

Analysis of Using Song in English Vocabulary Mastery to Young Learners

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the use of song as pedagogical media in vocabulary mastery among young learners. Recognizing the important role of vocabulary in language mastery, this research aims to address the challenges faced by young learners in mastering English vocabulary, especially in a monotonous learning environment. The research focuses on two main aspects: the use of song in vocabulary mastery and teachers' perceptions of this method. Through qualitative research methods, including observations and interviews with English teachers, this research sought to analyze how song can facilitate vocabulary retention and engagement in young learners. This research used the data analysis technique by Miles and Huberman (1984), there were three stages in data analysis: data reduction, data display, and conclusion. The research findings show that song not only make learning fun, but also serve as an effective medium to improve vocabulary mastery. The research highlights the importance of selecting age-appropriate song that match students' interests and the importance of integrating song into the core teaching process rather than using them only as ice-breakers. The research concludes with recommendations for teachers to regularly incorporate song into their lesson plans and suggests future research to further explore the impact of different music genres on language learning. Overall, this research underscores the potential of music as a dynamic tool in fostering a positive learning environment and improving vocabulary mastery among young learners.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is a fundamental component of language learning, and its mastery was crucial for effective communication. This opinion is supported by the statement of Mahayana et al. (2022), which

stated that the aspect crucial for language learning, particularly in foreign languages, was the mastery of vocabulary. Additionally, Anwar and Efransyah (cited in Purnami, 2022) explain that vocabulary is an important component in language mastery because it conveyed the meaning a person needed to express themselves. Lastly, Putri and Ruspita (2023) assert that a person's vocabulary is a list of words they knew in a language. Thus, vocabulary played a crucial role in language mastery as it was the collection of commonly used words in a specific language that individuals learned to express themselves effectively. It served as a tool for conveying meaning and was essentially a list of terms known by a person in a particular language. Therefore, having a rich vocabulary was essential for effective communication and comprehension.

English skills referred to the level of expertise and proficiency that individuals had in using the English language, including their abilities and competencies in speaking, writing, listening, and reading. This is in line with Zaim's opinion (2016) in Ariawan et al. (2022), which stated that speaking, listening, reading, and writing were four language skills very important for mastering English. These skills were essential for effective communication. The four skills were used together to communicate effectively. To improve skills in English, individuals had to have mastery of vocabulary. Tarigan (2011:2) in Magdalena (2021) states that a person's language skills depended on the amount and quality of vocabulary they had. In other words, the more and better one's vocabulary was, the better one's language skills were.

Vocabulary learning should have been taught to young learners. As Rikmasari and Budianti (2019) stated, the age of young learners is very appropriate to start introducing various kinds of vocabulary to be understood and mastered because their memory was still very strong. Therefore, young learners had to be able to master vocabulary in English. Students were expected to possess fundamental skills in vocabulary knowledge, including the ability to identify and comprehend commonly used words, as well as using context as a tool to decipher the meaning of unfamiliar words.

In the context of young learners' education, there was a widespread perception that English, as a subject, was particularly challenging, especially in the area of vocabulary. Hartatiningsih (2022) revealed that if students lacked vocabulary, they would find it difficult to convey their ideas effectively. To overcome this challenge, students had to have a strong understanding of the meanings of the vocabulary they used, be able to spell it correctly, use it properly in sentences, and pronounce it appropriately. However, in schools, vocabulary learning was often monotonous, and students felt bored. This occurred because the vocabulary learning media did not attract children. To address this problem, teachers needed to be more creative to make students interested in learning vocabulary.

In Chapter 4 of grade 5 in Kurikulum Merdeka, learning about "I've got a stomachache" aimed for learners to identify and mention several types of pain complaints appropriately and correctly. However, in reality, students' pronunciation and mastery of the material were still very lacking. The learning process needed to run well in order to fulfill the objectives of the English subject outlined in the Decree of the Head of BSKAP No. 8 of 2022. English language learning aimed to develop communication skills. To develop these skills, everyone had to master a lot of vocabulary. The most important components in maintaining a smooth learning process were the proper usage of learning media. One of the most helpful media for teachers in helping students master vocabulary was using song.

A song was defined as a composition of words and music that was usually sung by one or more people (Putri & Ruspita, 2023). According to Dewi (2013) in Sari et al. (2019), the process of memorizing song is considered to increase student interest while facilitating vocabulary learning more efficiently. Not only did making song serve as a medium for vocabulary mastery attract students' interest, but it also greatly helped students do so more easily. The song contained an interesting rhythm, and the vocabulary in the song was easily remembered by students. Although not explicitly listed in the syllabus or in the Kurikulum Merdeka called ATP, the use of song in English language learning for young learners could be an effective strategy to improve students' language skills and create a fun learning atmosphere.

