STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE ROLE OF SONGS IN ENHANCING ENGLISH VOCABULARY MASTERY

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Abstract

Vocabulary mastery is a fundamental aspect of English language learning, contributing significantly to students' communication skills. This study aims to explore students' perceptions of the role of songs in enhancing English vocabulary mastery. Using a qualitative approach, data were collected through a questionnaire consisting of 15 Likert-scale statements, distributed to eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 3 Lolofitu Moi. The results indicate that most students perceive songs as an effective tool for improving vocabulary retention, motivation, and pronunciation. The engaging nature of songs makes learning more enjoyable, leading to increased interest and independent learning outside the classroom. However, some students reported that while songs help with memorization, they still struggle with applying new vocabulary in conversations. These findings suggest that songs can be a valuable supplementary learning resource, but should be combined with other interactive teaching methods for maximum effectiveness. This study provides insights for educators to design more engaging vocabulary learning strategies.

Keywords: Song, Vocabulary, Students' Perception

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Introduction

Vocabulary mastery plays a crucial role in English language learning, as it contributes significantly to effective communication. Manda et al., (2022:311) define vocabulary as a set of words used to

form sentences with meaning. Similarly, Saripah (2022:208) describes vocabulary as an individual's stock of words used in communication. Given its importance, mastering vocabulary is essential for learners to improve their English proficiency. In the current era of globalization, English language skills are not only important for education, but also for career and social interaction. Traditional vocabulary learning methods often fail to engage students, making it necessary to explore innovative and enjoyable strategies. Therefore, innovative and interesting learning methods are needed to help students in mastering vocabulary. One of the increasingly popular methods is the use of songs in the learning process, which can create a fun and interactive learning atmosphere.

The use of songs in English language learning has attracted the attention of many educators and researchers. According to Farhansyah et al., (2023:14) say that listening a favorite song frequently can cause it to stick in the mind and replay unconsciously. This process makes it easier to identify new English vocabulary to learn. Many students show greater interest and higher engagement when songs are used as aids in vocabulary learning. Songs not only help students remember new vocabulary, but also provide a broader context through meaningful lyrics. With catchy melodies, students tend to remember the taught vocabulary and phrases more easily, thus enhancing their learning experience.

Previous research has shown that music and songs can increase student motivation and improve learning outcomes. Some studies found that students who learned vocabulary through songs showed significant improvement in vocabulary acquisition compared to traditional methods. Karim et al. (2022:456) found that English songs bring a positive impact on the students' English language development, especially vocabulary mastery. Additionally, Mantika, 2021:37) also supports this claim, emphasizing that songs can effectively be applied in learning vocabulary. Having a range of advantages that allows Songs to facilitate the learning process, and it can improve students' vocabulary mastery. However, while there are many studies that discuss the benefits of using songs, there is still a lack of understanding on how students specifically perceive the role of songs in vocabulary learning. This suggests a research gap that needs to be filled to understand students' perceptions more deeply.

The novelty of this study lies in its specific focus on students' perceptions of the use of songs in enhancing English vocabulary acquisition. Using a qualitative approach, this study aims to explore students' views on the effectiveness of songs as a learning tool. The results of this study are expected to provide new insights that can be used by educators to design more effective and interesting learning methods.

This research is particularly useful, given the importance of vocabulary acquisition in English language learning and the need to understand students' perspectives. Putri, et al. (2022:340), perceptions formed can help teachers to improve and evaluate systems, methods, or learning materials that we provide or apply to them. By understanding how students perceive the role of songs, it is hoped that new ways can be found to improve vocabulary acquisition and, ultimately, students' overall English proficiency. Therefore, this study entitled "Students' Perceptions of the Role of Songs in Enhancing English Vocabulary Mastery," aims to explore and analyze students' perceptions of the use of songs in English vocabulary learning.

