

# An Analysis of Students' Competence in Applying Action Verbs in English Sentences

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## ABSTRACT

This research aimed to analyse students' competence toward action verbs. There are four to five forms of action verb in English. This was descriptive research. The research subject was 25 students of Primary School Teacher Education at 1st semester. The data were collected through Verbs Comprehension Test in five assessment indicators. The achievement point for each indicator: Verb Recognition 24.48, Verb Form Understanding 12.16, Subject-Verb Agreement 6.52, Tense Application 14.12, and Sentence Construction 2.31. This result showed their ability in applying action verb was still poor that they demonstrated limited understanding and frequently misuse verbs. Many errors in applying tense rules, particularly in the Present Perfect Tense 1.59 and Past Tense 1.70. The highest achievement was found in the Present Tense for Plural Subjects 3.05 and the Present Progressive Tense 2.76. Indicating the students were more familiar with verb 1 as a base form than other tense categories.

**Keywords:** *Students' Competence, Action Verbs, English Sentences*

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## INTRODUCTION

Mastery of English vocabularies is one of important aspects in learning English especially for EFL (English Foreign Language) students. And it cannot be ignored due to the proficiency of students towards vocabularies will be able to detect and measure their competencies level in learning English Language. As Cheng & Matthews (2016) stated that the ability of mastering vocabularies in English may have a strong and significant relationship with the ability of second language competency, especially in reading and listening. In addition, they explained the vocabulary actively acts to predict and to measure the ability of someone in reading and listening activity of the second language. For this reason, vocabulary is not only about memorizing but more emphasized to the fundamental of language used in term of comprehension and its usage. Hartini & Ardini (2024) in the modern research, they have also shown the relationship among vocabulary knowledge and language competency thoroughly, that English vocabulary knowledge is strongly related to the English competencies of learners. From those facts founded by the previous researchers and experts, the main factor in detecting and following the development and the improvement language skill of someone is vocabulary knowledge. The proficiency of people in learning target language can be seen from how far they have understood the reading material. Which is wellknown with the term reading comprehension. The high-frequency and mid-frequency vocabulary can significantly predict the ability of language user in language proficiency.

There are some classification of vocabularies which is known as the term *part of speech*. It consists of nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, pronouns, conjunctions, interjections, and articles or determiners. And these words classification are as main component to form the sentence structures and also to help building the grammar system in language use. They become an important basis in forming the sentence structure. Furthermore,

these words classification are necessary to be comprehended and mastered by the students who learn English as the foundation to develop their capability to produce English language used properly and accurately. [Laufer & Aviad-Levitzky \(2017\)](#) explained that mastering vocabulary plays a crucial role in language proficiency and in understanding language structure. In addition, it is a high indicator for second language competence. [McLean et al. \(2020\)](#) emphasized that vocabulary knowledge has strong relationship with reading proficiency, because the language structures and the text comprehension are definitely influenced by the ability of someone in mastering the vocabulary. Vocabulary is also as foundation to show someone's ability to produce language and comprehend it partially or completely. From the explanation above it can be concluded that the words classification is an important basis in language acquisition, vocabulary mastery directly connect with the ability of arranging sentence properly, and vocabulary knowledge is a main foundation to measure someone's ability toward target language proficiency.

In the study of linguistics, as a branch of science that discusses language and its usage, besides vocabulary, grammar is also considered as a fundamental aspect, especially in understanding the formation and construction of sentences grammatically ([Purnama et al., 2025](#)). Vocabulary and grammar have strong relationship in arranging the sentence, due to each of them plays significant roles in constructing meaningfully and grammatically sentences. In addition, correct sentence has their own grammatical function and they are interconnected to each other. [Nainggolan & Simanjuntak \(2025\)](#) emphasized that grammatical errors can obstruct the effective communication and they may change meaning of the words that lead to misunderstanding and alter the intended meaning of words. Therefore, accurate use of grammar is essential to ensure clarity and precision in conveying messages. Thus, [Ardiansyah \(2018\)](#) a deeply comprehension toward vocabulary and grammar used are very important in language learning process, because grammar can affect the students' ability in arranging sentences and it plays an important role to produce correct sentence. In practice, focuses on learning English process, the collaboration of vocabulary and grammar in language used demands the user to understand their role in sentence construction. Because they really influence the students' competence in arranging the sentences grammatically, coherently and communicatively.

Verb comprehension assessment is not only focused on form recognition but also on the ability to use verbs appropriately according to context, tense, and subject agreement. [Nation \(2017\)](#) vocabulary mastery is not only related to the ability to recognize words, but also includes understanding word meanings, knowledge of word forms, and the ability to use words appropriately in sentence contexts. In English language learning, understanding verbs is important because verbs function as the main element in constructing correct meanings and sentence structures.

## Verbs in English

In the context of English language learning, the firstly important part for the development of students' language competence is mastering verb and recognizing their suitable form in the sentence construction in order to show the improvement of students' grammatical competence. [Schmitt & Schmitt \(2020\)](#), vocabulary knowledge is essential for effective communication, as learners need sufficient vocabulary to understand and express meaning in both spoken and written language. The authors emphasize that vocabulary is not merely a collection of words but also includes knowledge of word forms, meanings, and appropriate usage in different contexts. Therefore, students who possess adequate vocabulary knowledge are more likely to construct meaningful and grammatically acceptable sentences. In the context of learning action verbs, vocabulary mastery enables students to recognize, understand, and accurately apply verbs in English sentence construction.

