highlights varying degrees of vocabulary knowledge that have significant implications for effective communication and academic success.

A. *Vocabulary Proficiency Categories and Their Implications*

The "Good" category, representing 43.33% of students, indicates adequate vocabulary knowledge for general communication. Students in this group demonstrate generally accurate word choice and maintain a low error rate (3-5%), though they have limited usage of synonyms and field-specific terms. According to (Binder et al., 2016; Kerimbayeva & Abzhekenova, 2021), vocabulary knowledge contributes directly to reading comprehension and overall language skills. Therefore, students in this category are likely more equipped to navigate complex academic texts, although they could benefit from deeper vocabulary instruction to enhance their usage of synonyms and nuanced terms.

The "Poor" category, comprising 30.00% of students, reflects basic vocabulary skills with frequent inaccuracies (6-10% error rate) and difficulty in selecting appropriate words. Research by (Andriansyah, 2012) suggests that limited vocabulary impedes comprehension and expression, which aligns with the struggles observed in this group. Students with "Poor" vocabulary skills may experience challenges in academic reading and writing, as they lack the linguistic precision needed for specialized contexts. Task-based language learning (TBL) is one approach that can help improve these students' vocabulary. Thanh & Huan (2012) emphasize that TBL can enhance vocabulary retention by engaging students in relevant, context-driven tasks, which may be particularly beneficial for students struggling with application in real-life scenarios.

Lastly, the "Not Good" group, encompassing 26.67% of students, possesses a very limited vocabulary, which impedes effective communication. With an error rate above 10%, students in this category struggle significantly with word selection and basic comprehension. Vocabulary knowledge at this level often requires substantial assistance, particularly as these students are less likely to understand or use synonyms, idiomatic phrases, or technical language accurately. This finding aligns with (Rafique, 2021), who notes that students benefit from cooperative learning, as it allows for collaborative vocabulary practice in a supportive environment. Cooperative strategies could help these students improve by allowing them to learn and practice vocabulary through peer interaction.

B. *Vocabulary Acquisition in Higher Education Contexts*

The importance of vocabulary in higher education is well-established, with studies showing that robust vocabulary skills enable students to engage deeply with course material (Binder et al., 2016; Kerimbayeva & Abzhekenova, 2021). In academic settings, students are often required to understand and use specialized vocabulary within their field of study. The observed variability in proficiency among students suggests a need for targeted vocabulary instruction.

One effective instructional method for vocabulary acquisition is explicit vocabulary teaching, which involves direct explanations of word meanings and usage. According to (Al-Darayseh, 2014), explicit instruction significantly improves students' vocabulary and reading comprehension. Given that over half of the students fall into the "Poor" and "Not Good" categories, explicit instruction on high-frequency academic vocabulary could help bridge the gap in comprehension and application. Furthermore, explicit instruction could be supplemented by mnemonic techniques, as Ghobadi et al. (2016) found these helpful in retaining vocabulary.

C. *Enhancing Vocabulary Retention Through Technology and Interactive Methods*

Technology plays a critical role in vocabulary acquisition today, with digital platforms such as Quizlet and Kahoot providing interactive learning experiences. (Alfuhaid, 2023; Al-Malki, 2020) have shown that

gamified vocabulary learning tools can increase engagement and retention. For students at STIS HARSY, integrating these digital tools into the curriculum could create an engaging and practical way to reinforce vocabulary, especially for those in the "Poor" and "Not Good" categories who may struggle with traditional learning methods. The immediate feedback and interactive nature of these tools allow students to actively engage with vocabulary, making the learning process more dynamic.

Multimedia resources are also valuable in vocabulary instruction, as they cater to diverse learning styles and help reinforce word meanings. (Xu & Tsai, 2021) highlight the effectiveness of multimedia-enhanced teaching in improving vocabulary acquisition. Videos, infographics, and interactive content could expose students to vocabulary in context, aiding comprehension and making learning more relatable.

D. Role of Depth of Vocabulary Knowledge

Depth of vocabulary knowledge is essential for higher-order comprehension and application, especially in higher education. (Binder et al., 2016) emphasize that vocabulary depth understanding word nuances and contextual variations—correlates strongly with reading comprehension. For students in the "Good" category, additional focus on depth could enhance their ability to interpret and engage with complex texts, as they currently show limited use of synonyms and specialized terms. Teaching vocabulary in a way that goes beyond simple definitions, such as through task-based activities and discussions of connotation, could help these students develop a more sophisticated vocabulary repertoire.