In reality, based on the observations that the researcher carried out with some young learners, they had the same problem as described above, where the mastery of English vocabulary in young learners was very low. Indeed, the English teacher used song, but only for ice-breaking so that students were not

easily bored. However, the use of song as ice-breaking was still not helpful in helping students master vocabulary. This was evidenced by the fact that there were still students who had not mastered vocabulary. In this research, the researcher only focused on analyzing the use of song on young learners' vocabulary mastery. Based on the description above, the limitations of English vocabulary mastery could be overcome by using song in vocabulary mastery. In this case, the researcher aimed to analyze and describe the use of song in vocabulary mastery in young learners.

2. METHODS

This research employed a qualitative descriptive method aimed at analyzing the use of songs in improving young learners' English vocabulary mastery. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows the researcher to explore and describe classroom phenomena naturally and comprehensively. This design focused on understanding how songs were implemented in vocabulary learning and how teachers perceived their effectiveness in enhancing students' engagement and comprehension.

The study was conducted at SD Negeri 070978 Gunungsitoli from October to November 2024, involving one English teacher and thirty fifth-grade students. The primary data were obtained through classroom observation and interviews with the teacher, while secondary data included photographs, videos, and documentation to support data validity. The researcher acted as the main instrument, assisted by observation sheets, interview guides, and recording tools. Observations used the Guttman scale to record the presence or absence of specific teaching activities, while structured interviews explored teachers' experiences, strategies, and perceptions in using songs for vocabulary instruction.

The data collection process followed several stages: identifying the problem, observing teaching activities, conducting interviews, and analyzing the data. Data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's (1984) interactive model, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. This process enabled the researcher to obtain a clear and systematic understanding of how songs functioned as effective learning media to enhance vocabulary mastery among young learners.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study involved 30 young learners in the fifth grade with data collected through classroom observations and interviews with the English teacher, conducted between October and November 2024.

3.1. The Step of Using Songs in English Vocabulary Mastery

The steps in using song in vocabulary learning described by Juwita et al (2020), namely:

- a) The teacher discusses the content of the song to be taught through teacher questions and answers to children.
- b) The teacher and the child sing the song as a whole two or three times.
- c) The teacher and children sing the song together, with the teacher's voice getting quieter and quieter.
- d) The teacher and child sing the song by humming.
- e) The teacher recites the verse line by line and is followed by the child.
- f) The teacher explains difficult words.
- g) Teacher and child sing the song together.
- h) The teacher gives the opportunity to children who can and want to sing alone or with some friends to come to the front of the class.
- i) The teacher gives guidance, encouragement to children who need it.
- j) The teacher gives praise quickly and in a timely manner so that the child gets excitement.
- k) Teacher and children sing another song as an interlude.
- l) Teacher and child sing the song again.

And also, steps using song in vocabulary learning from Zahari and Ananda (2024), namely:

- a) Prepared a song with a familiar tune and changed the lyrics with English vocabulary as needed.
- b) The teacher explained the content of the song to the students.

- c) The teacher explained the correct pronunciation of the vocabulary words.
- d) The teacher explained the meaning of the vocabulary that was pronounced.
- e) The teacher gave an example of singing, which was followed by the students.
- f) The teacher gave the students the opportunity to sing independently.
- g) The teacher divided the students into groups to demonstrate and mention the vocabulary learned from the song.
- h) Sing the song again so that the students understood better.

Based on both of the step above, so the researcher modified the step of using song in vocabulary mastery, as follow:

- (1) The teacher prepares a song with a familiar tune and changes the lyrics with English vocabulary as needed.
- (2) The teacher discusses the content of the song through questions and answers with the students.
- (3) The teacher explains the meaning of the vocabulary in the song.
- (4) The teacher explains the pronunciation of the vocabulary correctly.
- (5) The teacher sings the song with the students 2-3 times.
- (6) The teacher and students sing the song together with the teacher's voice getting quieter.
- (7) Teacher and students sing the song by humming.
- (8) The teacher says the song lyrics per line and the students follow along.
- (9) The teacher gives an example of singing and the students follow.
- (10) Students are given the opportunity to sing independently or in groups.
- (11) Teachers provide guidance and encouragement to students in need.
- (12) The teacher gives praise quickly and in a timely manner to motivate students.
- (13) The teacher divides the students into groups to demonstrate the vocabulary of the song.
- (14) The teacher and students sing another song as a break.
- (15) Teacher and students sing the song again to reinforce understanding.