Aligned with the significance of vocabulary mastery, one of crucial aspects in learning English Process is the ability to comprehend the meaning and the function of verb as one of part of speech explained above. The part of speech consist of nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, pronouns, conjunctions, interjections, and articles or determiners ([Diessel, 2019](#)).

Why verb? Because verb is as the core of sentence which determine the correct or wrong sentence in English. Grammar, which include verb forms in it, is considered as a fundamental aspect of linguistics because it plays a crucial role in forming sentence structures and ensuring effective communication in language use (Ellis, 2016).

According to modern grammar, verbs in English can be classified based on their function and structure. Based on their function, they are divided into action verbs, which show actions; linking verbs, which connect the subject to a complement; and auxiliary verbs, which help the main verb form sentences. Based on their structures, they are divided into regular verbs, which show the similar form of the words; and irregular verbs, which show different form of the words but still in similar meaning (Grammarly, 2025).

### Action Verbs in English

Based on the classification of verbs above. In this research, the researcher only focused on analyzing about the students' competence of using action verbs in English sentence structures. Why the researcher chose action verbs was clearly based on certain reasons. We can see that action verbs frequently used type of verbs in daily communication and they are also the most fundamental language acquisition especially for EFL students. Action verbs directly represent daily activities or actions performed by the subject and it has been making them essential to form meaningful and complete sentences. Moreover, many English students, especially EFL students, often face difficulties to use action verbs correctly in sentence structures, and it ofcoursely can lead to their grammatical errors and misunderstandings in sentence construction. Therefore, focusing on action verbs allows the researcher to obtain a clearer and more specific picture of students' grammatical competence in building Basic English Sentences.

Basically there are four into five forms of verb in English. Verb 1 which can be modified into two more forms, the adding *-s/-es* and the adding *-ing* at the end of the word. Verb 2 and Verb 3 as the regular form of verb is by adding *-ed* at the end of the word. And different form among Verb 1, Verb 2, and Verb 3 in irregular form of verb. Those information are often obtained in every English classmeeting. And theoretically, it is strengthened by some quotations from experts, writer, and previous researchers as follow; according to modern grammar, English verbs typically have up to five inflected forms: base form, third person singular present, past tense, past participle, and *-ing* form. Moreover, they explained, the present tense third person singular is marked by *-s*, while the progressive form is marked by *-ing* (Huddleston & Pullum, 2016). Swan (2016) in his linguistic research explained that regular verbs form their past tense and past participle by adding the suffix *-ed* to the base form. Biber et al. (2017) Irregular verbs are those whose past tense and past participle forms do not follow the regular *-ed* pattern.

We can start from action verbs which have the closest relationship to everyday activities. These verbs may help students to understand and express various actions they perform in daily life, and it will be making easier for them to construct meaningful sentences. With a good command of verb forms, students can become more confident in producing correct sentences both spoken and written communication. As explained above that recognizing varied forms of verbs and their own function in sentence construction shall be prioritized in English learning process. Druzhinin et al. (2017) explained that verb forms in term of simple and progressive verbs play an important role in grammatical structure and meaning construction in language. In the contrary, the distinction of simple and progressive verb forms is essential because it helps to determine how actions are expressed, whether as general facts, habitual activities, or ongoing events.

### The Importance of English in Primary School Education Program

The importance of English in primary school education programs lies in its role as a basic skill that supports students' future learning. Maili (2018) learning English at primary school level is necessary because young learners can more easily acquire a new language, especially in the current digital era where English is widely used in technology and daily

communication. Cahyati & Madya (2019) Teaching English to young learners is considered the best stage to introduce a foreign language since primary school, because students are in a developmental phase where they can learn effectively through suitable and engaging methods. Warmadewi et al. (2020) early exposure to English helps children develop communication skills from an early age and supports their readiness to use English in future academic and real-life contexts. Alifia & Gumiandari (2021) English should be introduced early because children are in a "golden age" of language learning, making it easier for them to develop language competence compared to older learners. Because At an early age, students are more receptive to new languages, making it an ideal time to introduce English in a simple and engaging way. Based on the quotation from the previously researcher above, in general, they agree that English learning in primary schools plays a very important role in supporting students' language development. This is because children are in their *golden age*, a period in which they can naturally absorb new languages more easily.

In addition, early English learning helps students develop basic communication skills, both in spoken and written forms. In conclusion, learning English in primary school helps students develop basic communication skills, expand their vocabulary, and build confidence in using a foreign language. Moreover, early exposure to English prepares students for higher levels of education where the language is used more intensively in various subjects and contexts. Indeed, this learning is highly relevant to the development of the global era and technology, which require foreign language competence as an essential skill in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Because the ability to use international languages, particularly English, is highly needed for global communication, access to information, and technological development. As established by the Indonesian government through the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Regulation Number 12 of 2024, that English at the elementary school level will become a compulsory subject starting from the 2027/2028 academic year (Permendikbudristek No. 12, 2024) This policy indicates that English mastery is viewed as an important competency to prepare students for global challenges in the modern era. This regulation is also emphasized by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education Regulation Number 13 of 2025, that the transition of English into a compulsory subject in elementary schools as well as the government's support for improving elementary school English teachers' competencies (Permendikdasmen No.13, 2025).

