# Students' Perceptions on Using Song to Improving Students' Vocabulary

**Memy Wardani Elthia[1*], Elyakim Nova Supriyedi Patty[2]**
[1,2]Universitas Bumigora, Mataram, Indonesia

Alamat: Jl. Ismail Marzuki No.22, Cilinaya, Kec. Cakranegara, Kota Mataram,
Nusa Tenggara Bar. 83127
*Korespondensi penulis: *memy@universitasbumigora.ac.id*

*Abstract. This study investigates the students' perceptions on using song to improving the student's vocabulary. Though, the utilization of the songs as a media may have advantages and disadvantages. Thus, a consideration of its strengths and weaknesses is required. To fill the need, this study aimed to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the media as an tools in improving students 'vocabulary. The narrative inquiry was chosen as the research design to uncover the story or perception of the students towards the use of songs, by conducting interview. The results of the study indicate that: 1) The strength, including ease of access, effective, easily increases the students' vocabulary.2) the weakness, including most song using the figurative language.*

*Keywords: Vocabulary, Song, Students' Perception*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, people need to be fluent in English. However before learning English, everybody must learn the vocabulary first. Because vocabulary is the basis to being able speak English. Besides that, Vocabulary considered being at the heart of language learning and teaching (Safa, 2018). Besides that, Vocabulary is an important and necessary component of language learning; students with a large vocabulary can comprehend the subject accurately and effectively (Nella et al., 2020). The more vocabulary that is known, the better they comprehend the four skills. It serves as the foundation for language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It is difficult to achieve any level of language proficiency without acquiring the vocabulary (Afzal, 2019). According to (Faliyanti, 2017) it could be conveyed without grammar, but not without vocabulary.

It means that someone without vocabulary nothing can be communicated. Vocabulary is the crucial component of the language (Faliyanti, 2017). Based on explanation above, vocabulary is most crucial aspect of language learning. Students can understand what others say and converse if they know the vocabulary. However, in the educational world, many students experience difficulty in remembering and understanding the vocabulary, due to several factors such as low student motivation and very monotonous media. Therefore, the students could not speak English well because of their limited vocabulary. These problems are not just from to their skills, but also from the teachers. To overcome this problem, it is recommended to develop an interactive way to teach the vocabulary (Faliyanti, 2017) stated, "how lecturer teach can determine the result in the

learning process". There are several methods that teacher use for helping their students in learning English including puzzles, games, words selection, image, and music (Faliyanti, 2017).

Song is the right and effective technique or medium to improve the vocabulary learning process. Song is a way to improve student's vocabulary that can make easy to memorize acquire vocabularies subconsciously (Kurnia, 2017). Then, Song is one of the most important tools to improve student's vocabulary ability. We already know that, the students are more interested and love listening to music than the material in the books. Because by listening to music, they are more excited and not bored in it. When the students do not get bored during the learning process, it can be easier for them to accept the material (Faliyanti, 2017). In line with (Afriyuninda & Oktaviani, 2021) states that when students are trying to understand the meaning of new words or phrases in its context, they become tired by repeatedly listening to a narrative or speech. Besides that, listening to a song countless times can feel less monotonous due to the rhythm and melodrama. Then, students who are normally quiet become very talkative when discussing it. So, the students should have a great motivation to increase their vocabulary ability by using English Songs. Therefore, from the explanation above we know that the song's lyrics have a great influence on vocabulary learning, and we can know the vocabulary directly in the song's lyrics that we listen to.

According to (Murphey, 1990) many English teachers have long recognized that song and music work well in the class. It means that the teacher can utilize songs as media to overcome the students' difficulties in improving the vocabulary. According to (Abidin et al., 2011) State that, song offers a versatile way to look at the language and can be used to reinforce and improve speaking, listening comprehension, vocabulary, and phrasing. This is supported by (Beare, 2010) in his article on using music for the ESL (English as a Second Language) classroom. He reports that using music at the beginning of a lesson is a great way to introduce new vocabularies to students and get them thinking in the right direction, meaning that they will know what the lesson will be about. Besides that, songs are useful tools in the learning of vocabulary, sentence structures, and sentence patterns (Ningsih, Sofian, & Zainal , 2018). The teacher also can use the songs to teach English through songs since they provide a break from the textbook and workbook. It is a way to make them interested and enjoy learning vocabulary. Since the song's ability make an English learning pleasant, interesting, and comprehensible (Triwardani, 2022). Therefore, in this situation, they will be motivated. Besides that, (Solihat & Utami, 2014) says that

songs or piece of music change "atmosphere" in the classroom. It means that with song as media, it will change the atmosphere in the classroom. Where the classroom is identical with a tense, scared, and boring atmosphere, but when the teacher uses music as a learning media, the class atmosphere will drastically change into a class that is very encouraging for students, so they can receive listening lessons easily. According to (Yolanda et al., 2021) English songs in EFL (English Foreign Language) classrooms can successfully promote affective learning by creating a harmonious classroom environment, minimizing students' anxiety, encouraging their interests, and motivating them to learn the language they are interested in. Besides that, (Kuśnierek, 2016) states the used of song in the classroom could create an enjoyable and varied learning environment.

