

Improving Students' Vocabulary Mastery Through Listening English Songs of SMA Negeri 1 Torue

 <https://doi.org/10.31004/jele.v10i4.1082>

*Dinda Nandita, Nur Sehang Thamrin, Afrillia Anggreni, Nadrun^{abcd} 

¹²³⁴Tadulako University, Indonesia.

Corresponding Author: dindanandita12@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This research aimed to improve the vocabulary mastery of tenth-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Torue through an innovative learning method, namely by listening English songs. The low ability of students to remember, pronounce, and use new vocabulary in the correct context was the problem of the students expanding their vocabulary. This research used a quasi-experimental research design involving two groups: the experimental group that was taught using songs and the control group that was taught using conventional methods. The population is 369 students. A total of 60 students from classes XB and XC participated in this research, and data were collected through a pre-test and post-test to measure the improvement of students' vocabulary mastery, especially on verbs, nouns, and adjectives. The results of the research present a significant increase in students' vocabulary mastery after utilizing English songs. The mean post-test score of the experimental group increased from 45 to 89, while the control group only increased from 46 to 76. The hypothesis test using a t-test indicated that the t-value (6.14) was higher than the t-table value (2.042), which suggested that listening to English songs is effective in improving students' vocabulary mastery. This research concludes that the use of songs as a learning medium could create a fun learning atmosphere and increase students' motivation to learn English.

Keywords: *Vocabulary, English songs, Vocabulary Mastery.*

Article History:

Received 18th June 2025

Accepted 27th July 2025

Published 02nd August 2025



INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary mastery is a cornerstone of effective communication in any language, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. As Richards and Renandya (2002) highlight, an individual's ability to comprehend and convey information, ideas, and feelings is profoundly linked to the breadth of their vocabulary. A rich vocabulary empowers learner to articulate thoughts precisely and engage in meaning interactions, both orally and in writing. In Indonesia, the current Merdeka Curriculum places significant emphasis on developing extensive vocabulary and integrated language skills-speaking, writing, listening, and reading-recognizing their vital role in academic success and social integration for students, especially those at the tenth-grade level.

Despite this curricular emphasis, many Indonesian students face considerable challenges in acquiring and mastering English vocabulary. Previous research by Elmahdi and Hezam (2020) and Afzal (2019) points to ineffective teaching methods and low student motivation as primary impediments. Observations at SMA Negeri 1 Torue corroborate these findings, revealing that tenth-grade students struggle with remembering, pronouncing, and contextually applying new vocabulary. This deficiency often stems from a lack of engagement and difficulty in grasping the structure, meaning, and pronunciation of English words.

To resolve this challenge, innovative pedagogical approaches are essential. The integration of English songs into language learning has emerged as a promising method. Songs essentially create a fun and less intimidating learning atmosphere, utilizing familiar

melodies and relevant contexts to facilitate vocabulary mastery and retention (Mariana, Hasibuan, & Risnawaty, 2021). Research consistently supports the efficacy of this approach: Gushendra (2017) showed that English songs significantly improved students' vocabulary mastery, while Purnamasari (2020) noted its motivational impact. In addition, studies conducted by Bara (2019) and Octia (2019) also reported significant improvements in students' vocabulary and achievement through song-based instruction at various levels of education. These studies underscore the potential of music to improve pronunciation, stress, intonation, and overall vocabulary knowledge by providing a contextualized and engaging learning experience (Phisutthangkoon & Panich, 2016).

Building upon this evidence, this research aims to investigate the effectiveness of using English songs to improve vocabulary mastery, specifically focusing on verbs, nouns, and adjectives, among tenth grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Torue. It was hoped that this engaging and context-rich approach would not only increase students' motivation but also lead measurable improvements in their vocabulary mastery, thus enabling fluent and effective English communication.

METHOD

This research utilized a quasi-experimental research design to assess the effectiveness of English songs in enhancing vocabulary mastery among tenth-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Torue. The population consisted of 369 students, from which a sample of 60 students was randomly selected from classes XB and XC. The researcher wrote the name of each class on separate papers and placed them in a box, which was shaken to randomly select the names of the experimental and control classes. Two groups were formed: an experimental group that received treatment through English songs and a control, group taught using conventional methods. Data were collected by using pre-tests which included multiple-choice and match meaning test focusing on verbs, nouns, and adjectives. The treatment involved six sessions where the experimental group engaged with selected English songs. The pre-test assessed students' initial vocabulary mastery, while the post-test measured improvements after the treatment. Data analysis was conducted using t-test to evaluate the significance of the results, comparing the mean scores of both groups to determine the impact of the song-based learning approach on vocabulary mastery.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The result of Test:

Table 1. Pre-test Scores of Participants in the Experimental Group

No	Initial	Pre-Test Score
1	AD	47
2	ANM	43
3	AR	50
4	AYS	43
5	BD	47
6	BGAN	43
7	CI	43
8	DP	47
9	DPE	43
10	EFKL	43
11	F	43
12	FA	43
13	FIGRV	43
14	IIGC	47
15	JRA	47
16	JYT	43
17	MI	47
18	MJ	47
19	MRM	40
20	MS	37

Improving Students' Vocabulary Mastery Through Listening English Songs of SMA Negeri 1 Torue

21	MVT	47
22	MW	47
23	NNM	53
24	OCM	43
25	PA	40
26	RJE	40
27	RR	43
28	SM	47
29	YCP	43
30	ZNI	47
Total Score		1337

Table. 2 Post-test Scores of Participants in the Experimental Group

No	Initial	Post-Test Score
1	AD	80
2	ANM	97
3	AR	87
4	AYS	90
5	BD	87
6	BGAN	90
7	CI	90
8	DP	90
9	DPE	87
10	EFKL	93
11	F	83
12	FA	90
13	FIGRV	90
14	IIGC	83
15	JRA	97
16	JYT	93
17	MI	90
18	MJ	93
19	MRM	87
20	MS	93
21	MVT	87
22	MW	90
23	NNM	83
24	OCM	87
25	PA	87
26	RJE	93
27	RR	90
28	SM	80
29	YCP	87
30	ZNI	93
Total Score		2667

From the data above, it can be indicated that the students score before and after implementing English song statistically presents significant difference. The average score of the students in pre test was in 45 while in post-test is in 89.

Table 3. Pre-test Scores of Participants in the Control Group

No	Initial	Pre-test
1	ADA	40
2	AN	53
3	BGNPL	47
4	DA	40
5	DCM	37
6	DJNN	43
7	DR	40
8	DS	47
9	DSE	53
10	FE	33
11	FEE	40
12	FJ	43
13	FS	47
14	HA	33
15	INEA	47

16	JAY	37
17	KAPF	47
18	KG	43
19	MA	43
20	MR	43
21	NPLA	47
22	NSS	50
23	OPD	47
24	PR	57
25	R	53
26	RR	43
27	RS	67
28	YM	47
29	YS	57
30	YU	47
Total Score		1370

Table. 4 Post-test Scores of Participants in the Control Group

No	Initial	Post-Test Score
1	AD	80
2	ANM	97
3	AR	87
4	AYS	90
5	BD	87
6	BGAN	90
7	CI	90
8	DP	90
9	DPE	87
10	EFKL	93
11	F	83
12	FA	90
13	FIGRV	90
14	IIGC	83
15	JRA	97
16	JYT	93
17	MI	90
18	MJ	93
19	MRM	87
20	MS	93
21	MVT	87
22	MW	90
23	NNM	83
24	OCM	87
25	PA	87
26	RJE	93
27	RR	90
28	SM	80
29	YCP	87
30	ZNI	93
Total Score		2667

From the data above, it can be indicated that the students score before and after implementing traditional method does not statistically present significant difference. The average score of the students in pre-test was in 46 while in post-test is in 76.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics

Group	Test	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Experimental	Pre-test	45	3.21	30
Experimental	Post-test	89	4.32	30
Control	Pre-test	46	7.23	30
Control	Post-test	76	6.93	30

The table showed that the standard deviation for the experimental group's pre-test (3.21) and post-test (4.32) indicates the variability in students' scores. The increase in standard deviation in the post-test shows that although many students improved, the degree of improvement varied, while the standard deviation of the control group decreased slightly

from pre-test (7.23) to post-test (6.93). This indicated more consistent performance among the students in the control group over time, with less variability in their scores.

With a significance level of 0.05 and degree of freedom $N_x + N_y - 2 = 30 - 30 - 2 = 58$, based on the results of data analysis, a t-count value of 6.14 was obtained. The researcher found that the t-table value (2.042) is smaller than t-count value (6.14). This indicates acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (H1) and rejection of the null hypothesis (H0).