Based on the phenomenon explained above, we can take the main point that the Primary School Teacher Education program at universities plays an important role in preparing competent future teachers who are able to teach English at the primary level. This program is designed to equip students with pedagogical knowledge, mastery of English language content, and teaching skills that are appropriate for the characteristics of primary school learners. Therefore, prospective teachers are expected to be able to create effective, engaging, and enjoyable learning environments that suit the developmental needs of students in the modern era.

### **Students' Competence in Learning English**

Generally, competence refers to an individual's ability to perform tasks effectively by integrating knowledge, skills, attitudes, and experiences in a particular field. Competence is not only related to intellectual capability, but also to how a person applies his or her understanding in real situations and performances. According to Tagala (2018) competence is an underlying characteristic of an individual that is closely related to effective and outstanding performance. Therefore, competence can be understood as an important aspect that supports students' achievement and learning development in the educational process.

Students' competence in learning English refers to students' ability to understand and use English appropriately in terms of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and language skills. This competence becomes one of the important indicators of success in the English learning process, especially for EFL (*English as a Foreign Language*) students. In the learning process, students are not only expected to understand language theories, but also to apply them in both spoken and written communication. Therefore, the development of English

competence should be supported by effective learning strategies, active learning environments, and mastery of basic language components such as vocabulary and verb forms.

Competence in students' understanding of English vocabulary, particularly action verbs, plays an important role in supporting their ability to construct meaningful sentences. Vocabulary mastery enables learners to recognize, understand, and correctly use verbs in different contexts, which directly influences their writing and speaking performance. Research by [Mansur et al. \(2025\)](#) show that students' grammatical competence, especially in verb usage, is essential in forming correct English sentences and avoiding common errors in sentence construction. In conclusion, vocabulary knowledge, including verb mastery, significantly contributes to language proficiency and productive skills development. Therefore, students' competence in applying and comprehending verbs is a fundamental aspect of successful English language learning.

### **Students' Difficulties in Understanding Verb Usage in English Sentences**

Previous studies have consistently shown that English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners still encounter significant difficulties in understanding and applying verb forms correctly in sentences. These difficulties are commonly reflected in errors related to tense usage, subject-verb agreement, and the inappropriate selection of verb forms such as the base form (V1), past form (V2), and past participle (V3). Such problems indicate that mastery of verb structures remains a persistent challenge in English language learning contexts. [Listia & Febriyanti \(2020\)](#) found that EFL learners frequently experience confusion in using English tenses, which directly affects the accuracy of verb usage in sentence construction. Their study highlights that students often fail to select the correct verb form according to temporal context. Similarly, [Vazariah & Rozimela \(2020\)](#) reported that students commonly make grammatical errors in verb usage within their written texts, indicating insufficient understanding of verb forms and their functions in sentence structures. [Pandapatan \(2020\)](#) emphasized that students' ability in applying subject-verb agreement rules is still relatively low, which further contributes to inaccuracies in sentence formation. The findings of these studies collectively suggest that verb-related grammatical competence is still a major area of difficulty for EFL learners and requires greater instructional attention in classroom practice. In addition, [Putri et al. \(2023\)](#) in their research with the title EFL students' difficulties on using subject-verb agreement found that the EFL Students still had obstacles about the usage and the function of verbs in sentence construction. Furthermore they explained that the students could not differentiate the regular and the irregular verbs even in simple sentences. And the more critical problem that the students also could not identify the subject and verb in the sentence. From those findings we can conclude that the action verbs are often challenging for students due to their complexity in usage and contextual variation.

In the context of pre-service primary school teacher education, these difficulties are particularly significant because these students are not only expected to understand English language content, but also to be able to teach it accurately to young learners at the elementary level. Therefore, a weak mastery of verb usage may negatively affect their pedagogical readiness in teaching English grammar effectively in primary schools. There are still many students of Primary School Education Program don't understand and cannot differentiate action verbs in sentence construction. Also in some previous studies there were also found the reality that students, particularly at the primary level, still face difficulties in using verb vocabulary appropriately in sentence construction.

Building on these findings, difficulties in understanding and using English verbs remain a common problem among EFL learners. These difficulties are not only related to the correct selection of verb forms, but also involve understanding the function of verbs in constructing grammatically correct and meaningful sentences. This situation indicates that mastery of verbs is still an important aspect that requires greater attention in English language learning, particularly at the primary education level and for future educators.

Therefore, this issue encouraged the researcher to analyse the competence of Primary School Teacher Education (PGSD) students at STKIP Widyaswara Indonesia in the 1<sup>st</sup> semester

of the 2025/2026 academic year in understanding action verb vocabulary. This is important because PGSD students, as pre-service primary school teachers, are expected not only to understand English language concepts but also to apply them accurately in sentence construction and classroom teaching practice. Thus, this study provides an overview of PGSD students' competence in using action verbs and serves as a basis for improving the quality of English language instruction at the primary education level.

