



# Song-Based English Vocabulary Teaching to Improve Students Vocabulary Mastery at SDN Banjar Agung 4

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## ABSTRACT

Students' ability to memorize vocabulary is the foundation of language acquisition. While only a few EFL learners, especially elementary school students in Indonesia, have the willingness to memorize English vocabulary. This study aims to help students enrich their English vocabulary through English songs and vocabulary worksheets in the form of crossword puzzles. This research uses qualitative methods with a descriptive approach. The data collected came from observation in class 2 of SDN Banjar Agung 4 with the researcher as a participant. The use of songs as learning media is considered efficient in improving students' mastery of English vocabulary. This is evidenced by the results of the worksheet done at the end of the lesson and analysis of student interactions during the learning process. The pleasant classroom atmosphere during learning comes from the students' enthusiasm for singing English songs. Students become more courageous to pronounce English vocabulary and actively involved during learning.

**Keywords:** English learning, vocabulary mastery, primary school

## INTRODUCTION

Language is a vital tool in the human communication system. Of the many languages, English is the language with the highest percentage of users. Proficiency in English is necessary to stay up to date with the advancements in science and technology [3]. However, the fact that English is the dominant language for the world community does not necessarily motivate students to learn English consciously.

Language mastery will be better if it is familiarized as early as possible. Although English is not currently included in the Indonesian education curriculum, but only in local content, English learning in elementary schools must still be done intensively. This realizes the importance of English in all aspects of life that can support students' success in their future careers.

Language knowledge is very important in the process of learning a language. Learning a language cannot be separated from mastering vocabulary. The first and most crucial stage in learning a language is expanding the vocabulary [8]. However, many students in Indonesia think that memorizing vocabulary is a boring activity. This should encourage English teachers to dismiss this notion. The trick is to find the right learning method.

Some of the problems faced by Grade 2 students in learning English at SDN Banjar Agung 4:

1. Mispronouncing often occurs so that students are also afraid to pronounce English vocabulary.
2. Students are not yet able to construct simple sentences in English
3. Students lack in vocabulary mastery
4. Students are not enthusiastic in learning English.

Based on these problems, the author decided to use songs as an English teaching medium. The use of songs is considered suitable with the characteristics of elementary school students. They need active, fun teaching methods. Learning English through English songs is very enjoyable and practical.

Primary school children should acquire English knowledge in a way that suits their character and developmental level at primary school, so that primary school children who will continue to secondary school will not experience psychological pressure and cognitive development [7]. This shows that primary school students really need to be taught English, provided that the material taught is only a basic introduction to English. Due to their tendency to play, it would be better if English is taught while interspersed with games or songs.

At the primary school level, expanding vocabulary becomes a significant challenge for students. One interesting and effective method in achieving this goal is the use of English songs in learning. Songs not only enrich students' learning experience, but also have great potential to improve vocabulary recall and comprehension. Therefore, this article intends to explore students' experiences and perceptions towards the use of English songs as a vocabulary learning tool in grade 2 of SDN Banjar Agung 4. Through a qualitative approach, this study aims to understand in depth how English songs can help students in expanding their vocabulary. By providing a deeper insight into students' experiences, this article is expected to make a valuable contribution to the development of more effective English learning strategies at the primary level.

### **Vocabulary Mastery**

According to Kurnia [6], the components of English include expressions, vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and structure. Mastering vocabulary is crucial for effective language learning, as it allows for effective interaction and understanding of concepts [5]. Students with limited vocabulary struggle with expanding and memorizing words. Without vocabulary, it is impossible to write, speak, or comprehend what is read or heard. In order to learn a foreign language, one must first master vocabulary [1]. Introducing vocabulary is crucial because it's one of the components that language learners must learn if they hope to speak English fluently. The mastery of the four English language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—is influenced by vocabulary. Young learners learn English more effectively the more vocabulary they have. Furthermore, a solid foundational knowledge base can help students when learning English in the future.

### **Song in Language Learning**

Since children learn languages through listening first, the use of songs is essential to the process [4]. Before being able to read, children will learn language through listening first. Visual, including imagery, movement, and facial expressions, aid in the listening process. Singing in the classroom can improve language abilities by bringing in a more laid-back vibe. Bawawa stated that using songs into vocabulary instruction for English language learners creates a pleasant ambiance, facilitates memory retention for the students due to the songs' familiarity, and helps them comprehend and acquire new vocabulary [4]. Songs are effective vocabulary introducers because they provide the words a relevant context. Students that engage in song-based learning typically find it easy to express themselves and gain a lot of new vocabulary. Music may also be enjoyable and a great way to spark

curiosity about other cultures. Songs usually make people curious about the meaning behind the lyrics, so that without realizing it, it leads them to learn the language.

Songs have a variety of benefits for teaching language to young students in the classroom. They can be utilized for unwinding, engaging in games, switching up the action, establishing new connections, and introducing new vocabulary [6]. Additionally, playing songs in class can boost the enthusiasm, drive, and engagement of the younger students in language acquisition.

