

**THE EFFECTS OF VOCABULARY MASTERY ON
COMPREHENDING MARITIME ENGLISH TEXTS:
A CASE STUDY OF SEAFARERS OF
NAUTICAL CLASS**

A THESIS



By

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**ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
GRADUATE SCHOOL
WIDYA MANDALA SURABAYA CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY
SURABAYA
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Presented to Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya
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(Doctor in Applied Linguistics)



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APPROVAL SHEET

(I)

This thesis entitled “The Effects of Vocabulary Mastery on Comprehending Maritime English Texts: A Case Study of Seafarers of Nautical Class” prepared and submitted by Ika Erawati/ 8212712018 has been approved and examined by the Thesis Board of Examiners on Tuesday, March 18, 2014.



Dr. V. Luluk Prijambodo, M.Pd.

Thesis Advisor

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STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICITY

I declare that this thesis is my own writing, and it is true and correct that I did not take any scholarly ideas or work from others dishonestly. That all cited works were quoted in accordance with the ethical code of academic writing.

Surabaya, March 18, 2014



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The Writer

The Effects of Vocabulary Mastery on Comprehending Maritime English Texts: A Case Study of Seafarers of Nautical Class

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ABSTRACT

Since the seafarers' language skill influenced the safety of life, cargo handling, pollution prevention, operation of ship at sea, etc, the seafarers are expected to be proficient in understanding and using maritime English appropriately. However, many seafarers still encounter difficulties in understanding written instructions of everyday shipboard activities. To comprehend the larger units of text such paragraphs and stories, the seafarers have to understand first Maritime English (ME) vocabulary. The types of ME vocabulary can be divided into *core vocabulary type*, *semi-technical vocabulary type*, and *maritime and/or technical vocabulary type*. In connection with the seafarers' difficulties in comprehending ME texts, this study is oriented to answer three research questions: (1) What types of maritime vocabulary have the seafarers mastered? (2) How does vocabulary mastery affect the seafarers in the process of comprehending maritime English texts? (3) What are the effects of seafarers' vocabulary mastery in their reading comprehension of maritime English texts?

This case study involves eight (8) seafarers of nautical class at Merchant Marine Academy who were investigated in around six sessions of meeting. This study gathered the research data to answer the first research question using Maritime Vocabulary Mastery Test. Classroom observation, questionnaire, and interview were the techniques to gather data to answer the second research question. To answer the third research question, the data were gathered from classroom observation, questionnaire, interview, and reading comprehension texts.

In connection with the first research question, the findings of this study shows that 50% students or 15 of 30 students fell into core vocabulary type, 37% students or 11 of 30 have mastered semi-technical vocabulary type, and 6%

students or two of 30 students have mastered technical vocabulary type, while 47% or 14 of 30 students were considered to have no mastery on the three vocabulary types. For the second research question, the findings indicated that students who had mastered technical vocabulary type tended to use global strategy than problem solving and support strategy, the subjects who had mastered semi-technical vocabulary type tended to use global strategy and problem solving strategy more often than support strategy, and the subjects who had only mastered core vocabulary type tended to use problem solving strategy more often than global strategy and support strategy when comprehending maritime English texts. While the subjects who had not mastered the three types of vocabulary only used support strategy to help them understand the content of readings. The result also classified two typical areas of subjects' reading difficulty. The first area refers to the factors that influenced the subjects' difficulties and knowledge before comprehending texts such as low motivation, memory of vocabulary, insufficient knowledge of general English and learners' age. The second area refers to the subjects' difficulties during the process of comprehension maritime texts such as unfamiliar words, lack of vocabulary knowledge and polysemy.

Then the findings which relate to the third research question indicated that the subjects who had mastered technical vocabulary type tended to master semi-technical vocabulary type and core vocabulary type. This made them encounter more vocabulary knowledge that might help them much when they needed to recall it so that they could perform better in reading comprehension. Subjects who were considered to have mastered semi-technical vocabulary type could also perform better in reading comprehension ME texts than those who had mastered core vocabulary type or those who had not mastered the three vocabulary type, but they could not perform better than those who had mastered technical vocabulary type. The findings of this study also indicated that the subjects who had mastery on technical vocabulary or semi-technical vocabulary type had more correct items on reading comprehension texts than those who only had mastery on core vocabulary type.

In conclusion, seafarers who had mastered the three vocabulary types - technical, semi-technical and core vocabulary type - indicated that they could perform better in comprehending ME texts than those who only mastered semi-technical and core vocabulary type. While, those who had only mastered core vocabulary type and those who had not mastered the three vocabulary type encountered more difficulties in comprehending ME texts because understanding ME texts requires both specific and general meaning of words. The more seafarers have mastery on the three types of maritime vocabulary the less they encounter difficulties in comprehending ME texts.

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