Research Methods

This study employs a qualitative research design to explore students' perceptions of the role of songs in enhancing English vocabulary mastery. A qualitative approach is chosen because it allows for an in-depth understanding of students' experiences, attitudes, and thoughts regarding the use of songs as a learning tool. As stated by Fiantika, et al. 2022) define that qualitative method is a data collection technique where the results will be described in the form of written or descriptive words. Through qualitative research, the study aims to capture rich, descriptive data that provide insights into how students perceive the effectiveness of songs in vocabulary learning.

Design

This research design is a qualitative descriptive research, which aims to describe phenomena based on data collected from participants (Creswell, 2021:38) states that qualitative descriptive research is used to understand the experiences of individuals or groups in a particular context without experimental intervention. By using this design, this research focuses on how students interpret the role of songs in vocabulary learning, allowing for a deeper exploration of their experiences.

Participants

The participants in this study were class VIII students at SMP Negeri 3 Lolofitu Moi. In this study, there were 20 participants who participated in this study. And also in this case, students who have been accustomed to learning English vocabulary through songs are the main subjects of the study, because they can provide a deeper insight into the effectiveness of this method.

Instrument

To collect data, this research utilizes observation and interviews as the research instruments. The researcher observes students during English vocabulary learning sessions where songs are used as a medium of instruction. This method helps identify students' engagement levels, reactions, and interactions with the learning material. Field notes are taken to document students' behaviors, participation, and overall response to the use of songs. Interviews Semi-structured interviews are conducted with selected students to gain deeper insights into their perceptions and experiences. The interviews focus on students' views regarding the effectiveness of songs in improving vocabulary mastery, their level of motivation, and any challenges they encounter when learning through songs. Open-ended questions are used to allow students to express their thoughts freely and provide detailed responses.

Data Collection

The data collection process involves gathering and evaluating information systematically to achieve the research objectives and address the research problem. As supported by (Flick, 2018) qualitative data collection refers to the systematic process of gathering non-numerical data to explore and understand people's experiences, behaviors, social contexts, and meanings. First, the participants are chosen using purposive sampling, focusing on students who have experienced learning English vocabulary through songs. Second, the researcher attends and observes English vocabulary lessons where songs are integrated into the learning process. Third, One-on-one semi-structured interviews are conducted to collect students' perspectives on how songs influence their vocabulary acquisition. And last, all observations and interviews are documented, recorded (with consent), and transcribed for further analysis.

Data analysis

The collected qualitative data are analyzed using data condensation, data display, drawing, and verification, as suggested by Miles and Huberman (in Creswell, 2021) In data condensation, the collected data from observations and interviews are carefully reviewed, summarized, and organized to highlight key themes and patterns related to students' perceptions of songs in vocabulary learning. And then, the relevant information is systematically presented in the form of text, tables, or diagrams to help identify relationships and connections within the data.

Conclusions are drawn based on the patterns and themes identified during data analysis. The findings are then verified by cross-checking data from different sources (observation and interviews) to ensure reliability and validity.

Results and Discussion
Results

The findings of this study are derived from observations and semi-structured interviews conducted with Class VIII students at SMP Negeri 3 Lolofitu Moi who have experienced learning English vocabulary through songs. The results are categorized into key themes that emerged from the data analysis.

1. Students' Perceptions of Songs in Vocabulary Learning

Observations indicated that students exhibited high levels of engagement when learning vocabulary through songs. They actively participated in singing, demonstrated enthusiasm, and showed improved retention of vocabulary. Many students were more motivated to learn English when songs were incorporated into the lessons, as they felt that the rhythm and melody helped them absorb new words effortlessly.

During the interviews, most students reported that learning with songs was more enjoyable and less stressful compared to traditional methods. They expressed that singing along to familiar tunes made learning feel more like a recreational activity rather than a formal academic task. Additionally, students highlighted that songs made them feel more confident in pronouncing words correctly, as they could mimic the pronunciation of native speakers in the lyrics.