In the present study, the researchers want to investigate how did the student's perception of the strength and the weaknesses of the songs from their experiences in using songs as the medium in teaching-learning to improve their vocabularies. However, this research is different from previous studies, which are on the previous study the researchers' only focuses on the effectiveness of the song in improving student's vocabulary. Therefore, I really state my topic is proper to be conducted because this study uses different methodology and approach, different aspect and the different subject of study. Based on the background study above, the researcher interested to formulate the problem of this topic by making some of the research question, below: How does the student's perception of the strength and the weaknesses of songs that used by the teachers in improving the student's vocabulary?

## 2. METHODS

### Research Design

In this research, the researchers used qualitative approaches with narrative inquiry focus on exploring "a personal experience story" to uncover the students (participants) story in using songs as the medium to improve their vocabularies. (Creswell, 2012) point out that narrative research is research describing the lives of individuals, collecting and telling stories about people's lives, and writing narratives of individual experiences. The subject of this study is some of students of Mts Nurul Yaqin. But, the researcher just collected two students only, So, as to enable researchers to obtain in-depth information about student perceptions about using songs as a media to increase their vocabularies, because in this research some students of Mts Nurul Yaqin Gili Air is the target of collecting the data. Therefore, to answer the research question above, the researchers uses

interview as data collection, because this research uses qualitative approaches which are to collect the data from some students in Mts Nurul Yaqin. While we know that interview is a data collection technique by way of interviewing selected individuals as respondents to find out students' perceptions or experiences about the use of songs as learning media.

**Data Collection and Data Analysis**

Before doing the interview, the researchers schedule interviews individually at different times. After that, the researchers interview or give respondents questions related to their experiences of using songs as a learning media to improve their vocabulary. Then, their voices were recorded and transcribed, and the results of transcriptions were sent back to each of them, so they could confirm back of what they had said  in the interview and could give further clarification from what they had been stated in the transcription. After being confirmed back, the final transcriptions were then analyzed. The students' answers were coded and arranged into certain them; covering their perceptions, strengths and weaknesses of using songs in improving their vocabularies.

3.  **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The following are the results from the interviews to answer the research question.

**Strength**

The students have experienced some benefits of song as the media which are to improve their vocabulary, including ease of access, effective, easily increase the students' vocabulary.

**Ease of Access**

The ease of access is the first benefit of utilizing songs as a media because song is the easiest media to access wherever we are.

Student 1 said "*Using songs as a medium is easy and fast to access. We just turn on our mobile and play the song. Then we can repeatedly until we understand with the vocabulary and the grammar/ tenses that used in the songs. And, I have tried using other medium for learning English but it is not easy to use.*

So, based on statement above he had compared song with other media to improve his vocabulary and he admitted that "this media has the easiest access because by using song as the media he just turn on his mobile and play the song. Then he can repeatedly until he understands with the vocabulary and the tenses that used in the songs without

getting trouble. Whereas, student 2 said that "*Songs are indeed very easy to access. We can access songs wherever we want. Not only in schools, even when we go playing, we can ease to access it.*

The statement above means that the use of this media was easy, especially in flexibility to using it.

**Effective**

The students have a similar opinion on effectiveness.

Student 1 said: 'I am curious about the meaning of a word in a song and motivated to find its meaning by looking up a dictionary and I can also study at home by listening to an English song that is written to me pleases. Based on the above statement, learning English through songs is effective because students become more active in class. Students try to find the meaning of song lyrics by opening a dictionary. They usually use an electronic dictionary because it's easy. In addition, students can also practice at home with different songs they like.

Student 2 said *"actually I'm very quiet in the classroom, but when the teacher uses songs a media, I become very talkative* and *most active in the learning process because it makes me practice directly, and also I can sing together with my family, my friends and my siblings.*

Based on the perception above, the learning process in the classroom become more active as a result of the student's enthusiasm in the learning process and it provides a new atmosphere in the classroom. The students can practice what they have learned.

**Easily increase the students' vocabulary**

Utilizing song's lyrics as media could increase the students' English vocabulary, but as we know that every students are different.

