



THE EFFECTIVENESS OF USING SONGS IN TEACHING ENGLISH VOCABULARY AT SMP NEGERI 1 BANDA ACEH

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of using songs in vocabulary learning among seventh-grade students at SMPN 1 Banda Aceh. The research employs a Pretest-Posttest Single Group design to measure the differences in vocabulary scores before and after the intervention. Data were collected through pre-tests and post-tests administered before and after the song-based instruction. The intervention involved using specific songs during teaching sessions. Statistical analysis, including the paired sample t-test, revealed a significant improvement in students' vocabulary scores, with an average pretest score of 60.7 and a post-test score of 80.2. The calculated t-value was 54.2, which exceeded the critical t-value at a 0.05 significant level, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis and supporting the alternative hypothesis that songs significantly enhance students' vocabulary understanding. These findings align with previous research and suggest that the song-based learning method can effectively improve vocabulary mastery and student engagement. The study recommends applying this method in other educational contexts and exploring the long-term impact of vocabulary learning through songs.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching vocabulary is a fundamental component of language education, as vocabulary acquisition forms the basis for effective communication and language proficiency. According to Linsen (2015), vocabulary is the body of words used in a particular language. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), learners often struggle with retaining new words and understanding how to use them in different contexts. Traditional methods, such as rote memorization and vocabulary lists, have their limitations, as they can be repetitive and disengaging for students. Therefore, educators continually seek innovative strategies to enhance vocabulary instruction, making it more dynamic and effective for learners. One such method that has gained attention is the incorporation of songs into vocabulary teaching, leveraging the natural appeal of music to facilitate language acquisition.

Songs have long been recognized for their potential to enhance memory and learning in various educational settings. In language learning, songs offer rich, authentic language

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input within a context that is both entertaining and familiar to students. The rhythmic patterns and repetitive structures in songs allow learners to repeatedly encounter and practice new vocabulary in a way that is both enjoyable and meaningful. The role of vocabulary is necessary in the language learning process, and according to Dale in Gasma (2017), songs are particularly effective in introducing vocabulary because they provide a meaningful context for the words, and through songs, students are more likely to participate in learning. Furthermore, the emotional connection that students often develop with music can create a more relaxed and conducive learning environment. This emotional engagement can reduce the anxiety often associated with learning a foreign language, fostering a positive attitude toward vocabulary acquisition.

The benefits of using songs for teaching vocabulary extend beyond simple memorization. Songs provide opportunities for learners to encounter vocabulary in context, helping them understand not only the meaning of new words but also their usage in different linguistic situations. According to Christiana Evy Tri Widya Hening & Rahayu (T. Widyahening et al., 2021), vocabulary is a collection of words that a person knows and is one of the crucial components of the language system that is important to learn in English. Through exposure to real-life language in songs, students can see how vocabulary is used in authentic communication, including colloquial expressions and idiomatic phrases. This contextualized learning approach can bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge of vocabulary and practical usage, helping learners apply new words in meaningful ways during conversation and writing tasks.

There are three previous studies that have discussed this research. The first from Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teachers' Training Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta (2015) with the title "The Effectiveness of Using English songs from YouTube Towards Students Vocabulary Mastery at RUHAMA Islamic Junior High School at South Tangerang" by Rahmah, F.A shown that teaching vocabulary through song proved by the students' mean score of post-test in experimental class (75.33) was higher than pre-test (57.16) with gained score was 18.16. Furthermore, Hatimah, H.K (2018) from University of Makassar in titled "Song-Based Lesson in Improving Vocabulary: An Experimental Study of The Second Year Student of MTs Negeri Bantaeng" proved in experimental group the students' score in pretest was 57.10 improved to 76.60 in post-test. While in control group, the students' scores in pretest were 51.00 and 58.90 in post-test. It means that the students' mean score of post-test indicated the experimental group was higher than control group (76.60 > 58.90). The last one, Hidayati (2017) "Increasing Students' Vocabulary by Using Song Lyric at The Second Grade of SMP Negeri 3 Tolitoli" from Madako University, proved that the result of the mean score of post-test was 82.42. It was higher than the mean score of pre-test 77.09.