## METHOD

This study employed a descriptive research design, which aims to describe and interpret students' competence in applying action verbs in sentence construction without manipulating any variables. Descriptive research is considered appropriate for identifying current conditions and providing a factual overview of a phenomenon as it naturally occurs in the field and is widely recognized in recent methodological literature as a systematic approach to describing phenomena as they naturally occur. [Saunders et al. \(2019\)](#) emphasize that descriptive research focuses on collecting and presenting data to describe patterns, characteristics, and conditions of a population, particularly through structured methods such as observation, tests, and interviews. In line with this, recent methodological perspectives highlight that descriptive research is essential in providing a factual baseline of a phenomenon before further analytical or experimental investigation is conducted. This descriptive research is also strongly supported by [Sugiyono \(2017\)](#) that descriptive research is a method used to describe or depict a phenomenon or condition of the subject as it is, without any treatment or manipulation of variables, so that the data obtained reflects the actual situation in the field. Therefore, the use of a descriptive research design in this study is appropriate to describe students' competence in applying action verbs in sentence construction as it naturally occurs in the classroom context.

The research subjects were 25 1<sup>st</sup> semester students of Primary School Teacher Education (PGSD) at STKIP Widayawara Indonesia. They were selected as participants because pre-service teachers are expected to have sufficient English language competence, particularly in grammar and vocabulary usage, to support their future teaching profession in primary schools. The researcher used observation and test as the instruments. Observation in educational research is widely recognized as an effective technique for gathering direct information about learners' performance in real learning situations ([Creswell & Creswell, 2018](#)). The observation was conducted through *Verb Comprehension Test* to measure students' ability in understanding and applying action verbs in English sentence.

The researcher applied 5 indicators of Verb Comprehension Test to analyze the data. These indicators were adapted from theories of vocabulary and grammar competence proposed by ([Nation, 2017; Schmitt & Schmitt, 2020](#)). Indicator 1-4 were multiple-choice test. While indicator 5 deeply analyzed students' competence in sentence construction. They were instructed to make sentences in different forms of action verb by following the guide given by the examiner. In order to analyze students' competence of comprehending aux & verb 1 in present tense, aux & verb 1+s/es in present tense, aux & verb 2 in past tense, tobe & verb-ing in in present and past tense, aux & verb 1 in future tense, aux & verb 3 in in present perfect tense, in the sentences produced by them from the action verbs applied by the examiner.

Table 1. Indicators of Verb Comprehension Test

| Table 1: Indicators of Verb Comprehension Test |                         |                                                                         |       |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| No                                             | Indicators              | Achievement                                                             | Score |
| 1                                              | Verb Recognition        | Students correctly identify all action verbs                            | 4     |
|                                                |                         | Students identify most verbs correctly                                  | 3     |
|                                                |                         | Students identify some verbs                                            | 2     |
|                                                |                         | Students rarely identify verbs correctly                                | 1     |
|                                                |                         | Students are unable to identify action verbs                            | 0     |
| 2                                              | Verb Form Understanding | Students correctly distinguish V1, V2, V3 and regular/irregular verbs   | 4     |
|                                                |                         | Minor errors in distinguishing verb forms                               | 3     |
|                                                |                         | Partial understanding but many errors                                   | 2     |
|                                                |                         | Very limited understanding                                              | 1     |
|                                                |                         | Cannot distinguish verb forms                                           | 0     |
| 3                                              | Subject-Verb Agreement  | Always applies correct subject-verb agreement                           | 4     |
|                                                |                         | Minor errors in agreement                                               | 3     |
|                                                |                         | Frequent errors but meaning still understandable                        | 2     |
|                                                |                         | Major errors affecting meaning                                          | 1     |
|                                                |                         | Cannot apply subject-verb agreement                                     | 0     |
| 4                                              | Tense Application       | Correctly uses all tenses (present, past, future, progressive, perfect) | 4     |
|                                                |                         | Occasional errors in tense usage                                        | 3     |
|                                                |                         | Partial use of correct tenses                                           | 2     |
|                                                |                         | Very limited control of tenses                                          | 1     |
|                                                |                         | Cannot use correct tenses                                               | 0     |
| 5                                              | Sentence Construction   | Produces correct, meaningful, and grammatically accurate sentences      | 4     |
|                                                |                         | Meaningful sentences with minor errors                                  | 3     |
|                                                |                         | Understandable but many grammatical errors                              | 2     |
|                                                |                         | Poor sentence structure                                                 | 1     |
|                                                |                         | Cannot construct sentences                                              | 0     |
| Maximum Score:                                 |                         |                                                                         | 20    |

The students' final scores achieved then converted into grade 1-100 using the following formula:

$$\text{Final Score} = \frac{\text{Total Achievement Score}}{\text{Maximum Score}} \times 100$$

The grade levels was taken from the existing grade range at Widyaswara Indonesia Campus as a standard grade for students.

