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The Effectiveness of Using English Songs to Teach Vocabulary to Fifth Grade Students

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Abstract

The researcher made this research to investigate the effectiveness of using English song in teaching vocabulary to fifth-grade students at SDK Santa Maria Tulungagung during the academic year 2024/2025. The study employed a quasi-experimental design with two groups: an experimental group taught using English songs and a control group taught using conventional methods. Data were collected through pre-tests and post-tests, and analyzed using the Independent Sample T-test. The results showed that although the experimental group achieved a slightly higher mean post-test score compared to the control group, the statistical analysis indicated no significant difference between the two groups ($p > 0.05$). Thus, English songs did not significantly improve students' vocabulary mastery compared to conventional teaching methods. However, descriptively, the use of English songs created a more engaging and motivating classroom atmosphere. Therefore, while English songs may not drastically enhance vocabulary mastery in a short period, they remain a valuable tool for maintaining students' interest and enthusiasm in learning.

Keywords: English Song; Vocabulary; Young Learners; Teaching Media; Experimental Study

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INTRODUCTION

In this modern globalized world, English functions as a widely recognized international language. It is utilized across various domains, including science, technology, education, economy, culture, and communication. As a result of its global importance, English is incorporated into the education systems of many non-English-speaking countries, including Indonesia, where it is taught from the elementary to the university level. English is introduced early in schools to help students build strong foundations in the language. Among the key elements of language learning, vocabulary plays a fundamental role.

Despite its importance, vocabulary learning often becomes a challenge for students. Traditional teaching approaches, which typically rely on rote memorization, may not effectively motivate or engage students, especially young learners. In many cases, this results in boredom and lack of interest. One effective strategy to address these challenges is using English songs. Songs can enhance the learning situation and make vocabulary acquisition more enjoyable. According to Millington (2011), "using songs in the classroom can promote vocabulary retention, improve pronunciation, and create a positive emotional connection to the language being learned". Songs serve multiple functions in English language learning, particularly in vocabulary instruction. In the context of teaching English to young learners or beginners, songs offer an effective, engaging, and interactive method for introducing and reinforcing new words. Through rhythm, repetition, melody, and meaningful context, songs help students understand, remember, and use vocabulary naturally.

Recent studies have begun exploring about using English song to improve students' vocabulary ability. Amelia Ramadini and Siti Halimah (2019), in their study entitled "Using Song to Improve Vocabulary Mastery for Elementary School Students" found that there's an improvement in students' score for the group who are thought by English song. The researchers concluded that the use of songs created a more enjoyable and relaxed learning environment. Similarly, Eva Faliyanti (2017) found that students who were taught using English songs

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showed higher levels of engagement and motivation during the learning process. The rhythmic and repetitive nature of songs helped students absorb vocabulary more naturally. Additionally, students were more confident and enthusiastic in class, which led to improved performance in vocabulary-related tasks.

Songs offer many benefits for teaching vocabulary, especially to young or beginner-level learners. They provide a fun and comfortable way to learn, making students more interested in the lesson and more confident in using new words. First, songs can boost student motivation. Second, songs can help students remember words easily. Third, songs can create a relaxed learning environment. With these benefits in mind, this research is intended to examine how effective using English songs is in improving vocabulary mastery among fifth-grade students of SDK Santa Maria Tulungagung in the academic year 2024/2025. The findings are expected to contribute to alternative teaching practices that support both language development and student motivation through enjoyable media.

METHOD

This research employs a quantitative approach through the use of a quasi-experimental design. This method is chosen to examine whether the application of English songs in vocabulary instruction significantly influences the vocabulary mastery of fifth-grade students. A quasiexperiment is considered suitable in situations where participants cannot be randomly assigned to groups, yet the researcher intends to compare outcomes between those who receive a specific treatment and those who do not. As explained by Creswell (1994), experimental research involves the manipulation of an independent variable to observe its impact on a dependent variable. In this case, the independent variable is the use of English songs as a teaching strategy, while the dependent variable is the students' vocabulary mastery.

The population comprises all fifth-grade students enrolled at SDK Santa Maria Tulungagung in the academic year of 2024/2025. At this grade level, the school has a total of 57 students, who are distributed across two classes, namely Class VA and Class VB. the sample comprises two pre-existing classes at SDK Santa Maria Tulungagung: Class VA, which serves as the control group, and Class VB, which functions as the experimental group. Although the full fifth-grade population consists of 57 students, only 30 students participated in this study—15 students from each class. This decision was made to ensure that the sample groups were equally distributed and manageable for conducting both the pre-test and post-test assessments effectively.

