

Perceptions of English Education Students at Iain Sorong Toward the Use of Songs in Improving Vocabulary Skills

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Abstract

This research was conducted to find out about students' perceptions of the use of songs in improving their vocabulary abilities. This research was conducted using qualitative research methods. Data from this research were collected using interview methods and focus group discussions. The research subjects for this thesis are all English language education students at IAIN Sorong. The results of this study show that English education students at the IAIN Sorong campus have varied perceptions but end up with the same answer. They all have a good perception about the use of songs as an effective way to improve vocabulary skills. There are 5 perceptions, including using songs as a relaxed and relaxed way of learning, not studying under pressure, a flexible way of learning, knowing lots of new vocabulary, and it is easier for them to memorize vocabulary by listening rather than reading.

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INTRODUCTION

English is an internationally recognized language that is utilized worldwide, facilitating communication between individuals from diverse countries. It is widely regarded as the most popular and extensively studied language across the globe, with proficiency in English being emphasized from elementary school through higher education. Achieving mastery in English requires the acquisition and improvement of multiple skills, which can be a challenging endeavor due to the vast range of abilities involved. These skills including listening, speaking, writing, and reading, all of which contribute to effective English communication. An individual who is considered proficient in English must demonstrate high level of competence in each of these skills listed above. Fluency in English is often acquired through the assimilation of knowledge and the expansion of vocabulary, enabling the application of these abilities in practical contexts. Vocabulary helps us improve every skill we have,



be it is listening, speaking, writing, or reading. In order to proficiently engage in English communication, both verbally and in written form, students must diligently cultivate an extensive command of vocabulary. Based on Harmer, good vocabulary mastery can help students speak fluently and quickly because vocabulary is one of the core components of language skills and determines how well students speak, listen, read, and write (Harmer, 2001). Most Indonesians study English as a foreign language in order to be able to communicate in English (Maru, 2009). Therefore speaking is one of the most important skills for students to master.

In order to effectively enhance vocabulary acquisition, it is imperative to implement diverse teaching strategies that can be tailored to the unique characteristics of each class. Creative or innovative approaches, including use media as well as songs are used to convey educational goals to develop students, keeps them engaged, active and improves their language skills and vocabulary mastery. Song media is an alternative method of teaching vocabulary (Ratmaningsih, 2016). She claims that songs can improve and make students' ability to understand and memorize vocabularies more and more profound because the ability to sing makes learning English can be fun, interesting, and of course easy to understand so that the learning atmosphere does not feel bored and of course they are more inspired to do it. In addition, using songs to learn and teach languages can improve students' vocabulary skills (El-Nahhal, 2011).

Listening songs, especially songs in English, indirectly makes our brain memorize every word we heard so that our vocabulary becomes more numerous and of course we use it more often by practicing it in every songs we sing. Songs are useful for showing how important it is in the process of learning English especially as a media to support and improvise mastery of student vocabulary. Songs are versatile and fun so they can serve various purposes. They are also a good educational tools because a number of reasons. Songs are a short piece of music arranged into text poetic, with equal priority given to the music and the lyrics (Faliyanti, 2017). Songs are an excellent tool for assisting learners in learning English (Maru, 2009). Songs that are regarded to be useful to stimulate pupils when they are studying English in particular. Songs are also a crucial element of learning English since they increase student's sensitivity to sound, and learning languages is nothing more than learning various sorts of meaningful sound. Additionally, music might serve to make a lesson more engaging and energetic. This definition has been used by researcher in a number of cases. In terms of children's songs child, the contextual text contains monosyllabic words that are often repeated. This is an opportunity for students to practice vocabulary and vocabulary acquisition words so that the vocabulary that is included in their memorization becomes more and they master the vocabulary more. English is made a compulsory subject in schools. In learning English, there are two main aspects that need to be learned, language skill and language components. Language skills consist of listening, speaking, reading, and writing and language components consist of vocabulary, structure and pronunciation (Lengkoan, 2017).

Therefore, when choosing the topic or theme of the song, it is important to carefully analyze how the lyrics will match the target language and analyze



the ease with which each vocabulary will be absorbed by students so that they become more familiar with the vocabulary (Milington, 2011). Using songs as teaching or learning medium effective pedagogical tools have a positive impact on deep English learners expand, improve, and build their vocabulary as well as fun and also makes students enjoy and their learning process becomes more enjoyable (Halici, 2018). In addition, students can enjoy the songs that can reduce their stress levels and make them happy feel more relaxed while studying. They can even learn vocabulary by singing (Thao, 2019).

In developing English vocabulary, there are many ways that can be done, one of which is by using songs or music as media. Therefore, this study aims to examine more deeply about students perceptions about songs and how influential it is to improve students' English skills, especially in vocabulary mastery. Based on the explanation from the background above, the researcher wants to examine the relationship students' perceptions of English education at IAIN Sorong towards songs in improving vocabulary skills. The reason the researcher chose IAIN Sorong students because the researcher want to know more about the students' learning pattern.

