

English Vocabulary Mastery Profile of STIS Harsy Central Lombok Students

Sudiani

Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Syariah. Lombok Tengah. Indonesia

Correspondence e-mail.: sudiani.darmasji@gmail.com

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Abstrak

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.

Keywords: Vocabulary Mastery, English Proficiency, Descriptive Study, Instructional Strategies, Language Acquisition

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INDRODUCTION

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 is particularly pronounced in specialized academic programs like the Family Law Program, where students require a strong command of domain-specific vocabulary to navigate complex legal texts and express 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 hinders their comprehension when reading texts or listening to conversations in English. While prior research has explored general vocabulary teaching methods and their impact on language learning (Nguyen, 2023; Wei, 2021), studies focusing on vocabulary challenges specific to academic programs, particularly in Family Law, are limited. This gap highlights the need to understand the unique vocabulary demands faced by these students and to develop tailored strategies that address their challenges.

Recent studies 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; 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 the Family Law Program, such strategies could include integrating legal texts and examples into language exercises, helping students relate new vocabulary to their academic context.

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). 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 (Widiadnya, 2023; Pornpongtechavanich et al., 2021; Vedadi et al., 2018).

This study is distinct in focusing on the interplay between vocabulary mastery and productive language skills, specifically in speaking and writing, within the context of the Family Law Program. By investigating the specific challenges faced by students in this academic discipline, the research aims to provide practical insights for developing more effective vocabulary 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 examines the extent to which vocabulary mastery influences productive language skills, particularly in speaking and writing. By addressing the specific needs of Family Law students, this research seeks to bridge the existing gap and offer solutions that can enhance their academic and professional communication abilities.

METHOD

Based on the research problem, the appropriate method to apply is the descriptive method. Nawawi (1991) 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 population comprises 30 students with varying levels of English proficiency. While some students have prior exposure to English through secondary education, others have limited experience, making it critical to assess their vocabulary skills comprehensively. These students are enrolled in courses that require understanding of both general and specialized vocabulary relevant to Family Law. 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. The test was developed following a structured process to ensure its validity and reliability. Initially, the test items were designed based on a curriculum analysis to align with the vocabulary needs of the students. These items were reviewed by two experts in language education

to assess content validity. Subsequently, the test was pilot-tested with a similar group of students from another class to refine the items and ensure clarity. The reliability of the final test was established using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.82, indicating good internal consistency.

The test consisted of 20 multiple-choice questions designed to measure various aspects of vocabulary mastery, including word recognition, meaning, and contextual application. The test was administered in-person during a scheduled class session under standardized conditions to ensure consistency. Students were given 30 minutes to complete the test, with clear instructions provided beforehand. The test environment was controlled to minimize distractions and ensure fairness.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study revealed that vocabulary mastery levels among fifth-semester students in the Family Law Program at STIS HARSY, Central Lombok, are categorized into three proficiency levels: "Not Good," "Poor," and "Good," with percentages of 43.33%, 30.00%, and 26.67%, respectively. This data demonstrates that a significant proportion of students, nearly half, are in the "Not Good" category. This indicates substantial challenges in vocabulary acquisition, which can hinder their ability to engage effectively in academic and professional communication.

The high percentage of students in the "Not Good" category reflects the need for targeted interventions to enhance their vocabulary skills. This group likely faces difficulties in comprehending and using even basic vocabulary, which can impede progress in developing other language competencies, such as speaking and writing. Meanwhile, the "Poor" category, representing 30% of students, indicates some familiarity with vocabulary but highlights persistent struggles with accuracy and contextual application. Students in this group require further instruction to refine their understanding and use of vocabulary effectively.

Finally, the "Good" category, encompassing only 26.67% of students, reflects a minority of learners with adequate vocabulary knowledge. While these students demonstrate foundational proficiency, there is room for improvement in mastering advanced and specialized vocabulary, particularly terms related to their field of study.

The findings, as shown in Figure 1, underscore the overall challenges in vocabulary proficiency among these students, emphasizing the urgency for enhanced instructional strategies. Effective interventions, such as explicit vocabulary instruction and interactive learning methods, are essential to address these gaps, particularly for students in the "Not Good" and "Poor" categories. These efforts can bridge the proficiency gap and improve academic outcomes.



Figure 1. Vocabulary Mastery Levels

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 respective percentages of 43.33%, 30.00%, and 26.67%. This chart provides a clear visual comparison of students' vocabulary skills across these proficiency levels, highlighting notable disparities in performance. The "Not Good" category stands out

with the highest proportion, indicating that 43.33% of the students struggle significantly with vocabulary. This deficiency impacts foundational language skills, potentially hindering overall proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing, as well as their ability to express ideas effectively.

The "Poor" category, representing 30.00% of the students, illustrates a slightly better but still limited level of vocabulary knowledge. While these students demonstrate basic vocabulary recognition, they struggle with contextual application and accuracy, which are essential for effective communication. The smallest group, classified as "Good" and comprising 26.67% of students, signifies those with adequate vocabulary skills. However, this group still exhibits limitations in mastering advanced and specialized vocabulary, particularly in academic contexts, emphasizing the need for further instruction to expand both the breadth and depth of their vocabulary knowledge.