Student 1 said: *"Songs* can *develop vocabulary, because when listening to the song I can find many new words"*

Based on student's statement above, according to student 1" by utilizing the song as medium could improve his vocabulary, because he can sing while identifying the new words that he find.

Student 2 said that:

*"I can increase my* vocabulary *and other skill through song."*

Based on the perception above, student 2 agrees that using songs as media can improve our vocabulary and other English skill . Song can increase our ability to remember, we can memorize new words and also we can even try to spell a new word correctly. Therefore, the vocabulary will developed or increase drastically.

**Weakness**

The students also admitted that they faced several weaknesses on using songs a medium, which is to improve their vocabulary, including most song using the figurative language.

**Most song using the figurative language**

Student 1 stated that "*I* think *the weakness of using songs as media is in the choice of words. Most songs use figurative language that is very difficult to understand.*

Student 2 also stated *"I often confused to understand the meaning of the song lyric, I don't know the meaning of each word in that lyric because it mostly uses the figurative language and idiom"* "Based on the student perceive above, the students have difficulty in finding the meaning of the song because most songs are using figurative language that make them confused and difficult to understand the meaning.

**Discussion**

In this part, explains the finding that the researcher found and analyzed in the previous chapter. Besides that, it also answers the research problem that have been formulate in the previous, which is about the student's perception of the strength and the weaknesses of songs that used by the teachers in improving the student's vocabulary. Those research problems have been revealed through the interview. The findings showed that the participants had a positive perception of the songs that they used as the media to improve students' vocabulary. Besides that , the effectiveness of using music to teach language can be seen by its positive impact on learner cognitive ability (Ningsih et al., 2018). Some aspects as the strengths of a song as a media give positive contributions to the students.  By having an ease of access, they can easily access song that they want without need media that can complicate them. They can access songs wherever and whenever they want, not only at school, even when playing they can easily access it. Then, by the ease of access of the songs, these students can feel the second beneficiary impact given in using this medium. They can easily get the new vocabulary, grammar, and easy

to access. Moreover, the satisfaction of having effectiveness showed the students more curious to learn English in the classroom. They more active than usual because they can practice directly what is taught while singing a song, and it makes students who are very quiet become talkative when the teachers using songs as learning media. Song is one of the media that teachers can use to help students improve their English skills (Hadi, 2019). Song is a great way to get students interested in practicing their English skills. Also, (Millington, 2011) said in his book " Songs may offer diversity to the everyday classroom routine and create a calm and comfortable atmosphere that makes the classroom pleasant when used properly to teach an English to young learners". Furthermore, he explained that the variety created stimulates interest and attention, which can help maintain classroom motivation, by helping learners to reach higher levels of achievement. Students also revealed that song can improve their vocabulary because when students listen to the songs repeatedly it makes students easily find the new words that they don't know in advance, then of course they have the initiative to find out the meaning through the lexicon or else. Besides that, they will ease to remember the words and they can also try to write the correct spelling of the new words. The words used in songs are might be remembered alongside the melody of the song, throughout a lifetime (Siskova, 2008). Therefore, the vocabulary will increase drastically. Music will stir memories and emotions, emotions make a person to think of a song or a memory, and memories are formed based on music and emotions (Lynn, 2012). However, the weakness they faced gave a negative contribution to the students' perceptions. Many of the songs they use to learn using the figurative language which is experienced by those students reflected how this media can make it difficult to find the meaning of the song and leave them confused about the literal meaning. We know that figurative language is the use of words or phrases that differ from their usual meaning. People may find many figurative languages such as in daily conversations, magazine articles, advertisements, novels, songs, etc (Keraft, 2006.).

4. **CONCLUSION**

The findings of this study revealed that students had a positive perception of using songs as a media to improve their vocabulary. The effectiveness of using music in language teaching was evident, as it had a positive impact on learners' cognitive abilities. The strengths of using songs as a media were identified, including ease of access, increased vocabulary, and enhanced classroom engagement. Students found it convenient to access songs anytime and anywhere, which contributed to their motivation and curiosity to learn

English. The use of songs in the classroom also created a pleasant and comfortable atmosphere, stimulating interest and attention, and ultimately leading to higher levels of achievement. Furthermore, students reported that listening to songs repeatedly helped them discover new words, understand their meanings, and improve their spelling. The melodic nature of songs facilitated long-term retention of vocabulary. However, a weakness identified was the presence of figurative language in many songs, which posed challenges in understanding the literal meaning and sometimes left students confused. Overall, the findings highlight the benefits of using songs as a tool for vocabulary improvement while acknowledging the potential difficulties associated with figurative language usage.

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