METHOD

The Type of research design used by researcher is qualitative research. Qualitative research is a type of research aimed at exploring and understanding the meaning of an individual or group that is considered a social or human problem. The research process involves eliciting questions and procedures, data that are typically collected in participant settings, analysis of data that is inductively constructed from particles for a common theme, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data. Quoted by Farida Nugrahani in Bogdan & Taylor, qualitative research methods can be defined as research procedures that produce descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and actors in a holistic (whole) manner, not isolating individuals as part of the whole (Nugrahani, 2019).

In this study, the researcher will use a purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling technique is a sample selection technique based on predetermined criteria. Purposive sampling is a sampling technique used when researchers already have target individuals with characteristics appropriate to the research (Turner, 2020) The reason the researcher uses this method is to obtain a sample according to the needs of the research based on the characteristics that have been made by the write.

The data collection techniques used in this study are interview and focus group discussion (FGD). Interview is a process to obtain information for the purpose of research by face to face questioning between the interviewer and informant or interviewee, with or without the use of an interview guide. In this study, interviews were conducted with third semester English education students to find out their perceptions of songs as a learning medium to improve vocabulary skills. Meanwhile, From a group discussion of people gathered, researchers usually draw conclusions from the opinions conveyed during the discussion earlier. FGD method as a method to obtain product data/information via deep social interaction of a group of individuals the interaction between individuals affects one another (Lehoux, 2006).



Characteristics in conducting the method FGD is using semi-structured interviews to a group of individuals with the moderator who leads the discussion with the order informal and aims to collect data or information on a particular topic of issue. FGD method have the characteristics of a sufficient number of individuals varies for one discussion group. One discussion groups can consist of 4 to 8 individual.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Finding

In this section the researcher wants to describe some of the researcher's findings while conducting research on the title above. This finding is based on the results of interviews and focus group discussions with English language education students at the IAIN Sorong campus regarding the use of songs in improving vocabulary skills.

The researcher conducted analysis and review in the form of interviews and focus group discussions with several English language education students at the IAIN Sorong campus regarding their perceptions of the use of songs as a strategy in an effort to increase vocabulary. There were varied responses, but ended in the same conclusion. Most interviewees considered that, when they learned using songs, in an informal environment, they could easily memorize and know new vocabulary that they did not know before. They also feel that by using songs in the learning process, they feel comfortable, and it is also fun when they want to increase their knowledge of vocabulary.

In the results of interviews and focus group discussions with the students regarding students' perceptions of the use of songs in improving vocabulary skills. The researcher found five main points about their perceptions. The first finding that the researcher got based on the results of interviews and focus group discussions is that learning using songs is a relaxed way of learning. In the interview, one of the students said:

When I learn using songs, I feel that my learning process becomes more meaningful and I can learn better, especially in memorizing vocabulary. By listening to my favorite songs, I can study more calmly”.

According to them, the use of songs is a relaxed and enjoyable way of learning, thus creating a better learning experience for them.

In the second finding, the researcher found that most of those who studied using songs felt that they did not learn under pressure. The results of the researcher's interview with one of the students said:

“We prefer to learn using songs because we feel there is no pressure from anyone. We can further improve our English skills, especially in improving our vocabulary skills by using songs that we like.”

This emphasizes that a good way to learn for students, one of which is by using songs so that students do not feel that their learning process is under pressure.



In the third point, students realize that by using songs, they can learn anywhere and anytime. Both during study hours and outside study hours. One student revealed that the habit of listening to songs could indirectly increase his vocabulary. The student stated that:

"I often listen to songs everywhere. Whether in the room, in the kitchen, or wherever. This habit allows me to know vocabulary that I didn't know at first. And the songs that I often listen to are romantic songs because the words are easier for me to understand and remember."

At this point, students' perceptions about learning using songs are that learning is very flexible. They can do it anywhere, anytime, without having to depend on other people.

The finding in the fourth point is that students feel that the songs they hear really help them in knowing and memorizing new vocabulary. Especially romantic songs because those are the songs they hear most often. They revealed that by listening to romantic songs, they learned more about expressions in romantic relationships that they had never heard before. One student said:

"Listening to songs in English, especially songs from Taylor Swift and Justin Bieber example love story from Taylor Swift and love yourself by Justin Bieber every day really helps me to at least know the expressions in English about love".

On the last point, students tend to feel that by listening to songs indirectly they can memorize vocabulary more quickly than other methods such as reading. They revealed that in some moments, when they heard songs, they quickly memorized some of the vocabulary from the songs, especially romantic songs. Apart from that, not only is it easy to memorize but also the memory of the vocabulary lasts longer in their memory. They don't quickly forget what they hear so they feel that using songs to improve vocabulary is a very effective way of learning.