2. Effectiveness of Songs in Vocabulary Acquisition

The majority of Class VIII students at SMP Negeri 3 Lolofitu Moi expressed that songs helped them remember new words more effectively. They mentioned that repetitive lyrics, rhythm, and melody made it easier to recall words compared to textbook-based learning. For example, some students noted that after repeatedly listening to an English song, they could recognize certain words when encountering them in written texts.

Several students also noted that songs provided contextual usage of vocabulary, making it easier to understand meanings and applications in real-life situations. Unlike memorizing vocabulary lists, songs helped them associate words with emotions, stories, and real-world settings, which aided their comprehension and retention. Furthermore, the students shared that learning through songs made them more eager to

practice their English outside of the classroom. Some students mentioned that they searched for song lyrics and translations in their free time, which enhanced their independent learning habits.

3. Challenges in Learning Vocabulary Through Songs

Despite the benefits, some students encountered difficulties in understanding lyrics, especially when songs contained fast-paced speech, unfamiliar accents, or complex vocabulary. This challenge was particularly evident in songs with slang or idiomatic expressions that were not commonly taught in formal lessons. As a result, students sometimes misunderstood the meaning of words or phrases, leading to confusion.

A few students also mentioned that they sometimes focused more on the melody rather than the meaning of words, leading to passive listening rather than active learning. They enjoyed singing along but did not always pay attention to the meaning of the lyrics. This suggests that while songs are an effective tool, they should be complemented with guided learning strategies, such as providing lyrics with translations and discussing key vocabulary before listening to the song. Additionally, activities like gap-fill exercises or comprehension questions could help reinforce vocabulary learning.

Discussion

The findings from this study provide an insightful view into how songs can serve as an effective medium for vocabulary learning, particularly for students at SMP Negeri 3 Lolofitu Moi. The integration of songs into the English learning process has led to positive results in terms of engagement, vocabulary retention, and pronunciation. This section will discuss these findings in detail, drawing on existing literature to further explore the implications for language learning.

The enthusiastic response of students towards learning vocabulary through songs can be attributed to the multisensory nature of music, which taps into both auditory and emotional engagement. As mentioned, students reported feeling less stressed when learning through songs. This aligns with Mantika's research (2021), which asserts that music fosters a positive atmosphere conducive to active participation. Music engages students not only cognitively but also emotionally, helping them form stronger associations with the vocabulary being taught. The emotional connection formed while singing the lyrics aids in better retention and understanding of words, as students are more likely to recall words linked with emotional experiences or specific contexts.

Further, students emphasized that songs made vocabulary learning feel more like a fun activity, a sentiment echoed in Farhansyah et al. (2023), who argue that regular exposure to songs helps students internalize vocabulary by embedding the words in their memory through repetition and familiarity. The rhythm and melody assist in the retention process by transforming the learning experience into a less formal, more enjoyable activity. This enjoyment contributes to an increase in intrinsic motivation, which is crucial for maintaining sustained interest in language learning. In essence, songs serve as a tool that reduces anxiety and makes language acquisition more accessible and enjoyable for learners.

Moreover, the act of singing along and mimicking the pronunciation of native speakers further aids in the development of language skills. The natural rhythm and flow of songs facilitate the development of intonation and stress patterns, which are critical for language fluency. Maisarah (2023) emphasizes that songs help students become more aware of phonetic details, improving their pronunciation and listening skills. This dynamic aspect of songs provides an avenue for students to practice language in a more naturalistic way, thus enhancing their speaking and listening abilities in real-life communication.

In terms of vocabulary acquisition, the findings suggest that songs are a powerful tool for helping students not only recall new words but also understand their meanings and applications. The repetitive nature of songs ensures that vocabulary is reinforced throughout the learning process, making it easier for students to remember and recall words at later times. Students noted that they could recognize words encountered in songs when reading them in written texts, demonstrating the long-term effects of music-based learning on vocabulary retention. This supports the work of Putri et al. (2022), who found that using songs in English lessons improves students' recall of new vocabulary, particularly when the songs are engaging and relevant to their interests.