The similarity between this study and the three previous studies is the use of songs for teaching vocabulary, with a focus on secondary school education. However, there are several key differences. First, this study was conducted at a different location compared to the previous studies. Second, this study specifically uses audio media in the form of songs, while the previous studies might have employed various forms of media or teaching techniques. Third, the methods used to measure effectiveness in this study may differ from

those in the previous studies, which could involve different approaches or measurement instruments.

This research aims to determine the effectiveness of using songs as a tool for teaching vocabulary at SMP Negeri 1 Banda Aceh. The study will focus on investigating whether incorporating songs into vocabulary instruction can enhance students' ability to learn and use new vocabulary.

Teaching vocabulary is a crucial aspect of language learning, as it forms the foundation for effective communication and language proficiency. Thornbury (2002) emphasizes that vocabulary learning is important because it is the basis of language. Similarly, Burhayani (2013) contends that effectiveness is attainable as songs enhance students' enjoyment of the learning process and facilitate the retention of new words. Engaging in singing songs and related activities enables students to grasp the meanings of lyrics or new words without the need to consult dictionaries or seek assistance from others. Another perspective comes from Sa'd, S.H. and Rajabi, F. (2018) who state that vocabulary learning provides learners with an opportunity to use that language and communicate with others. Mastery of a broad vocabulary contributes significantly to almost all aspects of language (Nathalie Wijaya, 2015; C. E. T. Widyahening & Sufa, 2022). Susanto & Fazlinda (2016) further argue that vocabulary mastery plays an important role in the four language skills, highlighting that it is a crucial component of language learning. Furthermore, according to Juliana (2021), vocabulary is important to reach the success of language learning. The use of song lyrics in vocabulary instruction offers a multisensory learning experience that appeals to diverse learning styles. According to research by Rahman et al. (2018), music engages auditory, visual, and kinaesthetic modalities, allowing students to internalize vocabulary more effectively. Through listening to songs, observing lyrics, and participating in rhythmic movements or gestures, students activate multiple cognitive processes, reinforcing their understanding and retention of vocabulary words. This holistic approach to vocabulary learning not only accommodates the needs of auditory and visual learners but also fosters a deeper connection to the language, making learning more engaging and memorable. Alqahtani (2015) further argued that the acquisition of an adequate vocabulary is essential for successful foreign language use because without an extensive vocabulary, a language learner will be unable to use the structures and functions they have learned for comprehensible communication.

Songs, short musical compositions with lyrics, offer an engaging and cost-effective method for teaching vocabulary. Moreover, utilizing songs in language learning attracts students' interest and motivation, as highlighted by Hadi (2019) and Andayani (2022). Andayani emphasizes that songs motivate children to enjoy learning English, making it easier for them to grasp the presented material. One of the primary advantages of using songs is the repetitive structure inherent in them. Repetition plays a crucial role in language acquisition, as it allows students to hear and practice new words multiple times in meaningful contexts. The rhythm and melody of songs also aid memory retention by making words easier to recall. The repeated exposure to new vocabulary in a structured and repetitive form, as in songs, strengthens students' ability to remember and use the words effectively. Additionally, songs serve as valuable media for conveying information and enhancing student comprehension during the teaching and learning process. English

songs play a magical role in teaching new vocabulary and should be used as 9 supplementary materials in teaching (Malekian, 2016). Songs are viewed as one of the most effective ways for vocabulary learning (Nguyen, 2020; Setiawan, 2019). By listening to songs, students encounter real-life language usage, including word forms and sentence patterns, which can enrich their vocabulary knowledge in practical and engaging ways.