Discussion

This research highlights the significant impact of using English songs as a medium for improving vocabulary mastery among tenth-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Torue. The results from the pre-test and post-test demonstrate a marked increase in students' vocabulary scores, indicating that the integration of music into language learning can be an effective pedagogical strategy. As Gordon, Fehd, and McCandliss (2015) notes, music can serve as a powerful tool in the classroom, as it not only captures students' attention but also fosters a positive emotional connection to the learning material. This improvement can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, the use of the songs created a more engaging and enjoyable learning environment, which motivated students to practice in vocabulary exercises linked to music. This aligns with previous studies suggesting that enjoyable learning experiences can enhance student engagement. As noted by Hidi and Renninger (2006), interest is a key factor in motivation, and when students find learning enjoyable, they are more likely to engage deeply with the material. Secondly, the lyrics of the selected songs provided rich contextual example of vocabulary usage, helping students not only to memorize words but also to understand their meanings and applications in real-life situations. As Nation (2001) states, contextualized learning, such as through songs, allows learners to see how words function in real language, which enhances their understanding and retention. Supporting this, Schmitt (2000) emphasizes that learning vocabulary in context, such as through songs, allows students to make connections between words and their meanings, leading to deeper understanding and retention.

However, the increase in standard deviation in the post-test indicates that while many students improved, the degree of improvement varied among individuals. This variability suggests that not all students respond equally to auditory learning methods, and factors such as individual learning styles and prior knowledge may influence their ability to learn from songs. As Davis, Christodoulou, Seider and Gardner (2011) posits, intelligence is not a single entity but a combination of various types of intelligences, which can influence how students learn and engage with material. In contrast, the control group, which didn't use songs, showed a slight decrease in standard deviation, indicating a more consistent performance over time. This suggest that traditional teaching methods may provide a stable but less dynamic learning experience. As Baker (2011) points out, while traditional methods may provide a stable learning environment, integrating music can create a dynamic atmosphere that fosters creativity and critical thinking.

Overall, the research underscores potential of using English songs as an effective tool for improving vocabulary mastery, while also highlighting the need diverse teaching strategies to cater to different learning styles.

CONCLUSIONS

The research clearly showed that the use of English songs significantly improved the vocabulary mastery of tenth grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Torue. The findings showed a substantial increase in the vocabulary scores of the experimental group, with the mean score increasing impressively from 45 to 89. These results suggest that English songs serve as a valuable and effective tool for language acquisition, providing a fun and engaging medium for students to learn and practice new vocabulary. Therefore, this research advocates the use of English songs as a powerful learning strategy to improve students' vocabulary and promote overall language learning.

REFERENCES

- Afzal, N. (2019). A Study on Vocabulary-Learning Problems Encountered by BA English Majors at the University Level of Education. *Arab World English Journal*, 10(3), 81-98.
- Baker, G. (2011). *Strategic Uses of Music in the US History Classroom*. The University of Alabama.
- Bara, U. K. B. (2019). *Improving the Students' Vocabulary Mastery by Using English Song at Eight Grade of MTS Islamic Zending Medan*. Skripsi. Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara. Medan.
- Davis, K., Christodoulou, J., Seider, S., & Gardner, H. E. (2011). The Theory of Multiple Intelligences. *Cambridge Handbook of Intelligence*, 485-503.
- Elmahdi, O., & Hezam, A. M (2020). Challenge for Methods of Teaching English Vocabulary to Non-native Students. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal*, 7(5).
- Gushendra, R. (2017). An Experimental Study: Improving Students' Vocabulary Mastery by Using English Songs. *IJIELT: Indonesian Journal of Integrated English Language Teaching*. 3(1). 53-64.
- Gordon, R. L., Fehd, H. M., & McCandliss, B. D. (2015). Does Music Training Enhance Literacy Skills? A Meta-Analysis. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 6, 1777.
- Hidi, S., & Renninger, K. A. (2006). The Four-Phase Model of Interest Development. *Educational Psychologist*. 41(2), 111-127. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15326985ep4101_4
- Mariana, Hasibuan A. L., & Risnawati. (2021). Improving Students' Vocabulary Through English Song. *Indonesian Journal of ELT and Applied Linguistics (IJEAL)*. 1(1). 1-7.
- Nation, I. S. P. (2001). *Learning Vocabulary in Another Language*. 126-132. Cambridge University Press.
- Octia, A. M. (2019). *Improving Vocabulary Mastery Through Listening to English Songs at The Garde IX Students of SMP N 8 Padangsidempuan*. Skripsi. Institute Agama Islam Negeri Padangsidempuan.
- Phisutthangkoon, K., & Panich, M. (2016). Effectiveness of English Song Activities on Vocabulary Learning and Retention. *The European Conference on Language Learning*. 1-12.
- Purnamasari. (2020). The Effect of Using English Song as Teaching Media to Improve Vocabulary Mastery on The Eleventh Grade Students of SMK Negeri 11 Samarinda. *Borneo educational Journal (BORJU)*. 2(2). 89-100.
- Richards, J. C., & Renandya, W. A. (2002). *Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of current practice*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Schmitt, N. (2000). *Vocabulary in Language Teaching*. Cambridge University Press.