Discussion

Based on the findings above, there are various varied perceptions from students regarding the use of songs in an effort to improve English language skills, especially in vocabulary mastery skills. Some of the perceptions that the researcher got when conducting focus group discussions and interviews were that learning using songs is a fun way, students become more relaxed and at ease when studying, the learning process is not under pressure, easy to do anywhere and anytime, lots of vocabulary is found, new words, and also they find it easier to memorize vocabulary by listening rather than reading.

1. Using songs is a relaxing way to learn

There are many ways and learning methods that students can use to learn a new language, especially English. In learning English, the most important thing is to master vocabulary. Using songs is a good way to increase students' vocabulary mastery. Students think that by using songs, they feel



that their way of learning is more relaxed and relaxing . A more relaxed and fun way of learning makes it easier for students to learn new vocabulary. A relaxed, fun, enjoyable atmosphere provides a different learning atmosphere . This method could be said to be very good. This is also in accordance with several previous studies that examined similar things. For example, in research conducted by Saun Lolong in his research entitled “Student Perceptions of the Use of English Songs for Learning English” (Lolong, 2019). This study identified seven main perceptions regarding the use of English songs in English language learning. This perception is that English songs make learning more fun and less monotonous, can function as an effective learning medium, provide entertainment, offer cultural learning tools, motivate students to learn, and can improve thinking abilities. Thus, learning English using songs to improve vocabulary skills is very good and effective because it is a relaxed, fun and enjoyable way of learning. This aligns with the theory put forward by Isnaini et al. In their theory, they state that English songs are an excellent tool for improving students' listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Apart from that, English songs can motivate students in the process of learning English (Isnaini & Aminatun, 2021).

2. Not learning under pressure

Often students who study under pressure do not understand what they are learning, both in class and outside of class. In the language learning process, studying under pressure is also a bad way because students find it difficult to understand, memorize, and even practice in daily communication. Therefore, many students think that by listening to songs, they can get an impressive learning experience without pressure from various parties so that it is very easy for them to memorize new vocabulary. Apart from that, they also get motivation to learn from listening to song so that students have the desire to improve their English language skills, especially vocabulary skills.

Listening to songs also brings students to a learning pattern that is not monotonous and stressful. They will feel that the learning process will be better for them. Learning carried out under pressure is very difficult for students, with this pressure, students find it difficult to memorize vocabulary. On the other hand, learning that is fun and enjoyable makes them more knowledgeable about vocabulary. This is also in line with the research carried out by Sri Putri Dilago. In her research entitled Students' Perceptions of Using Song Lyrics As a Media to Improve Vocabulary Mastery (Dilago, 2022). From this research it was found that of the 30 students who were respondents who answered the questionnaire got a score of 72.03 from the interval score between 68-83. This suggests that students enjoy learning vocabulary using songs as a learning medium. Students feel happy and they can be more active in learning vocabulary using songs . This finding is in line with what Herliana et al. (2018), in their research, stated that songs are an excellent tool and strategy for helping students learn English and are believed to be able to motivate students and increase students' confidence during the English learning process.



3. A way of learning that can be done anywhere and at any time

By listening to music as an effort to improve vocabulary skills, students feel that this method is very flexible. They consider that language is a habit, therefore, to master a language, habits must be changed. They think that listening to music anywhere and anytime indirectly changes their way of learning which seems monotonous. On the other hand, by listening to music, they are very easy to memorize.

Several students from the IAIN Sorong English language education program who the researcher studied closely revealed that they often listen to songs in their freetime, even at home when they are doing activities at home such as washing, cooking or cleaning the house. As a statement from one student stated that "I often listen to English songs when doing activities at home, and I feel that I can know some vocabulary. This really helped me in improving my vocabulary skills."

Several other students also revealed that they often listened to English when they were on a long trip. They feel that spending a long time listening to songs can help them improve their vocabulary skills. This is very easy for them to do because listening to songs is a very flexible way of learning

From the students' perceptions above, a conclusion can be drawn that in a flexible way , it is easy to know something, in this case mastery of vocabulary. Listening to songs is very good for improving vocabulary skills because it can be done anywhere and at any time according to their mood and enthusiasm.

4. Get lots of vocabulary

There are many ways that students can do to improve their vocabulary skills, but not all of the methods used are effective and able to improve vocabulary skills. One very good way to improve vocabulary skills is listening to English songs.