## **MATERIAL AND METHODS**

This study involved 34 students from grade 2 of SDN Banjar Agung 4. The students consisted of 20 male students and 14 female students of varying levels of English proficiency. Students were given a worksheet in the form of a crossword puzzle about English vocabulary. The results of the worksheet were used to measure students' ability to master the English vocabulary obtained through the song. Video recording was used to record students' interactions with the English songs taught. This study was conducted through participant observation, in which the researcher took an active role as a teacher in teaching English in the classroom.

### **1. Reparation Stage**

In the preparation stage, the author asked permission from the 2B homeroom teacher at SDN Banjar Agung 4, which is located at Jl. Sheikh Nawawi Al-Bantani Lingk. Cigebug, Banjaragung, Kec. Cipocok Jaya, Kota Serang, Banten 4212.

Some of the activities carried out in this stage are:

- a) Determining the time of English learning
- b) Preparation of activity materials, which include: adjusting learning materials with what is being taught in class this semester, determining songs that are suitable for the subject matter and students' ability levels, making crossword puzzles using the puzzlemaker website, and preparing rewards for students who have the courage to come forward to sing English songs and fill in crosswords on the board.

### **2. Implementation Stage**

At this stage, the author encouraged the students to want to learn English. The author explains that it is important to expand English vocabulary, and it can be done in a fun way. The author wrote the song lyrics on the board, then gave an example of singing an English song with the correct pronunciation. The selected song contains vocabulary about adjectives and animal names. Students had their turn to pronounce certain vocabulary in the song correctly. The author also opens a question-and-answer session if there are vocabulary words that students do not understand or vocabulary words whose pronunciation is difficult.

### **3. Final Stage**

Collect the worksheets that have been filled in by the students, then motivate the students to be enthusiastic about learning English.

Qualitative analysis will be applied to collect data. The worksheet results will be analyzed with a descriptive approach. Video recordings and field notes are also analyzed to identify how songs can improve students' vocabulary. Findings will be presented narratively, highlighting patterns of interaction between students and the English song materials. Qualitative analysis will be conducted to identify changes in students'

interactions and their responses to the song-based English learning method. Thus, the results of the analysis can illustrate the impact of teaching English songs on students' vocabulary improvement

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The song-based English vocabulary learning activity received a good response from the students. When the author asked when the learning was about to start, many students raised their hands to show that they like to sing. So when the core activities began, the students were very enthusiastic about singing back the song that was being taught. This activity does not focus on singing alone, but more importantly, it trains students' ability to pronounce English vocabulary. This singing activity indirectly helps students remember the English vocabulary in it. The song review stage also helps students know the meaning of song lyrics or vocabulary.



**Figure 1.** teaching class 2 of SDN Banjar Agung 4

There are three songs used in this teaching and learning process.

### 1. **Good Morning, Everybody**

Good morning, everybody.

How are you?

I'm fine.

Good morning, everybody.

How are you?

I'm fine.

Good morning, students.

Good morning, teacher.

Good morning, everybody.

How are you?

I'm fine

**Description of Activity:** The author as the teacher and all students sing together, ask questions (say greetings and ask how are you) using tones and hand claps.

**Benefit:** To help students recognize forms of greeting in English, as well as asking how you are and how to respond to it.

## 2. Animals Are in The Zoo

Animals are in the zoo.  
Elephant, bear, sheep, and bird.  
Fish, lion, and tiger.  
Giraffe is the tallest one.

**Description of Activity:** Sing this song like the melody of the song “Balonku”. The teacher gives an example of how to sing the song, then the students follow after. After singing together, the teacher tells the meaning of the song. The teacher tries to make the topic of the zoo interesting, connecting it to daily life context. Then asks the meaning of some vocabulary in the song. Students are given the opportunity to learn to pronounce the vocabulary correctly. Students are given time to be able to sing the song independently. Students who dare to come forward to sing will get a reward.

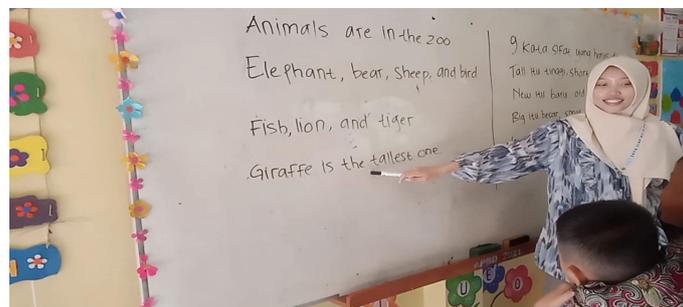
**Benefit:** Helps students to recognize English vocabulary about the kinds of animals in the zoo. It also helps students to be brave in pronouncing English vocabulary properly and correctly.