In this study, data were gathered through tests, which were used to measure the impact of using English songs on the vocabulary mastery of fifth grade students. Pre-tests and post-tests allowed the researcher to compare students' performance before and after the intervention in both the experimental and control groups. In this study, the researcher employed tests as the primary instruments to assess the vocabulary mastery of fifth-grade students. Two sets of test instruments were used: 1) A pre-test, administered before the treatment phase; 2) A post-test, given after the instructional intervention was completed.

In this study, the data analyzed were obtained from the results of vocabulary pre-tests and post-tests administered to both the experimental and control groups. The data were examined using quantitative methods, specifically through statistical analysis techniques. This approach was selected to ensure the results could be measured precisely and compared objectively between the two groups. To guarantee the reliability of the findings, the researcher first conducted a normality test to determine whether the distribution of the data met the assumptions required for further statistical testing. Once the data were confirmed to be normally distributed, the researcher proceeded with both descriptive statistics—such as mean, median, and standard deviation—and inferential statistics, which were used to test the significance of the difference in vocabulary achievement between the two groups.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

In this research, the researcher gave the same structure for both pre-test and post-test group. 20 questions, which included 10 multiple-choice items and 10 fill in-the-blank sentences. These question types were designed to measure not only recognition but, also we hope that the students can apply vocabulary in every English context. Each correct answer was given a score of 5 points, making the highest possible score per

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student 100 points. After the tests were conducted, the scores from both groups were collected and analyzed through descriptive statistics to observe patterns, identify trends, and compare the overall performance of students before and after the treatment. The results of the pre-test are summarized in the table below:

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

	N	Median	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
PreTest Control	15	35.0	60.0	95.0	1150.0	76.667	12.0515
PreTest Experimental	15	40.0	60.0	100.0	1185.0	79.000	12.9835
Valid N (listwise)	15						

From the results on the table above, the mean score for the control group was 76.67, while the experimental group had a slightly higher mean of 79.00, indicating that both groups had relatively similar starting levels. The minimum score for both groups was 60, suggesting that some students struggled with the vocabulary material. The experimental group had one student scoring a perfect 100, giving it a higher maximum score.

Following the treatment, both groups completed a post-test using the same format as the pre-test. The test was designed to assess the improvement in students' vocabulary mastery after the intervention.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of the Post-Test Scores

Descriptive Statistics							
	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Post Test Control	15	25.0	70.0	95.0	1242.5	82	8.3381
Post Test Experiental	15	27.5	70.0	97.5	1255.0	83	9.6763
Valid N (listwise)	15						

After treatment, both groups showed progress. The control group's mean rose from 76.67 to 82.00, and the experimental group increased from 79.00 to 83.00. The minimum score improved to 70.0 in both groups, reflecting better performance among previously low-achieving students. The maximum score was higher in the experimental group, at 97.5 compared to 95.0 in the control group. The standard deviation was smaller in the control group (8.34), suggesting slightly more uniform improvement, while the experimental group (9.68) showed greater individual variation.

The Analisys of Data

All statistical computations were performed using SPSS version 24. Two main types of statistical tests were applied: the paired sample t-test, which was used to assess changes within each group before and after treatment, and the independent sample t-test, which was used to compare the final outcomes between the two groups.

Paired Samples Correlation (Paraphrased)

Before conducting a full comparison of pre-test and post-test scores, the researcher first ran a paired samples correlation analysis to determine whether there was a statistically significant relationship between students' performance on the two tests within each group. This step was important to establish the consistency and strength of the association between initial and final vocabulary scores before moving on to t-test procedures. And the result is showed in this table.

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Table 3. Descriptive Statistics Comparison of pre-test and post-test. Descriptive Statistic

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
PreTest Control	15	35.0	60.0	95.0	76	12.0515
Post Test Control	15	25.0	70.0	95.0	82	8.3381
PreTest Experimental	15	40.0	60.0	100.0	79	12.9835
Post Test Experiental	15	27.5	70.0	97.5	83	9.6763
Valid N (listwise)	15					

Based on the data presented above, the control group showed an increase in vocabulary test scores, with the mean score rising from 76.00 to 82.00 after instruction using conventional methods. Additionally, the standard deviation decreased from 12.05 to 8.33, which indicates a greater level of uniformity in student performance following the treatment.