Using songs has a very positive impact on students. The biggest positive impact is that listening to songs can make students know a lot of vocabulary. They no longer look for vocabulary in books, dictionaries or wherever, but they just listen to songs, especially their favorite romantic songs. By itself, this habit allows them to know a lot of vocabulary. Several other students said that songs from Taylor Swift and James Arthur, which are pop and romance genres, are also songs that are suitable for students who want to improve their vocabulary skills to listen to. The meaning of these songs is considered easy to understand so that the vocabulary is easy to memorize

The students' perceptions above are based on their experience and also their assessment of the role of songs in adding new vocabulary. Of course songs in the pop, slow and romance genres provide a more memorable learning experience and are also easier for them to improve their vocabulary skills.

In research also conducted by Windy Fransisca in her research entitled "Students' Perception of Using English Songs and Their Vocabulary Learning" revealed that Almost all participants agreed that using English songs could help them learn and improve their vocabulary. This is supported by interview results which indicate that when students encounter foreign lyrics in English songs, they look for the words in the dictionary and study them so that in this way they can expand their vocabulary. This statement is the same as that



contained in Millington's theory as quoted in Wardiansyah et al. (2019), who argue that English songs are a useful tool for learning vocabulary, sentence structure and patterns. In addition, all participants stated that pop songs were very effective for increasing vocabulary because the slow tempo made the lyrics easier to understand. This is in line with Rachmawati et al. (2019), who recommend using pop songs to improve students' vocabulary due to their accessibility and ease of listening. In addition, all participants said that pop songs gave the best results to increase vocabulary because pop songs have a slow tempo, making it easier for students to understand the meaning of the lyrics of the song. It is in line with, Rachmawati et al., (2019) which recommends the use of pop songs to increase students' vocabulary because pop songs are easy to listen to.

Based on the results of interviews and discussions with students, they revealed that by listening to songs, they learned more about new vocabulary. This vocabulary comes from songs of various genres. Based on the narrative of one of the students, he revealed that listening to songs, especially songs in the pop, slow and romance genres, really helps master vocabulary because we often use these words in everyday life. Apart from that, the vocabulary in these songs can be said to be light and easy to understand.

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5. It's easier to memorize vocabulary by listening.

Improving vocabulary skills can of course be done in various ways and methods, either by reading or listening. This is in line with Winkle's theory which states that learning type refers to a person's tendency to learn something in a more visual or more auditory way (Winkle, 2004). Students can be said to have a visual type if they have a tendency to learn more easily if the learning material can be seen or is in the form of pictures, charts, diagrams and so on. Meanwhile, students who have the auditive type tend to learn more easily if they can hear explanations and formulate the results of processing the lesson material that has been obtained into the form of new words and sentences which are then stored in memory. Based on the results of interviews and discussions, most of the students who were speakers had the view that listening improves their ability to memorize vocabulary rather than reading. They felt that listening to songs indirectly had a positive impact on their mood which could thus provide a strong memory for the words they learned. One of the students' opinions was as follows "I prefer the auditory way of learning. Therefore, I think that it is easier for me to memorize vocabulary by listening rather than reading.

Several other students also revealed that when they are in their free time or when they are bored, they often listen to songs, whether they are romance, slow or pop. From the songs they hear, they can learn new



vocabulary that they did not know before. On the other hand, when they read books or articles, they feel pressure that makes them lose focus so they have difficulty memorizing new vocabulary, or even increasing their vocabulary.

Thus, the student's perception states that listening to songs is a good way of learning that can be used as an effort to improve vocabulary skills. Increasing vocabulary is indeed a very important thing for the English learning process. This is a method used to improve vocabulary mastery in their learning process. Using songs is a method that can be said to be very helpful for students. From their perception, there is a positive impression when they use songs as a learning medium. By listening to music, their learning experience becomes more varied. Their perception of using songs as a way to improve vocabulary mastery can be said to be positive, with the learning experience being relaxed, not learning under pressure, flexible, getting lots of new vocabulary, and it is easier for them to learn by listening. This was an extraordinary learning experience for them.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research above, the researcher found that vocabulary mastery is one of the factors that support the language learning process, especially English. A large vocabulary makes students fluent in speaking English. However, the methods and methods for mastering vocabulary must be appropriate and in accordance with the characteristics of the student. There are many ways you can memorize vocabulary, including using songs. The use of songs is the method most often used by English language education students at IAIN Sorong. The perception of IAIN Sorong English language education students regarding the use of songs in improving vocabulary skills can be said to be quite good and effective. The use of songs makes their learning experience more interesting and enjoyable. They think that by using songs, they feel their learning experience is more enjoyable and relaxed, besides that, while using songs; their learning process is not under pressure. Their other perception is that they feel that by using songs, it is easier for them to identify new vocabulary that they can use in everyday life. Apart from that, using songs is also a very flexible way to increase vocabulary, it can be done anywhere. Apart from that, the most important thing expressed by students in this study was that they found it easier to memorize vocabulary by listening rather than reading.

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