## 2. Nine Adjectives

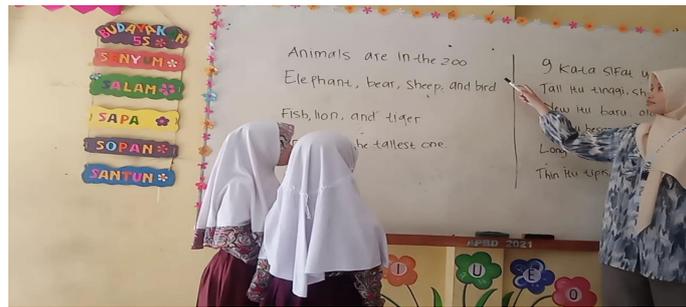
Sembilan kata sifat yang harus diingat:  
Tall itu tinggi, short itu pendek.  
New itu baru, old itu lama.  
Big itu besar, small itu kecil.  
Long artinya 140anjang, thick artinya tebal.  
Thin itu tipis, semua sudah dihafal.

**Description of Activity:** Sing this song like the melody of the song “Anak Kambing Saya”. The teacher introduces the students to adjectives through a song. The whole class sings the song together, then the students are given time to remember the song. The teacher also asks questions and answers about the vocabulary in the song.

**Benefit:** Helps students to recognize some adjective vocabulary and their opposites. The song makes it easier for students to remember the vocabulary and know how to pronounce it in a fun way.



**Figure 2.** Students learn to pronounce the English words

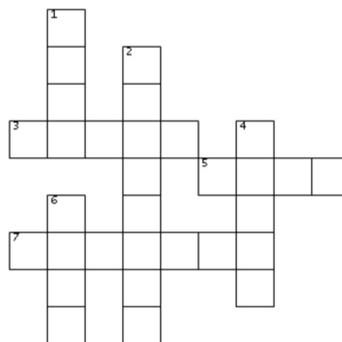


**Figure 3.** Students try to sing English song

After the core activity, the students were given 2 kinds of exercises, one print out worksheet containing a crossword puzzle about the vocabulary in the song “Animals Are in the Zoo” for each student, and one crossword puzzle as a quiz on the whiteboard. The results of the worksheet were collected, and students had to compete to show the fastest raise hand to get the opportunity to fill in the quiz on the board and get the reward.

After using the songs, the writer gave a test in the form of a crossword puzzle to measure the effectiveness of using songs as teaching media in improving students' English vocabulary. This test was given to find out the extent of students' mastery of English vocabulary. The following is the form of the crossword given:

1. Crossword based on the song Animals “Are In The Zoo”



**Figure 4.** Crossword based on song Animals

ACROSS

- 3. Domba
- 5. Singa
- 7. Jerapah

DOWN

- 1. Ikan
- 2. Gajah
- 4. Harimau
- 6. Burung

2. Crossword based on the song "Nine Adjectives"

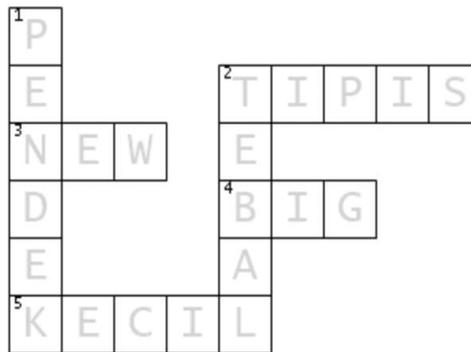


Figure 5. Crossword based on the song "Nine Adjectives"

- |          |          |
|----------|----------|
| ACROSS   | DOWN     |
| 2. Thin  | 1. Short |
| 3. Baru  | 2. Thick |
| 4. Besar |          |
| 5. Small |          |

Through the worksheets given to students, it was obtained that 28 students answered or filled in the entire crossword correctly, 5 students were wrong in filling in 1 question, and 1 student was wrong in filling in 3 questions. That means 82% of students answered all questions correctly. More than half of the total number of students were able to remember the vocabulary and its meaning through the songs that had been taught. While the rest of the students had problems in reading and spelling, this is normal because they are still in grade 2.

While working on the worksheet, the thing that must be emphasized is the explanation of the rules for working on crosswords. After instructions, students can do the crossword puzzle themselves. The students who had no problems in recognizing letters and reading were very enthusiastic and many finished it quickly. Meanwhile, students who had obstacles in recognizing letters and reading still need to be guided slowly.



Figure 6. Students fill in the quiz

However, their memory of the vocabulary in the song helped them fill in the crosswords, and the crossword format also helped them learn to spell the alphabet. Through the songs, they can remember the vocabulary of animals and adjectives in English and their meanings. Many students were more motivated to come forward to sing and fill in the crossword puzzle on the board. This can be seen from their enthusiasm for competing and raising their hands quickly to get the chance to answer the quiz and sing back the songs.

## CONCLUSION

Based on this study which aims to improve the mastery of English vocabulary through English songs in class 2 of SDN Banjar Agung 4, the author found that there was a significant effect on students' vocabulary mastery. The results of this study found that: 1) Students' vocabulary mastery ability increased. 2) Students' pronunciation skills improved. 3) Students' memory ability of English vocabulary also increased. 4) Students' confidence and enthusiasm in learning English increased. It can be concluded that the use of songs as media in English learning has a significant effect on students' vocabulary mastery. It can also increase students' motivation in learning English. The use of songs as English learning media can provide a fun atmosphere so that students can freely express their understanding

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