Another important aspect of the effectiveness of songs in vocabulary acquisition is their ability to provide context for vocabulary. Unlike isolated vocabulary lists, songs incorporate words within a narrative or emotional context, making it easier for students to grasp the meaning and usage of words in real-life situations. This contextual learning is crucial for deepening students' understanding of how words function in different contexts, something that traditional methods of vocabulary acquisition often lack. By associating vocabulary with emotions, stories, and real-world settings, students gain a richer understanding of the language and its applications. This finding aligns with the work of Karim et al. (2022), who highlighted that

songs facilitate vocabulary mastery by providing students with contextual usage that enhances their overall comprehension.

Additionally, the study revealed that students were motivated to continue learning English outside of the classroom, often listening to songs in their free time, searching for song lyrics, and translating them. This independent learning behavior indicates that songs can inspire students to take ownership of their learning and engage with the language beyond formal classroom activities. As students search for lyrics and translations, they are enhancing their vocabulary acquisition autonomously, demonstrating the power of songs to spark curiosity and encourage lifelong learning. This finding underscores the importance of incorporating engaging, authentic materials like songs into language instruction to promote a more dynamic and self-directed learning environment.

While the benefits of using songs in language learning are evident, the study also identified several challenges that can hinder the effectiveness of songs in vocabulary acquisition. One of the primary issues faced by students was the difficulty in understanding fast-paced lyrics, unfamiliar accents, and complex vocabulary. In particular, songs containing slang, idiomatic expressions, or complex phrases proved challenging for students to comprehend fully. This problem is common in music-based language learning, as songs often use informal language, regional accents, or cultural references that may be unfamiliar to learners. As noted in this study, students sometimes misunderstood the meaning of certain words or phrases, which could lead to confusion and hinder the learning process.

To address these challenges, it is important to provide students with additional support during the learning process. For example, offering students the lyrics with translations or definitions of difficult words before they listen to the song can help them better understand the content. This pre-teaching approach enables students to focus on the vocabulary and its meaning while listening to the song, rather than struggling to decipher the lyrics as they go along. Furthermore, guided activities such as gap-fill exercises or comprehension questions can help reinforce vocabulary learning by encouraging students to pay closer attention to the meaning and usage of words in context. These strategies can help overcome the limitations of relying solely on songs for vocabulary acquisition and ensure that students actively engage with the language.

Another challenge noted by students was their tendency to focus more on the melody rather than the meaning of the words, which could lead to passive listening. While singing along can be enjoyable and motivating, it is essential to ensure that students are also actively engaging with the vocabulary and the meaning behind the lyrics. To mitigate this issue, teachers

can incorporate active listening strategies, such as asking students to listen for specific vocabulary or phrases in the song. By guiding students to focus on the meaning of the words while they sing, teachers can ensure that songs are used effectively as a tool for vocabulary acquisition. This balanced approach helps students develop both their linguistic and cognitive skills while enjoying the music.

Conclusion

This study highlights the significant role that songs play in enhancing English vocabulary acquisition among students. The findings reveal that most students perceive songs as effective tools for improving their vocabulary mastery, primarily due to the engaging and enjoyable nature of music. Songs not only aid in memorizing new words but also help students understand the context in which these words are used, thereby enriching their overall learning experience. Furthermore, the repetitive melodies and catchy lyrics facilitate better retention and recall of vocabulary, supporting the notion that music can serve as a powerful educational resource.

However, while the majority of students benefit from song-based learning, individual preferences and learning styles still influence their effectiveness. Some students expressed a desire for additional methods to complement their learning, indicating that songs should be integrated with other interactive approaches to maximize engagement and participation. Overall, this research underscores the importance of innovative teaching methods in vocabulary acquisition and suggests that educators should consider incorporating songs alongside various instructional strategies to create a more inclusive and effective learning environment for all students.

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