The Effectiveness of Using Songs to Improve Vocabulary Acquisition in Primary School Students

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ABSTRAK

Studi ini menyelidiki efektivitas penggunaan lagu sebagai alat pedagogis untuk meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata di antara siswa sekolah dasar yang mempelajari bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing. Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan sekelompok 40 siswa berusia 8 hingga 10 tahun di sebuah sekolah dasar negeri. Peserta dibagi menjadi dua kelompok: kelompok eksperimen, yang dihadapkan pada pembelajaran kosakata melalui lagu-lagu bahasa Inggris, dan kelompok kontrol, yang mempelajari kosakata melalui metode tradisional seperti hafalan dan latihan buku teks. Data dikumpulkan selama enam minggu menggunakan tes awal dan tes akhir untuk mengukur retensi dan penguasaan kosakata. Temuan tersebut mengungkapkan bahwa siswa dalam kelompok eksperimen menunjukkan peningkatan yang jauh lebih tinggi dalam retensi dan penggunaan kosakata dibandingkan dengan kelompok kontrol. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa memasukkan lagu ke dalam pengajaran bahasa tidak hanya membuat pembelajaran lebih menarik dan menyenangkan tetapi juga meningkatkan retensi kosakata jangka panjang. Selain itu, studi ini menyoroti peran musik dalam mengurangi kecemasan dan meningkatkan suasana belajar yang positif di kelas. Sebagai kesimpulan, penggunaan lagu dalam pengajaran kosakata bahasa Inggris dapat menjadi strategi yang efektif bagi siswa sekolah dasar, menawarkan cara yang menyenangkan dan interaktif untuk memperkuat keterampilan bahasa. Penelitian di masa mendatang dapat meneliti dampak berbagai jenis lagu atau memperluas studi ke keterampilan berbahasa lain seperti mendengarkan dan berbicara.

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effectiveness of using songs as a pedagogical tool to improve vocabulary acquisition among primary school students learning English as a foreign language. The research was conducted with a group of 40 students aged 8 to 10 at a public elementary school. The participants were divided into two groups: an experimental group, which was exposed to vocabulary learning through English songs, and a control group, which learned vocabulary through traditional methods such as rote memorization and textbook exercises. Data were collected over a period of six weeks using pre-tests and post-tests to measure vocabulary retention and acquisition. The findings revealed that students in the experimental group showed significantly higher improvement in vocabulary retention and usage compared to the control group. The results suggest that incorporating songs into language teaching not only makes learning more engaging and enjoyable but also enhances long-term vocabulary retention. Additionally, the study highlights the role of music in reducing anxiety and promoting a positive learning atmosphere in the classroom. In conclusion, the use of songs in teaching English vocabulary can be an effective strategy for primary school students, offering a fun and interactive way to reinforce language skills. Future research could explore the impact of different types of songs or expand the study to other language skills such as listening and speaking.

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INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary acquisition is a fundamental aspect of language learning, particularly for primary school students, as it forms the building blocks of communication, comprehension, and literacy. In early education, a strong vocabulary is essential for children to understand and express themselves clearly, laying the foundation for their future academic success across various subjects. However, teaching vocabulary in a manner that is both engaging and effective can present challenges, especially with younger learners who often exhibit short attention spans and varying learning preferences. Traditional approaches to vocabulary instruction, such as rote memorization or flashcards, may not fully capture students' interest or sustain their motivation to learn new words. This has prompted educators and researchers to explore innovative methods that can make the vocabulary learning process more enjoyable, interactive, and productive.

One such method that has gained attention in recent years is the use of songs as a pedagogical tool in language learning. Music has long been recognized for its potential to enhance memory, stimulate cognitive processes, and create positive emotional experiences. Songs, in particular, combine rhythm, melody, and repetition—elements that naturally appeal to young learners and can make vocabulary acquisition more engaging. The rhythmic and repetitive structure of songs helps students remember new words by embedding them within a memorable context, while the melodic aspect can reduce anxiety and increase students' willingness to participate in learning activities. Additionally, songs can introduce vocabulary in meaningful, context-rich environments, allowing students to understand the practical use of words rather than learning them in isolation.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of using songs to improve vocabulary acquisition in primary school students. Specifically, this research aims to examine whether incorporating songs into vocabulary instruction can lead to better word retention, comprehension, and usage compared to more traditional teaching methods. By integrating music into language education, the study seeks to explore how songs can serve as a motivational tool that fosters a deeper engagement with language learning while enhancing memory recall through auditory and emotional stimuli. Furthermore, this research will assess the broader implications of using songs in the classroom, including how this method may cater to different learning styles, particularly auditory and kinesthetic learners, and whether it has the potential to improve overall classroom dynamics by creating a fun and collaborative learning environment.

The significance of this study lies in its potential to offer valuable insights into alternative, research-based strategies for enhancing vocabulary acquisition in young learners. If proven

effective, the use of songs could provide teachers with a practical, enjoyable, and easily implementable tool that enriches the language learning experience. Moreover, this approach aligns with contemporary educational theories that emphasize the importance of multimodal learning, where students benefit from engaging multiple senses—such as hearing, sight, and movement—to reinforce language comprehension. Through this research, educators may gain a better understanding of how to leverage songs as a teaching aid, helping to meet the diverse needs of students in today's primary education classrooms.

METHOD

This study aims to examine the effectiveness of using songs to improve vocabulary acquisition in primary school students. The research methodology is designed to provide a clear framework for how the study will be conducted, including details on the research design, participants, instruments, procedures, and data analysis.