Table 2. The Standard Grade Level Used at Widyaswara Indonesia Campus

|   |            |                    |                                                                                                  |
|---|------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A | 85 - 100   | Excellent          | Students demonstrate very accurate understanding and application of verbs in all indicators.     |
| B | 70 - 84,99 | Good               | Students demonstrate good understanding with minor grammatical errors.                           |
| C | 60 - 69,99 | Satisfactory       | Students demonstrate sufficient understanding but still make several errors in verb usage.       |
| D | 40 - 59,99 | Poor               | Students demonstrate limited understanding and frequently misuse verbs in sentence construction. |
| E | 0 - 39,99  | Very Poor / Failed | Students demonstrate very accurate understanding and application of verbs in all indicators.     |

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Students' Competence on Each Indicator

#### Verb Recognition

In this test, the Verb Recognition test was designed to measure students' ability in identifying action verbs through a matching task. The researcher provided 50 vocabulary items consisting of commonly used daily action verbs. Students were required to match each picture with the most appropriate action verb provided. This format was used to assess students' basic understanding of verb meaning in context and their ability to connect visual

representations with the correct lexical forms of action verbs. The selection of vocabulary focused on frequently encountered verbs in everyday activities to ensure that the test reflected real-life language use and their relevance to beginner-to-intermediate English proficiency levels. The 50 action verbs covered 10 action verbs in five categories: basic daily activities, school activities, physical movements, household activities, and social communication. This selection ensures that the test reflects real-life language use and allows students to demonstrate their basic understanding of action verbs in meaningful contexts.

The giving score toward this test was 1 point for each correct answer. The target point of 25 students for 1 category was 250. The achievement point then adjusted to the score in table 1.

Table 3. Scoring Criteria for Verb Recognition

| Category                                                    | Number of Test Items |                           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Basic daily activities                                      | 10                   |                           |
| School activities                                           | 10                   |                           |
| Physical movements                                          | 10                   |                           |
| Household activities                                        | 10                   |                           |
| Social communication                                        | 10                   |                           |
| Total Test Items                                            | 50                   |                           |
| Scoring Criteria and Students' Achievement Point personally | score 4              | Point 41-50 = 0 student   |
|                                                             | score 3              | Point 31-40 = 6 students  |
|                                                             | score 2              | Point 21-30 = 7 students  |
|                                                             | score 1              | Point 11-20 = 12 students |
|                                                             | score 0              | Point 0-10 = 0 student    |

Table 4. The Students' Competence in Recognizing Action Verb

| Categories              | Target Point | Achievement Point | Average Point |
|-------------------------|--------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Basic daily activities  | 250          | 131               | 5.24          |
| School activities       | 250          | 146               | 5.84          |
| Physical movements      | 250          | 107               | 4.28          |
| Household activities    | 250          | 95                | 3.80          |
| Social communication    | 250          | 133               | 5.32          |
| Total Achievement Point | 1.250        | 612               | 24.48         |
| Total Achievement Score | 4            |                   | 2             |

Based on the results of the Action Verb Recognition Test, the students' competence was categorized at Level 2. The total achievement point obtained by the 25 students was only 612 not even half. This result indicated that most students were only able to identify some action verbs correctly. The highest point was two students of 40 correct from 50 words, and the lowest point was one student only of 15 correct. The finding demonstrates indicating that students' understanding of action verbs was still limited and requires further improvement through more intensive practice and contextual learning activities.

### Verb Form Understanding

The Verb Form Understanding section was designed to assess students' knowledge of verb forms, including the base form (V1), past form (V2), and past participle (V3), as well as their ability to distinguish between regular and irregular verbs. In this part the researcher provided 25 multiple-choice question. The action verbs were randomly selected from the 50 words tested before. Each assessment category had 5 questions. Each correct answer was scored 1 point. The target point for 25 students for 1 category is 125. The achievement point then adjusted to the score in table 1.

Table 5. Scoring Criteria for Verb Form Understanding

| Category                                                    | Number of Test Items |                          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Verb 1                                                      | 5                    |                          |
| Verb 2                                                      | 5                    |                          |
| Verb 3                                                      | 5                    |                          |
| Regular Verbs                                               | 5                    |                          |
| Regular Verbs                                               | 5                    |                          |
| Total Test Items                                            | 25                   |                          |
| Scoring Criteria and Students' Achievement Point personally | score 4              | Point 21-25 = 1 student  |
|                                                             | score 3              | Point 16-20 = 4 students |
|                                                             | score 2              | Point 11-15 = 6 students |
|                                                             | score 1              | Point 6-10 = 14 students |
|                                                             | score 0              | Point 0-5 = 0 student    |

Table 6. The Students' Competence in Verb Form Understanding

| Categories              | Target Point | Achievement Point | Average Point |
|-------------------------|--------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Verb 1                  | 125          | 90                | 3.60          |
| Verb 2                  | 125          | 66                | 2.64          |
| Verb 3                  | 125          | 41                | 1.64          |
| Regular Verb            | 125          | 66                | 2.64          |
| Irregular Verb          | 125          | 41                | 1.64          |
| Total Achievement Point | 625          | 304               | 12,16         |
| Total Achievement Score | 4            |                   | 2             |

Students' competence in the Verb Form Understanding was categorized at Level 2. The total achievement point obtained by the 25 students was only 304 points and the average point of 12.16. Only one student achieved score 4 for 21 correct answers and the other 14 students were just in score 1 level. This result indicated that most students were only able to identify verb 1 as a base form of verb correctly. They were able to distinguish Verb 1 forms correctly and showed their excellent understanding according to the scoring criteria. Meanwhile there were still many errors in identifying verb 2 and verb 3 forms for irregular form. Overall, the students' competence in Verb Form Understanding was categorized as partial understanding but still many errors.