Together, these approaches highlight the importance of interaction, repetition, and positive reinforcement in fostering an engaging and effective learning experience. By integrating elements from both frameworks, educators can create a comprehensive strategy that not only enhances vocabulary retention but also promotes a joyful and collaborative classroom atmosphere. Ultimately, using songs as a learning media enriches the English vocabulary mastery, making it both enjoyable and impactful for students.

3.2. Observation Result

In this observation stage, researcher used an observation checklist sheet. The observation checklist used by researcher is based on the results of observations in the field. The following are the results of the researcher's observation of the use of song on young learners' vocabulary mastery.

Table 1. Result of Observation

Steps of Learning	1 st Observation	2 nd Observation	3 rd Observation	4 th Observation	Comment
The teacher prepares a song with a familiar tune and changes the lyrics with English vocabulary as needed.	✓	✓	✓	✓	In all observations, this step was consistently carried out. This demonstrates good teacher preparation and supports early student engagement.
	✓	✓			

The teacher discusses the content of the song through questions and answers with the students.			✓	✓	There was an improvement from the second observation onwards. Initially, this was not done, but afterwards the teacher began to involve students more actively.
The teacher explains the meaning of the vocabulary in the song.	✓	✓	✓	✓	This was only observed in the third and fourth observations, indicating an increase in teachers' awareness of the importance of vocabulary comprehension. There was an increase from the second observation onwards. Initially, this was not done, but afterwards teachers began to involve students more actively.
The teacher explains the pronunciation of the vocabulary correctly.	✓	✓	✓	✓	Pronunciation began to be observed from the second observation onwards. This is important because correct pronunciation helps students in speaking.
The teacher sings the song with the students 2-3 times.	✓	✓	✓	✓	Done consistently. This repetition is very effective in strengthening students' memory.
The teacher and students sing the song together with the teacher's voice getting quieter.	✓	✓	✓	✓	This was only done in the 3rd and 4th observations. This indicates a gradual transition towards student independence.
Teacher and students sing the song by humming.	✓	-	✓	✓	Started to appear on the 4th observation. Demonstrates a variety of methods to reinforce memory without explicit lyrics.
The teacher says the song lyrics per line and the students follow along.	✓	✓	✓	✓	Being consistent from the beginning, it clarifies the structure of the lyrics and helps students memorize.
The teacher gives an example of singing and the students follow.	✓	✓	✓	✓	This step is routine and an important part of imitation learning.
Students are given the opportunity to	✓	✓	✓	✓	Progress was evident from the 3rd and 4th observations; students

sing independently or in groups.					were passive at first, but then they started to become more confident.
Teachers provide guidance and encouragement to students in need.	✓	✓	✓	✓	New to the 4th observation, showing an increase in students' individualized attention.
The teacher gives praise quickly and in a timely manner to motivate students.	✓	✓	✓	✓	Started to appear in the 1st observations. Had a positive impact on student motivation.
The teacher divides the students into groups to demonstrate the vocabulary of the song.	-	✓	✓	✓	Only appeared in the 2nd observation. Indicates the teacher is starting to apply active and collaborative methods.
The teacher and students sing another song as a break.	-	✓	-	✓	This was done on the 2nd observation. This helps to keep the classroom atmosphere fun.
Teacher and students sing the song again to reinforce understanding.	✓	✓	✓	✓	It is consistent and very effective as a form of meaningful repetition.

The table reflects best practices in teaching vocabulary through song, aligning well with the theories proposed by Juwita et al. (2020) and Zahari and Ananda (2024). The observation table shows that all the steps applied by the teacher in using song as a vocabulary learning tool have been implemented well. This process includes preparing a song with a familiar melody, discussing the content of the song, and explaining vocabulary and pronunciation. Each step in the table contributes to the achievement of the learning objective, which is to improve students' understanding and use of English vocabulary.

Based on four classroom observations conducted between October and November 2024, the use of songs in teaching English vocabulary to young learners demonstrated several positive outcomes. During the initial observation on October 15th, 2025, the teacher introduced new vocabulary through a simple song, which effectively engaged students and encouraged them to repeat and practice the target words. Visual aids further supported the learning process, aiding students in associating the new vocabulary with corresponding images. As a result, many students were able to recall and pronounce the new words correctly by the end of the session.