Teaching Vocabulary by Songs In English language teaching, the use of songs as a medium for learning has been shown to have a positive impact on students' language development. According to Zamin et al. (2020), songs are used by EFL teachers as a tool for teaching English because they contribute positively to language improvement. A study on learning vocabulary through songs was also conducted by Zamin et al. (2020), supporting these findings. Additionally, Džanić et al. (2016) found that songs benefit young learners' vocabulary and are relevant for various learning styles and settings. This indicates that songs are adaptable and can be effectively used in diverse educational environments. Sari, Asahra, and Yana (2019) confirm that songs can be a valuable learning resource for English classes as learning English through songs reduces learners' anxiety and stress. This reduction in anxiety can enhance students' engagement and willingness to participate in language learning. According to Yusnida (2020), effective teaching involves making good preparations on the material to be taught before coming to class and choosing interesting and authentic materials to build up students' motivation, which aligns well with the use of songs in enhancing language learning experiences. English songs offer an effective alternative technique in teaching as they allow for vocabulary practice and add enjoyment to the learning process 10 (Antika, 2021; Bawawa, 2020; Millington, 2011). This is in line with Adnyani & Dewi (2020), who emphasize that songs are not only beneficial in language learning but can also enhance students' motivation and vocabulary mastery. By integrating songs into vocabulary teaching, educators can create a more dynamic and enjoyable learning experience, which can lead to better retention and application of new words. Thus, teaching vocabulary through songs not only enriches students' learning experiences but also improves the overall effectiveness of English language education.

Vocabulary plays a crucial role in language learning as it is the foundation for effective communication. Without a sufficient vocabulary, individuals will struggle to understand and convey messages clearly. Vocabulary helps not only in understanding texts and conversations but also in expressing ideas, emotions, and needs precisely. In the context of language learning, a broad vocabulary facilitates improvements in reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. The ability to read and comprehend texts heavily relies on the number of known words, while in speaking and writing, a varied vocabulary allows for more creative expression and richer nuances. Mastery of vocabulary also strengthens listening skills, as students can more easily follow conversations and complex audio materials. Furthermore, a good vocabulary enhances critical and analytical thinking skills, as students can understand and analyse more complex ideas. Vocabulary enables learners to engage in deeper discussions and process information more efficiently. Additionally, a broad vocabulary acts as a bridge to access and understand broader cultural contexts, which is vital for authentic language learning. A strong vocabulary 11 supports effective interaction in social and professional settings and helps achieve academic and personal goals. According to Alqahtani (2015), the importance of vocabulary is evident both

inside and outside the classroom on a daily basis. In the classroom, successful students typically have the most adequate vocabulary. Strong vocabulary mastery provides significant advantages in the learning process, as it allows students to better understand materials, actively participate in discussions, and clearly express their ideas. Nation, as cited by Alqahtani (2015), further illustrates the complementary relationship between vocabulary knowledge and language use: vocabulary knowledge enables language use, and conversely, language use enhances vocabulary knowledge. Additionally, both teachers and students agree that vocabulary acquisition is a central factor in language teaching, as noted by Walters in Alqahtani (2015). Thus, effective vocabulary development not only supports language comprehension but also facilitates more successful communication and a more comprehensive mastery of the language.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative research design utilizing a Pretest-Posttest Single Group approach. This design was chosen to allow for an in-depth examination of the impact of a specific intervention (the use of songs in vocabulary teaching) on students' performance in a controlled setting. By measuring students' vocabulary proficiency before and after the intervention, the researcher aimed to assess whether the use of songs effectively enhanced vocabulary learning.

The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 1 Banda Aceh, with a randomly selected class of seventh-grade students from class 7-3. The class consisted of 30 students, who were selected randomly to ensure that every student had an equal chance of participating. The study specifically targeted improving students' vocabulary related to nouns.

Pre-test

Before the intervention, a pretest was administered to assess the students' baseline knowledge of vocabulary. This pretest consisted of a gap-fill exercise based on song lyrics, where students were required to fill in missing words from a song based on their understanding of the vocabulary in context. The exercise was designed to evaluate the students' existing vocabulary proficiency, particularly their familiarity with the target nouns, and served as a benchmark to measure improvements following the intervention.

The gap-fill exercise was based on the lyrics of the song "Happy" by Pharrell Williams. The missing words were specifically chosen to represent key vocabulary related to emotions, positivity, and descriptions, which were relevant to the learning objectives of the study. This pretest provided insights into the students' vocabulary retention and comprehension before they were exposed to the song-based treatment.

Treatment

Following the pretest, the intervention phase began. During this phase, students were taught vocabulary through the use of songs. The song selected for this phase was "Happy" by Pharrell Williams. The song was chosen because it features clear, repetitive lyrics, making it accessible for students to understand, memorize, and engage with the vocabulary. Moreover, the vocabulary within the song was related to emotions and positive experiences, making it both relevant and practical for students' everyday language use.