### Subject- Verb Agreement

This section evaluated students' ability to apply subject-verb agreement rules accurately in sentences. Students were given sentence-based items and asked to determine whether the verb used was appropriate according to the subject of the sentence. The task focused on singular and plural subjects, as well as correct verb usage in present tense forms. This indicator was intended to measure students' grammatical accuracy in ensuring consistency between subjects and verbs within sentence structures. In this part the researcher provided 10 multiple-choice question. The action verbs were randomly selected from the 50 words tested before. Each assessment category had 5 questions. Each correct answer was scored 1 point. The target point for 25 students for 1 category is 125. The achievement point then adjusted to the score in table 1.

Table 7. Scoring Criteria for Subject- Verb Agreement

| Category                                                    | Number of Test Items |                         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Singular Subject                                            | 5                    |                         |
| Plural Subject                                              | 5                    |                         |
| Total Test Items                                            | 10                   |                         |
| Scoring Criteria and Students' Achievement Point personally | score 4              | Point 9-10 = 6 students |
|                                                             | score 3              | Point 7-8 = 4 students  |
|                                                             | score 2              | Point 5-6 = 14 students |
|                                                             | score 1              | Point 3-4 = 1 students  |
|                                                             | score 0              | Point 0-2 = 0 student   |

Table 8. The Students' Competence in Subject-Verb Agreement

| Categories              | Target Point | Achievement Point | Average Point |
|-------------------------|--------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Singular Subject        | 125          | 68                | 2.72          |
| Plural Subject          | 125          | 95                | 3.80          |
| Total Achievement Point | <b>250</b>   | <b>163</b>        | <b>6,52</b>   |
| Total Achievement Score | <b>4</b>     |                   | <b>2</b>      |

Based on the results of the Subject-Verb Agreement Test, the students' competence was categorized at Level 2, minus 0.48 point to the level 3. The total achievement score obtained by the 25 students was 163 points with an average point of 6.52. The findings revealed that the students performed better in identifying and using verb forms with plural subjects. In contrast, their achievement in singular subjects was lower. This difference suggests that most students were more familiar with using the base form of verbs with plural subjects. However, they still experienced difficulties in applying the correct verb forms with singular subjects, particularly in adding -s or -es to verbs in the simple present tense. Overall, the results indicate that although the students had a basic understanding of subject-verb agreement, their competence was still limited and required further improvement, especially in recognizing and applying verb forms for singular subjects accurately.

### Tense Application

The Tense Application section assessed students' ability to use appropriate verb forms across different tenses, including past, future, progressive, and perfect tenses. The researcher did not include present tense because it had been represented by the subject-verb agreement test above. In this test, students were required to apply the correct verb form based on the context of the sentence. This indicator aimed to evaluate students' understanding of temporal reference in English grammar and their ability to apply tense rules accurately in various communicative situations. There were 25 multiple-choice question. The action verbs were randomly selected from the 50 words tested before. Each assessment category had 5 questions. 1 point for each correct answer. The achievement point then adjusted to the score in table 1.

Table 9. Scoring Criteria for Tense Application

| Category                                                    | Number of Test Items                                              |                           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Present Tense</i>                                        | <i>It had been represented by the Subject-Verb Agreement Test</i> |                           |
| Past Tense                                                  | 5                                                                 |                           |
| Present Progressive Tense                                   | 5                                                                 |                           |
| Past Progressive Tense                                      | 5                                                                 |                           |
| Future Tense                                                | 5                                                                 |                           |
| Present Perfect Tense                                       | 5                                                                 |                           |
| Total Test Items                                            | <b>25</b>                                                         |                           |
| Scoring Criteria and Students' Achievement Point personally | score 4                                                           | Point 21-25 = 3 students  |
|                                                             | score 3                                                           | Point 16-20 = 7 students  |
|                                                             | score 2                                                           | Point 11-15 = 12 students |
|                                                             | score 1                                                           | Point 6-10 = 3students    |
|                                                             | score 0                                                           | Point 0-5 = 0 student     |

Table 10. The Students' Competence in Tense Application

| Categories                | Target Point | Achievement Point | Average Point |
|---------------------------|--------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Past Tense                | 125          | 66                | 2.64          |
| Present Progressive Tense | 125          | 86                | 3.44          |
| Past Progressive Tense    | 125          | 65                | 2.60          |
| Future Tense              | 125          | 95                | 3.80          |
| Present Perfect Tense     | 125          | 41                | 1.64          |
| Total Achievement Point   | <b>625</b>   | <b>353</b>        | <b>14,12</b>  |
| Total Achievement Score   | <b>4</b>     |                   | <b>2</b>      |

The findings revealed at the Tense Application Test that the highest achievement was found in the Future Tense category. This result suggests that most students were relatively familiar with constructing sentences using future tense patterns. The students also showed

moderate achievement in Present Continuous, which indicating that they had a fair understanding of progressive tense forms. Meanwhile, Past Tense and Past Continuous, the students still encountered difficulties in applying past forms consistently. The lowest achievement was found in the Present Perfect category, many students had difficulty using the appropriate auxiliary verbs (*have* and *has*) as well as selecting the correct past participle forms (*Verb 3*) when constructing present perfect sentences. Overall, the results suggest that the students had only a partial mastery of tense application. Although they were able to use some tense forms correctly, particularly future and progressive tenses, they still demonstrated weaknesses in applying past and perfect tenses accurately. Therefore, their competence in tense application was categorized at Level 2, indicating partial use of correct tenses with many remaining errors.