Vocabulary mastery plays a critical role in overall language proficiency and academic success. Research underscores the significant correlation between vocabulary knowledge and key skills such as reading comprehension and writing ability (Qunayeer, 2021; Al-Khasawneh, 2019). Learners with a robust vocabulary are better equipped to interpret texts, articulate their thoughts, and achieve academic goals (Leontjev et al., 2022; Teng & Zhang, 2021). Furthermore, vocabulary knowledge can be understood in terms of breadth and depth, where breadth refers to the quantity of words known and depth relates to understanding word meanings and their usage in context (Liu, 2019; Alqallaf & Ahmed, 2021). Both dimensions are crucial for developing advanced language skills and ensuring long-term retention.

The chart also emphasizes the need for targeted vocabulary interventions. Students in the "Not Good" and "Poor" categories, comprising the majority (73.33%), require urgent instructional support. Effective strategies to improve vocabulary mastery include explicit teaching over extended periods, which facilitates incremental vocabulary acquisition (Awabdeh, 2023). Additionally, small-group interventions combining direct instruction with interactive activities have shown significant gains, particularly among learners with poor vocabulary skills (Dyson et al., 2018). Experiential learning methods, which actively engage students in practical tasks, can further enhance retention and create positive learning experiences (Fitri, 2024).

Moreover, integrating technology into vocabulary instruction has proven effective in increasing student motivation and achievement. For instance, game-based learning platforms like Kahoot have demonstrated measurable improvements in vocabulary mastery while fostering an engaging learning environment (Mustagis, 2024; Muthmainnah, 2021). These tools not only make learning enjoyable but also provide opportunities for repeated exposure to target vocabulary, which is critical for retention and comprehension. Similarly, multimedia resources such as videos and interactive applications can cater to diverse learning preferences, enriching both the breadth and depth of vocabulary knowledge (Rahmani et al., 2022; Liando et al., 2021).

Research also highlights the importance of contextualized vocabulary instruction. Techniques such as dialogic teaching provide learners with opportunities to engage in meaningful discussions, allowing for repeated exposure to and application of new vocabulary in authentic contexts (Chow et al., 2021). This approach fosters deeper understanding and retention, enhancing students' ability to use vocabulary effectively in real-world situations. Additionally, extensive reading programs can expose learners to varied vocabulary in context, further supporting vocabulary development and reading comprehension (Herdiana, 2023).

The implications of these findings extend beyond vocabulary mastery to the overall academic success of students. A lack of vocabulary knowledge, as observed in the majority of students in the "Not Good" and "Poor" categories, not only hinders language proficiency but also limits students' ability to engage with academic content and professional discourse. Furthermore, self-perceptions of vocabulary knowledge significantly influence learners' confidence and motivation, which are critical for active engagement in language learning (Uchihara & Harada, 2018; González-Fernández, 2022). Therefore, fostering positive perceptions and providing varied, interactive learning opportunities are essential for addressing these gaps.

The chart clearly highlights the disparity in vocabulary proficiency among students, emphasizing the urgency of implementing diverse and effective intervention strategies. Combining explicit instruction,

experiential learning, and technology-enhanced methods can address the needs of students across all proficiency levels. By prioritizing targeted and engaging instructional approaches, educators can bridge the existing gaps in vocabulary mastery, thereby improving students' academic outcomes and overall language proficiency.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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). 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.

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.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that a significant proportion of fifth-semester students in the Family Law Program at STIS Harsy struggle with English vocabulary mastery, with most students categorized as "Not Good" or "Poor." These proficiency levels highlight major barriers to effective communication and academic success, as limited vocabulary skills hinder students' ability to express complex ideas, engage with academic texts, and participate in meaningful discussions. The findings emphasize that vocabulary is not merely a collection of words but a foundational element of language competence, supporting reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. Furthermore, the variability in vocabulary proficiency among students underscores the need for differentiated instructional strategies tailored to varying skill levels. Interventions should include explicit teaching methods, contextualized vocabulary instruction, and the integration of technology, such as gamified learning platforms, to enhance engagement and

retention. Research also points to the value of experiential learning and small-group interventions, which can address specific gaps in vocabulary knowledge and promote long-term retention. Given the critical role of vocabulary mastery in academic achievement and professional readiness, it is imperative to address this gap through innovative and sustained efforts. While this study identifies the extent of the issue, further research should investigate the efficacy of targeted approaches, such as task-based learning, extensive reading, and multimedia-enhanced instruction. By adopting diverse and evidence-based strategies, educators can bridge the vocabulary gap, thereby equipping students with the linguistic tools needed for academic and professional success.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To enhance vocabulary proficiency among students, targeted and evidence-based strategies should be implemented. Explicit vocabulary instruction must be prioritized, offering clear explanations of word meanings, usage, and contextual applications. This approach is particularly effective for students in lower proficiency categories, as it builds foundational knowledge incrementally. Cooperative learning techniques, such as group discussions, peer teaching, and collaborative tasks, foster motivation and create supportive environments for active vocabulary practice. These interactive methods allow students to apply new words in meaningful contexts, enhancing retention and comprehension.

The integration of digital tools, including vocabulary apps and gamified platforms like Quizlet or Kahoot, can further increase student engagement. These tools provide repeated exposure to target vocabulary, which is essential for long-term retention. Additionally, incorporating storytelling and multimedia resources, such as videos, infographics, and interactive content, can create memorable learning experiences that cater to diverse learning styles.

Regular feedback sessions are essential to help students monitor their progress and identify areas for improvement. Personalized feedback can guide them in adopting effective strategies to overcome vocabulary gaps. Finally, teaching independent vocabulary learning strategies, such as using context clues and mnemonic devices, empowers students to expand their vocabulary beyond the classroom. By implementing these interventions, educators can build stronger vocabulary foundations, improving students' overall language skills, academic performance, and readiness for professional communication.

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