Similarly, in the experimental group, there was an improvement in the average score, moving from 79.00 to 83.00 after students received vocabulary instruction through the use of English songs. The standard deviation also declined from 12.98 to 9.68, suggesting that students' test results became more consistent after the intervention.

Paired Sample Correlation

This test checks the relationship between pre-test and post-test scores within each group.

Table 4. Paired Sample Correlation Paired Samples Correlation Paired

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	PreTestControl & PostTestControl	15	.945	.000
Pair 2	PreTestExperimental & PostTestExperimental	15	.877	.000

From the data above, the control group shows a very strong positive correlation (0.945) between the two tests, and the p-value (0.000) indicates the result is statistically significant. The experimental group also shows a strong correlation (0.877) with a highly significant pvalue (0.000). This means students who performed well in the pre-test tended to perform similarly well in the post-test, and the relationship is not due to chance.

Paired Sampled T-Test

Table 5. Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences					T	df	Sig. (2tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 PreTestControl – PostTestControl	-6.1667	4.9881	1.2879	-8.9290	-3.4044	-4.788	14	.000
Pair 2 PreTestExperimental – PostTestExperimental	-4.6667	6.4688	1.6702	-8.2490	-1.0844	-2.794	14	.014

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From the data above, in the control group, the average score increased by 6.17 points, and the result is statistically significant (p = 0.000). This means the teaching method effectively improved vocabulary mastery.

In the experimental group, the average gain was 4.67 points, also statistically significant (p = 0.014), proving that English songs also contributed meaningfully to students' learning. Since both p-values are less than 0.05, we conclude that both methods led to significant improvements in students' scores.

From the results above, the following conclusions can be drawn: 1) Both teaching methods (traditional and using English songs) were effective in improving vocabulary mastery, as shown by significant gains within each group; 2) However, the post-test comparison between groups showed no statistically significant difference. Therefore, we cannot conclude that using English songs was more effective than traditional teaching; 3) Still, the higher maximum score, improved consistency, and student motivation observed in the experimental group suggest that English songs can be a valuable and engaging alternative in the classroom, especially for young learners.

Discussion

After completing all required statistical analyses, this study provided valuable insight regarding the impact of using English songs as a method for teaching vocabulary. While the experimental group—which received instruction through songs—achieved a slightly higher average post-test score of 83.00 compared to 82.00 in the control group, this difference was not found to be statistically significant. Several studies support the idea that English songs can enhance vocabulary acquisition, even if this research did not find a strong statistical effect:

Fracischa and Syafei (2016) argued that English songs could stimulate learning and promote positive emotional attitudes, which aligns with the qualitative improvement observed in the experimental group's enthusiasm and participation during the lessons. Sari et al. (2021) emphasized that songs balance intellectual and emotional aspects in learning, making them effective tools for long-term memory retention — a factor that might require a longer treatment period to yield significant results.

Thus, although this study did not find a significant statistical difference, it aligns with the broader theoretical and empirical framework that songs have positive effects on students' engagement, motivation, and enjoyment in learning English vocabulary.

CONCLUSION

The goal of the research is to examine the effectiveness of English song for students' vocabulary mastery of fifth-grade students at SDK Santa Maria Tulungagung during the 2024/2025 academic year. Analysis of the pre-test and post-test results revealed that both groups experienced improvement in their vocabulary knowledge. The experimental group attained a post-test mean score of 83.00, while the control group achieved a mean score of 82.00. Although the experimental group showed a slightly higher average, the difference between the two was minimal. Furthermore, the result of the Independent Sample T-Test yielded a p-value of 0.764, which exceeds the standard significance level of 0.05. This indicates that the difference in performance between the two groups was not statistically significant and could likely have occurred due to random variation rather than the instructional method used.

Nevertheless, it is essential to recognize that quantitative results alone do not capture the full impact of a teaching method. Throughout the implementation phase, the researcher observed notable changes in classroom dynamics. Students in the experimental group displayed higher levels of interest, active participation, and enthusiasm during lessons that incorporated music. They were more engaged with the material, more motivated to learn, and demonstrated greater confidence when using new vocabulary in spoken activities.

It can be concluded that although the quantitative data did not confirm the superiority of English songs, the qualitative aspects of the classroom environment and student responses suggest that this method offers valuable support to the learning process. English songs may serve as an effective complementary tool that enhances classroom dynamics, boosts learner motivation, and makes vocabulary learning more memorable and enjoyable— especially for young learners at the elementary level. With a longer period of implementation and continuous reinforcement, English songs may yield more measurable academic results.

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