### Sentence Construction

The Sentence Construction task measured students' ability to produce meaningful and grammatically correct sentences using action verbs. Students were required to construct sentences based on given prompts or vocabulary items. This indicator focused on their ability to integrate vocabulary knowledge, grammatical structure, and meaning into coherent sentences. It also assessed overall language production skills, particularly in forming correct and understandable sentences in English.

In this research, the *Sentence Construction Test* implemented was a *guided essay technique*. This approach was chosen to help students construct English sentences in a more structured and directed way, so that they would not face excessive difficulty in producing language. Through this guided essay technique, the researcher had prepared some action verbs familiar to the students but they were not required to write free essays. Indeed, they were guided to produce simple yet meaningful sentences based on the given prompts.

The students's competence in this part of the test could be seen based on the indicators of Verb Comprehension Test number 5 in table 1. The giving score was in the range 0-4. There were 7 categories of assessment. The students were instructed to construct 5 sentences for each category. The maximum score for 7 categories is 140 per 1 student and 3500 for all students. The researcher then calculated the mean score achieved in each category to show the students' competence in sentence construction and determined the interval for the mean score with the formula: Maximal score (4) minus Minimal Score (0) divided by number of question (5) equal (0.8)

Table 11. Scoring Criteria for Sentence Construction

| Category               | Number of Test Items | Prompts                                                                |
|------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The use of aux&V1+s/es | 5                    | 1. Construct 5 correct sentences in Present Tense for singular subject |
| The use of aux & V1    | 5                    | 2. Construct 5 correct sentences in Present Tense for plural subject   |
| The use of aux & V2    | 5                    | 3. Construct 5 correct sentences in Past Tense                         |
| The use of to-be&V-ing | 5                    | 4. Construct 5 correct sentences in Present Progressive Tense          |
| The use of to-be&V-ing | 5                    | 5. Construct 5 correct sentences in Past Progressive Tense             |
| The use of aux&V1      | 5                    | 6. Construct 5 correct sentences in Future Tense                       |
| The use of aux&V3      | 5                    | 7. Construct 5 correct sentences in Present Perfect Tense              |
| Total Test Items       | 35                   |                                                                        |

| Mean Score  | Score | Mean Score | Prompt 1  | Prompt 2 | Prompt 3  | Prompt 4  | Prompt 5  | Prompt 6  | Prompt 7  |
|-------------|-------|------------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Criteria    | 4 =   | 3.21 - 4   | 3         | 8        | 0 student | 5         | 1 student | 1 student | 0 student |
| and         | 3 =   | 2.41 -     | students  | students | 0         | students  | 6         | 3         | 0 student |
| Students'   | 2 =   | 3.20       | 4         | 13       | students  | 15        | students  | students  | 9         |
| Achievement | 1 =   | 1.61 -     | students  | students | 11        | students  | 15        | 21        | students  |
| Score       | 0 =   | 2.40       | 16        | 4        | students  | 5         | students  | students  | 16        |
| personally  |       | 0.81 -     | students  | students | 14        | students  | 3         | 0 student | student   |
|             |       | 1.60       | 2 student |          | students  | 0 student | students  | 0 student | 0 student |

|      |           |           |           |           |           |
|------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 0 –  | 0 student | 0         | 0 student | 0 student | 0 student |
| 0.80 |           | students  |           |           |           |
|      |           | 0 student |           |           |           |

Table 12. The Students' Competence in Sentence Construction

| Prompts                                                       | Target Score | Achievement Score | Mean Score | Average Score |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|------------|---------------|
| Construct 5 sentences in Present Tense 1 for singular subject | 500          | 294               | 2.35       | 2             |
| Construct 5 sentences in Present Tense 1 for plural subject   | 500          | 381               | 3.05       | 3             |
| Construct 5 sentences in Past Tense                           | 500          | 212               | 1.70       | 2             |
| Construct 5 sentences in Present Progressive Tense            | 500          | 345               | 2.76       | 3             |
| Construct 5 sentences in Past Progressive Tense               | 500          | 296               | 2.37       | 2             |
| Construct 5 sentences in Future Tense                         | 500          | 291               | 2.33       | 2             |
| Construct 5 sentences in Present Perfect Tense                | 500          | 199               | 1.59       | 1             |
| Total Achievement Score                                       | 3500         | 2018              | 2.31       | 2             |

Based on the results of the Sentence Construction Test, the students' competence was categorized at Level 2. The students were able to use several tense forms correctly. However, they still made many errors in applying tense rules, particularly in the Present Perfect Tense and Past Tense. In contrast, the highest achievement was found in the Present Tense for Plural Subjects and the Present Progressive Tense, indicating that students were more familiar with these tense forms than with other tense categories. The total achievement score obtained by the 25 students was 2018 points with an overall mean score of 2.31. According to the scoring criteria, this result indicates that the students were able to construct understandable sentences, but they still made many grammatical errors. The findings revealed that the highest achievement was found in sentence construction of Present Tense. This result indicates that most students were able to construct meaningful sentences with only minor grammatical errors. Similarly, the use of Present Progressive Tense showed that students had a relatively good understanding of constructing sentences using *to be* and *V-ing* forms. Overall, the findings suggest that the students were able to construct sentences that were generally understandable, but grammatical accuracy remained a significant challenge. Their competence in sentence construction was therefore categorized at Level 2, indicating understandable sentence production with many grammatical errors.