The treatment phase consisted of several stages:

1. **Song Introduction:** The teacher introduced the song to the students, explaining the meaning of the song and its vocabulary. This step provided context for the vocabulary that would be introduced in the song, preparing students to recognize and understand the words in context.
2. **Listening Activity:** Students listened to the song while following along with printed lyrics. The teacher encouraged students to pay attention to the vocabulary words used in the song, especially those that were directly related to the learning objectives.
3. **Gap-Fill Exercise:** After listening to the song, students completed a gap-fill exercise where key vocabulary words from the song were removed. Students were tasked with filling in the missing words, helping them practice and reinforce their understanding of the vocabulary within context.
4. **Vocabulary Practice:** After completing the gap-fill exercise, students had the opportunity to practice the vocabulary in context. They were encouraged to use the words in sentences, discuss their meanings, and think about how they might use the words in real-life situations.
5. **Repetition:** The song was played multiple times during the lesson to reinforce the vocabulary and help students retain the words. Repetition was key to ensuring that students had ample exposure to the vocabulary, allowing them to internalize the new words and their meanings.

Throughout the intervention phase, the teacher provided continuous support, clarifying any doubts and offering additional examples of how the vocabulary could be used. The goal of this phase was not only to introduce new vocabulary but also to create a meaningful and engaging learning experience for the students.

Post-test

After the intervention, a posttest was administered to assess whether students had improved their vocabulary knowledge. The posttest followed a similar format to the pretest, also utilizing a gap-fill exercise, but this time based on a different song, "Count on Me" by Bruno Mars. This song was selected because it contains a variety of vocabulary related to friendship, support, and trust, which aligned with the objective of improving vocabulary related to interpersonal relationships.

The posttest was designed to measure students' vocabulary retention and comprehension after being exposed to the song-based intervention. By using a different song, the researcher aimed to assess how well the students retained the vocabulary learned from the first song, and whether they were able to apply this vocabulary in a new context.

Similar to the pretest, the gap-fill exercise in the posttest required students to fill in missing words from the song lyrics. The vocabulary was related to positive concepts and emotions, providing a meaningful context for the students to demonstrate their vocabulary proficiency.

The data collected from the pretest and posttest were analyzed using a paired sample t-test. This statistical method was chosen because it allows for a comparison of the means of two related groups—in this case, the students' pretest and posttest scores. The paired sample t-test is commonly used in experimental research to determine if there is a

statistically significant difference between two sets of related scores. The results of this test will provide insight into the effectiveness of using songs as a method for teaching vocabulary.

In summary, this research method was designed to measure the impact of song-based vocabulary instruction on seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Banda Aceh. By using a pretest-posttest design, the study aimed to assess whether incorporating songs into vocabulary teaching can enhance students' ability to learn and retain new vocabulary, specifically nouns, through a fun and engaging approach

RESULT

The results of the study indicate a significant improvement in students' vocabulary proficiency after the intervention. The pretest and posttest scores of the 30 students in class 7-3 were analyzed, and a substantial increase in vocabulary mastery was observed. The detailed analysis was explained with the following formulas

$$\bar{x}_{pretest} = \frac{\sum x}{\sum n} = \frac{1829}{30} = 60.97$$

$$\bar{x}_{post-test} = \frac{\sum x}{\sum n} = \frac{2420}{30} = 80.67$$

$$T_{test} = \frac{Md}{\sqrt{\frac{\sum x^2 d}{n(n-1)}}} = 64.1$$

The average pretest score of the students was 60.97, indicating a moderate level of proficiency in the targeted vocabulary before the intervention. After the intervention, the average posttest score increased to 80.67. This represents a mean improvement of 19.7 points, which indicates a substantial gain in students' vocabulary comprehension after being taught using songs.

To assess the statistical significance of this improvement, a **paired sample t-test** was conducted. The calculated t-value was 64.1, which exceeded the critical t-value at the 0.05 significance level. This means that the difference between the pretest and posttest scores was statistically significant, allowing the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_0) that the intervention had no effect on students' vocabulary mastery. Therefore, the data supports the alternative hypothesis (H_1), which posits that the use of songs significantly enhanced students' vocabulary learning.