In the subsequent observation on October 22nd, 2024, the lesson began with a review song from the previous week, which helped reinforce students' confidence in using the vocabulary. The teacher promoted active participation by incorporating gestures and encouraging students to act out the

meanings of words, fostering peer interaction as students supported one another in remembering lyrics and definitions.

The third observation, conducted on October 29th, 2024, involved a thematic song focusing on colors and animals. Students were particularly enthusiastic during the chorus, and the teacher used pauses in the song to check their understanding of key vocabulary. Most students could identify vocabulary items in pictures and use them in simple sentences, indicating effective vocabulary acquisition through musical activities.

Finally, the observation on November 5th, 2024, featured a song-based vocabulary game. Students showed improved retention, recalling words from previous lessons with minimal prompting. Notably, learners with initially lower proficiency became more willing to participate, and the overall classroom atmosphere was positive and interactive. These observations collectively suggest that integrating songs into English lessons for young learners not only enhances vocabulary mastery but also increases engagement and fosters a supportive learning environment.

Based on the results of the four classroom observations, it can be concluded that the use of songs is an effective strategy for enhancing English vocabulary mastery among young learners. The observations consistently showed that songs increased student engagement, encouraged active participation, and facilitated better recall and pronunciation of new vocabulary. Additionally, the integration of songs created a positive and interactive classroom environment, making students—especially those with lower initial proficiency—more confident and willing to participate. Overall, songs serve as a valuable media in supporting vocabulary acquisition and fostering a supportive learning atmosphere for young learners.

3.3. Interview Result

Name : Masa Kristina Zendrato, S.S. Day/Date : Monday, October, 21 st 2024		
No.	QUESTION	ANSWER
1.	Can you share your experience teaching English to young learners?	My experience in teaching young learners has been fun and a little challenging.
2.	How do you currently teach English vocabulary to your students?	In the teaching process, sometimes I teach vocabulary naturally, such as when I give vocabulary by writing the vocabulary on the blackboard, then inviting young learners to read and memorize it. Sometimes I teach vocabulary by giving songs to young learners.
3.	How do you incorporate songs into your English vocabulary teaching?	I look for words in the material that can be incorporated or made into songs. By searching from several sources, any songs that can be given to young learners according to the material being taught.
4.	What type of songs do you use (e.g., traditional, modern, cultural)?	Sometimes I use songs based on the situation of the material being taught. So, if the material can be taught using songs then I will find out whether the material is suitable using traditional, modern or cultural songs. It all adjusts to the material being taught.
5.	Do you think the use of songs can help your students learn English vocabulary better?	Yes. Can help students.
6.	Can you give specific examples of how songs can improve your students' vocabulary acquisition?	In the use of songs in vocabulary learning, there are some young learners who quickly grasp English vocabulary through songs. But not all of them, there are also young learners who do not like the use of songs. Maybe most of the young learners feel happy to memorize the vocabulary by singing.

7.	How do your students respond to the use of songs in learning English vocabulary?	Most young learners feel energized when songs are used in vocabulary learning.
8.	Did you notice any changes in their enthusiasm and engagement when using the songs?	Yes. Of course there are changes.
9.	What challenges do you face when using songs to teach English vocabulary?	The challenge I face is that I have to be wise in controlling the class. Because when using songs, the situation in the classroom is automatically a little noisy, so as a teacher, you have to be wise in applying it so that other classes are not disturbed by the use of songs.
10.	How did you overcome the challenges?	In overcoming these challenges, I prepare the material as well as possible. Then provide, convey, or discuss the rules used before using the song. There must be a mutual agreement, so as not to disturb when using songs in the classroom.
11.	Have you ever received feedback from your students regarding the use of songs in learning English vocabulary?	Sometimes there are some young learners who feel happy with the use of songs in learning. So, some young learners ask for the use of songs in class again.
12.	How do your students feel about using songs in their English classes?	My students were happy with the use of songs in their English class. I noted that most students showed great enthusiasm when songs were used in learning. They feel more engaged and enjoy the learning process when they can listen and sing, which makes vocabulary learning more fun. Thus, the use of songs not only helps in vocabulary mastery, but also increases students' motivation and engagement in learning.
13.	Do you plan to continue using songs in your teaching of English vocabulary?	Yes. I plan to use songs in the future. However, as I said from the beginning that it must adjust to the material being taught. Because not all materials must use songs.
14.	Are there any new techniques or songs you would like to try in the future?	Of course, but back to the material. Maybe in the future it will be different, such as different instruments so that young students don't get bored easily.
15.	How does using songs compare to other methods you have used to teach English vocabulary?	I can't say that songs are better than others. But the use of songs is sometimes necessary so that young learners are not bored in participating in learning activities.
16.	Are there any specific advantages or disadvantages you have noticed?	I think the advantage is that for some young learners who have a hobby of singing, they will be faster in memorizing or mastering the vocabulary. The disadvantage is that for some young learners who are not very interested in singing and think that songs are noisy, they prefer quiet. It slightly reduces the enthusiasm in the young learners' learning.
17.	In your opinion, what are the key benefits of using songs in teaching English vocabulary to young learners?	In my opinion, based on my experience, it does not make young students feel bored quickly in the learning process. So, there is a little bit of a new atmosphere especially during the last lesson. And add enthusiasm for young students Then, for young students who like to sing, they will feel happy and easy in applying songs.
18.	What advice would you give to other teachers who are considering using songs in their classrooms?	My advice is that it is good to use songs in learning, of course, by adjusting the material to be taught.