### Students' Overall Competence in Applying Action Verbs

After completing all sections of the Verb Comprehension Test. The students' highest and lowest achievement are presented figure 1.

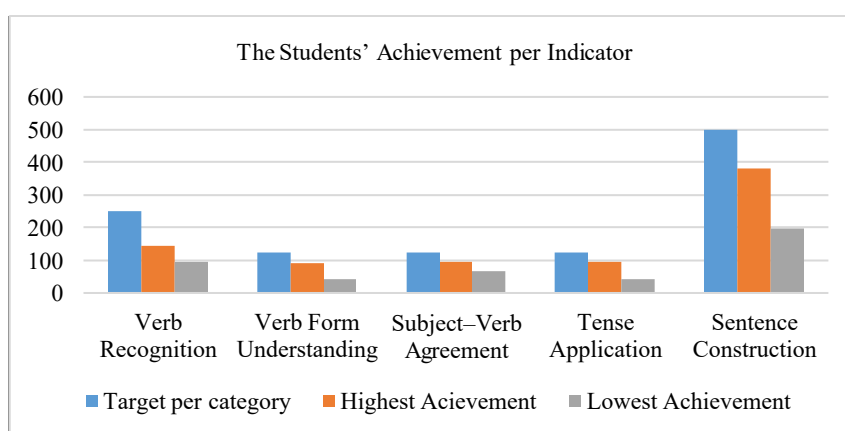


Figure 1. Students' Achievement per Indicator

Table 13. The Students' Achievement Description

| Indicators              | Highest Achievement                | Lowest Achievement       |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Verb Recognition        | Basic daily activities             | Household activities     |
| Verb Form Understanding | Verb 1                             | Verb 3 & Irregular Verbs |
| Subject-Verb Agreement  | Plural Subject                     | Singular Subject         |
| Tense Application       | Future Tense                       | Present Perfect Tense    |
| Sentence Construction   | Present Tense 1 for plural subject | Present Perfect Tense    |

And the students' overall competence in applying action verbs in English sentences was calculated based on the five assessment indicators, namely Verb Recognition, Verb Form Understanding, Subject-Verb Agreement, Tense Application, and Sentence Construction. The results of the overall achievement are presented in table 14.

Table 14. The Students' Competence In All Indicator

| Indicators              | Achievement Score | Achievement Description                          |
|-------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Verb Recognition        | 2                 | Students identify some action verbs              |
| Verb Form Understanding | 2                 | Partial understanding but many errors            |
| Subject-Verb Agreement  | 2                 | Frequent errors but meaning still understandable |
| Tense Application       | 2                 | Partial use of correct tenses                    |
| Sentence Construction   | 2                 | Understandable but many grammatical error        |
| Overall Score           | 10                |                                                  |

Based on Table 14, the students obtained an overall score of 10 from a maximum possible score of 20 across the five assessment indicators. To facilitate interpretation and align the results with the university grading system, the score was converted into a 100-point. Furthermore, the students' final grade were adjusted to letter grade (A, B, C, D, or E) according to the grading system implemented at Widyaswara Indonesia Campus. This grading system served as the standard for evaluating students' achievement, as presented in Table 2.

Table 15. Students' Overall Competence in Applying Action Verbs

| Indicators                         | Achievement Score | Grade    |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|----------|
| Verb Recognition                   | 2                 | 50       |
| Verb Form Understanding            | 2                 | 50       |
| Subject-Verb Agreement             | 2                 | 50       |
| Tense Application                  | 2                 | 50       |
| Sentence Construction              | 2                 | 50       |
| Total Achievement Score            | 10                | 50       |
| <b>Students' Final Achievement</b> |                   | <b>D</b> |

The students' final achievement was in grade 50 similar to D for letter grade. It showed the students' competence in applying action verb in English sentences was still poor that the Students demonstrate limited understanding and frequently misuse verbs in sentence construction

## CONCLUSIONS

The findings on 25 first-semester students of Primary School Teacher Education revealed that their competence in applying action verbs in English sentences was relatively low. The students obtained a total achievement score of 10 out of 20, equivalent to 50 on a 100-point scale and classified as grade D under the institutional grading system. Students experienced difficulties across most indicators, particularly in sentence construction and tense application. Although they performed slightly better in basic areas such as verb recognition and subject-verb agreement, their understanding of more complex grammatical structures, especially verb forms and tense usage, remained limited. The Present Perfect and Past Tenses were the most challenging areas, whereas simpler present-tense structures showed relatively better performance. Overall, the findings indicate that students' mastery of action verbs in English sentence construction was still weak, as reflected in frequent errors and limited understanding

of grammatical rules. Therefore, further instruction and targeted practice are needed to improve their grammatical competence.

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