The findings suggest that the song-based vocabulary teaching method was effective in improving students' vocabulary knowledge. The results align with previous studies that have demonstrated the positive impact of songs on language acquisition and vocabulary retention. In addition to improving academic performance, many students reported enjoying the song-based lessons, which may have further motivated them to engage with the learning material.

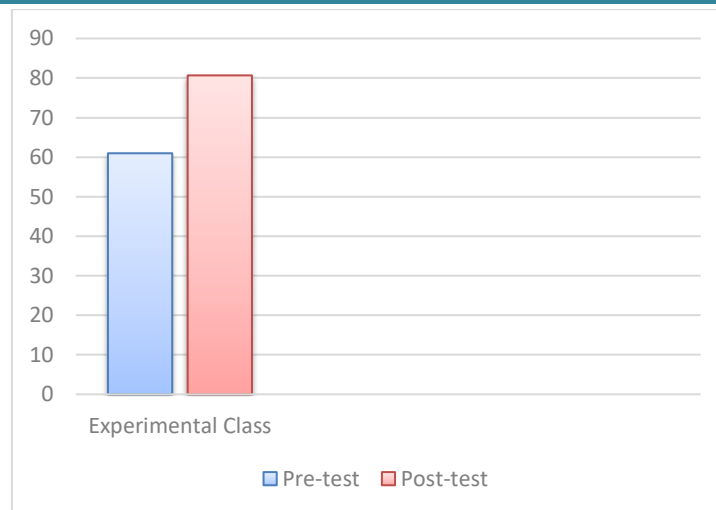


Figure 1. Pre-test and Pro- test

DISCUSSION

The results of this study support the hypothesis that using songs as a teaching method can significantly improve students' vocabulary proficiency. The significant increase in vocabulary scores from pretest to post-test demonstrates that songs can be an effective tool for enhancing language learning, particularly for vocabulary acquisition.

One of the main reasons for the positive impact of songs on vocabulary acquisition is the repetition inherent in music. Repetition is a key feature of both music and language learning. In the context of songs, students are exposed to vocabulary words multiple times within a short time span. This repetitive exposure helps reinforce the words and aids in memory retention. Furthermore, the rhythm and melody of songs facilitate memorization, making it easier for students to recall words and phrases when needed.

Another important factor is the engagement that songs provide. Students tend to be more motivated and excited when they learn through songs. The emotional connection that students develop with music helps create a positive and relaxed learning environment, which reduces the anxiety often associated with language learning. This emotional engagement likely contributes to the improvement in students' vocabulary scores, as students are more willing to actively participate in the learning process.

Additionally, songs offer a contextualized learning experience. Vocabulary is presented within the framework of a real-life situation, allowing students to understand not only the meaning of words but also how they are used in authentic communication. This context-driven approach is especially important in language learning, as it helps bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical usage. In this study, the songs used in the intervention provided students with a meaningful context to learn new vocabulary, which is likely one of the reasons for the improvement in their vocabulary proficiency.

Despite these positive findings, there are some limitations to the study that should be considered. One limitation is the small sample size. The study was conducted with a single class of 30 students, which may not fully represent the broader student population. A larger and more diverse sample would provide a more accurate picture of the effectiveness of

using songs in vocabulary teaching. Additionally, the study only focused on nouns, so the results may not be directly applicable to other types of vocabulary, such as verbs or adjectives. Future research could expand the scope of the study by investigating the effectiveness of songs in teaching different types of vocabulary.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that using songs in vocabulary teaching significantly improves students' vocabulary mastery. The pretest and posttest data demonstrated a clear improvement in students' vocabulary scores after the intervention, with the song-based approach proving to be an effective method for enhancing vocabulary comprehension.

The study recommends that teachers incorporate songs into their vocabulary instruction, as they provide an engaging and effective way to help students retain and understand vocabulary. The rhythmic and repetitive nature of songs, along with their ability to create emotional connections, makes them an ideal tool for language teaching.

Future research could explore the long-term impact of song-based vocabulary instruction and investigate its effectiveness across various educational settings and age groups. The potential benefits of using songs in language teaching extend beyond vocabulary acquisition, offering a more holistic approach to language learning that combines entertainment with education.

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