Task-based language learning (TBL) is effective for fostering vocabulary depth, as it encourages students to use vocabulary in real-life situations. (Dinh & Hoang, 2022) highlight TBL's impact on vocabulary retention, noting that meaningful tasks deepen understanding. Incorporating TBL into the curriculum could help students apply vocabulary in context, enhancing retention and practical application, especially for those already in the "Good" category but needing to expand their vocabulary range.

E. Motivation and Engagement as Key Influences

Motivation plays a significant role in vocabulary acquisition. Research suggests that motivated students engage more actively with vocabulary, utilizing strategies such as self-assessment and reflection, which contribute to better retention (Augustyn, 2013). Cooperative learning techniques, such as group projects and peer teaching, can boost motivation and provide a supportive learning environment for vocabulary development (Al-Shuga'a et al., 2020). Given the challenges faced by students in the "Poor" and "Not Good" categories, introducing cooperative learning may foster greater motivation and provide more opportunities for practice in a low-stress environment.

F. Storytelling as an Effective Vocabulary Development Tool

Integrating storytelling into vocabulary instruction can also support students' vocabulary development. According to (Tachom, 2021), storytelling, especially when based on culturally relevant narratives, can significantly enhance vocabulary acquisition among EFL learners. Storytelling provides a context-rich learning environment that promotes vocabulary retention by connecting new words to meaningful experiences. By implementing storytelling in the Family Law Program, students could be encouraged to relate new vocabulary to scenarios they are familiar with, deepening their understanding and retention.

G. Vocabulary Learning Strategies and Independent Learning

Vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) empower students to become more independent in their vocabulary acquisition. Teaching strategies such as using context clues, understanding word formation, and mnemonic devices can enhance students' ability to learn and retain vocabulary effectively (Adakhiel, 2021) Adakhiel, 2021). For students across all proficiency levels, VLS can provide lifelong tools for vocabulary learning. Specifically, students in the "Good" category could benefit from advanced VLS to refine their vocabulary, while those in the "Poor" and "Not Good" categories could use these strategies to build foundational knowledge.

H. Feedback and Vocabulary Mastery

The role of feedback in vocabulary learning cannot be overlooked. Constructive feedback allows students to identify areas for improvement and adjust their strategies accordingly. (Awabdeh, 2023) emphasizes that timely feedback improves vocabulary retention, as it helps students focus on specific challenges. Implementing regular feedback sessions in vocabulary instruction at STIS HARSY could help students at all levels refine their language use, guiding them toward more accurate and context-appropriate vocabulary application.

The vocabulary proficiency levels among fifth-semester students at STIS HARSY reflect a significant range, with nearly half of the students falling into "Poor" and "Not Good" categories. This distribution suggests a need for targeted interventions to improve vocabulary acquisition. Strategies such as explicit instruction, cooperative learning, TBL, and the integration of technology can address the specific needs of each proficiency level. Furthermore, incorporating feedback and vocabulary learning strategies could foster independent learning and long-term vocabulary development. By applying these instructional methods, educators can help

bridge the proficiency gap, supporting students in achieving better vocabulary mastery and, consequently, improved academic outcomes.

4.   CONCLUSION

This study reveals that a considerable proportion of fifth-semester students in the Family Law Program at STIS Harsy face challenges in English vocabulary mastery, with most students falling into the "Not Good" and "Poor" categories. These levels of proficiency indicate significant barriers to effective communication and academic success, as limited vocabulary skills restrict students' ability to express and comprehend ideas. The findings highlight that vocabulary is not merely a collection of words but a core aspect of language competence that underpins reading, writing, speaking, and listening abilities. As vocabulary mastery impacts academic performance and future professional engagement, addressing this gap is critical. The observed variability in vocabulary proficiency suggests the need for comprehensive strategies tailored to different proficiency levels to support students' linguistic development. This study underscores the importance of targeted interventions, but further research is needed to explore specific approaches that can effectively bridge the vocabulary gap.

To improve vocabulary proficiency among students, targeted instructional strategies should be implemented. First, explicit vocabulary instruction could be introduced to provide clear explanations of word meanings and usage, especially for those in lower proficiency categories. Cooperative learning techniques, such as group discussions and peer teaching, can also foster motivation and provide a supportive environment for vocabulary practice. Additionally, integrating digital tools like vocabulary apps and gamified learning platforms may engage students more actively in vocabulary acquisition. Incorporating storytelling and multimedia resources can create memorable learning experiences, aiding retention and understanding. Regular feedback sessions should also be established, enabling students to track their progress and identify areas for improvement. Finally, to promote independent vocabulary learning, teaching students vocabulary learning strategies, such as using context clues and mnemonics, can empower them to expand their vocabulary beyond the classroom. These interventions can build a more robust foundation in vocabulary, enhancing overall language skills and academic performance.

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