The analysis of the interview results provides a comprehensive look at the integration of song in teaching English vocabulary to young learners. The interviewee shared a mix of experiences that highlight both the joys and challenges of this approach. They described their teaching philosophy as one that balances traditional methods—like writing vocabulary on the blackboard—with more dynamic techniques, such as using song. This blend not only caters to different learning styles but also helps maintain student interest, which is crucial for effective vocabulary mastery.

Incorporating song into vocabulary lessons emerged as a particularly effective strategy. The interviewee noted that many students show a notable improvement in their vocabulary retention when learning through music. Song create a lively atmosphere that makes the learning experience more enjoyable, leading to increased enthusiasm and motivation among students. However, the interviewee also recognized that not all students respond positively to this method. Some may prefer quieter forms of learning, which indicates the importance of having a diverse set of teaching strategies to engage all learners. This adaptability reflects a thoughtful approach to education, ensuring that each student's needs are considered.

The interviewee identified specific challenges associated with using song in the classroom, such as managing noise levels and ensuring a focused learning environment. They explained that the energetic nature of song-based activities can sometimes lead to a noisy classroom, which might disrupt other classes. To address this, the interviewee emphasized the importance of thorough preparation and setting clear expectations before introducing song. This proactive strategy helps maintain a conducive learning environment while still allowing students to enjoy the benefits of musical engagement.

Feedback from students has generally been positive, with many expressing joy and enthusiasm for musical activities in their lessons. This positive reception highlights how song can enhance motivation and foster a love for learning. The interviewee noted that students often request more song-based activities, reinforcing the idea that music can make vocabulary learning not just effective but also enjoyable.

Looking to the future, the interviewee plans to continue using song but remains flexible in their approach, ensuring that the chosen song align with the material being taught. They expressed a desire to explore new techniques and instruments to keep the lessons fresh and engaging, recognizing that variety is key to sustaining student interest over time. In conclusion, while song are not a universal solution for all learners, they can significantly enrich the vocabulary learning experience when implemented thoughtfully and in conjunction with other teaching methods. This analysis underscores the value of creativity and adaptability in educational practices, particularly in fostering an engaging and effective learning environment for young learners.

4. CONCLUSION

This research shows that the use of song in English vocabulary mastery for young learners can increase their engagement and facilitate better vocabulary. The findings suggest that song not only make learning fun, but also serve as an effective medium to improve vocabulary acquisition. Although there were some limitations noted in this research, such as the inconsistent use of song outside of ice breaking activities, the overall impact on students' vocabulary mastery was positive.

One of the main suggestions is for teachers to regularly incorporate song into their lesson plans. Instead of using song only as icebreakers or for entertainment, teachers should integrate them as a core component of vocabulary teaching. Song can make learning more interesting and fun for students, thus increasing their motivation and interest in acquiring new vocabulary. By incorporating song into vocabulary learning, teachers can create a more dynamic learning environment that supports vocabulary retention. In addition, researcher also suggest that teachers choose a variety of song that suit different interests and age groups. Teachers are encouraged to choose song that are age-appropriate and relevant to students' learning, which can enhance their connection with the material and facilitate better comprehension. Finally, it is suggested that future research should explore different music genres and their impact on different aspects of language learning, providing valuable

insights that can inform teaching practices. This ongoing research will contribute to a deeper understanding of how music can be effectively used in vocabulary mastery.

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