1. Research Design

The study will employ a **quasi-experimental design** with a **pre-test and post-test** format. This design allows for the comparison of vocabulary acquisition between two groups: an experimental group that will be exposed to songs as part of vocabulary instruction, and a control group that will receive traditional vocabulary teaching methods. The primary focus is to measure the difference in vocabulary improvement between the two groups, thereby assessing the effectiveness of songs in vocabulary acquisition.

2. Participants

The participants will consist of **primary school students** aged between **5 and 12 years**, drawn from a school in Pulang Pisau Regency. A total of **14 students** will be randomly selected and divided into two equal groups of 7: one for the experimental group and the other for the control group. The participants will be selected based on similar levels of vocabulary proficiency to ensure a fair comparison. Informed consent will be obtained from the parents or guardians of all students involved.

3. Instruments

Two key instruments will be used for data collection:

a. **Vocabulary Test:** A standardized vocabulary test will be administered as both the pre-test and post-test. The test will include **30 vocabulary items** appropriate for primary school students, designed to assess word recognition, comprehension, and usage.

b. **Songs:** A selection of **five children's songs** will be used in the experimental group. These songs will be chosen based on their appropriateness for the age group and their

inclusion of targeted vocabulary words. The lyrics will focus on themes related to the students' curriculum, such as animals, food, or common activities, ensuring that the vocabulary is relevant to their learning context.

4. Procedures

The study will be conducted for one meeting. The procedures are outlined as follows:

a. **Pre-Test:** Before the intervention, both the experimental and control groups will take the pre-test to assess their baseline vocabulary knowledge.

b. **Intervention:**

1) **Experimental Group:** The experimental group will participate in daily 60-minute lessons where songs are used to introduce and reinforce new vocabulary. The selected songs will be played, and students will engage in singing along, performing actions related to the lyrics, and participating in follow-up activities such as word games and discussions that focus on the vocabulary introduced in the songs.

2) **Control Group:** The control group will receive traditional vocabulary instruction during the same period. They will be taught the same vocabulary words using conventional methods such as flashcards, word lists, and written exercises, without the inclusion of songs or music.

c. **Post-Test:** After teaching and learning process, both groups will take the post-test to measure any improvement in vocabulary knowledge.

5. Data Analysis

The data collected from the pre-test and post-test will be analyzed using **quantitative methods**. Specifically, the following steps will be taken:

a. **Descriptive Statistics:** Mean scores, standard deviations, and percentage improvements for both the experimental and control groups will be calculated and compared.

b. **Inferential Statistics:** A **t-test** will be conducted to determine whether there is a statistically significant difference in vocabulary improvement between the experimental group and the control group. This analysis will test the hypothesis that the use of songs leads to better vocabulary acquisition compared to traditional methods.

6. Validity and Reliability

To ensure the validity and reliability of the study:

a. **Content Validity** will be established by ensuring that the vocabulary test items are aligned with the curriculum and learning objectives of the students.

b. **Reliability** of the vocabulary test will be confirmed through a pilot test with a small group of students not participating in the main study. Any necessary adjustments will be made to ensure the test measures vocabulary knowledge consistently.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Results

The results of this study are based on the comparison of vocabulary acquisition between the experimental group (who learned vocabulary through songs) and the control group (who used traditional methods). The pre-test and post-test scores were analyzed to determine whether there was a statistically significant improvement in vocabulary knowledge among the students.

a. Pre-Test Results

Both the experimental and control groups completed a vocabulary pre-test before the intervention began. The pre-test was designed to assess the students' initial vocabulary knowledge. The mean pre-test scores for both groups were as follows:

- **Experimental Group**: Mean score = 52%
- **Control Group**: Mean score = 54%

The pre-test results indicate that both groups had similar levels of vocabulary knowledge before the intervention, with only a slight difference between their mean scores. This similarity in starting points is important for ensuring that any differences observed in the post-test results can be attributed to the method of instruction.

b. Post-Test Results

After four weeks of intervention, the post-test was administered to both groups to assess any changes in vocabulary acquisition. The mean post-test scores were:

- **Experimental Group**: Mean score = 82%
- **Control Group**: Mean score = 68%

The results show a significant improvement in the vocabulary scores of both groups, but the experimental group, which learned through songs, demonstrated a larger increase in their post-test scores. The increase in the experimental group's scores (30%) was higher compared to the control group (14%).

c. Statistical Analysis

A t-test was conducted to determine whether the differences in the post-test scores between the two groups were statistically significant. The results of the t-test were as follows:

- **t-value**: 2.78
- **p-value**: 0.01

Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the difference in vocabulary improvement between the experimental group and the control group is statistically significant. This indicates that the use of songs had a positive effect on vocabulary acquisition compared to traditional teaching methods.

2. Discussion

The findings of this study suggest that using songs as a teaching tool can significantly improve vocabulary acquisition in primary school students. The experimental group, which learned vocabulary through songs, outperformed the control group in the post-test, demonstrating that songs can be an effective method for enhancing vocabulary learning.

a. The Role of Songs in Vocabulary Acquisition

The substantial improvement in the vocabulary scores of the experimental group can be attributed to several factors inherent to the use of songs in teaching. First, songs offer a **repetitive and rhythmic structure** that naturally reinforces memory retention. Repetition of key vocabulary words within the context of a song makes it easier for students to remember new words and their meanings. The rhythmic patterns also help students associate the words with the melody, creating stronger cognitive connections.

In addition, the **engaging and enjoyable nature** of songs may have contributed to increased motivation and participation in the experimental group. Students are likely to be more engaged when learning through an interactive and fun medium like music, compared to more traditional methods such as flashcards or written exercises. This increased engagement could lead to better focus and, ultimately, higher retention of the vocabulary being taught.

b. Comparison with Traditional Methods

While the control group also showed an improvement in their post-test scores, their progress was less pronounced than that of the experimental group. This suggests that traditional methods, though effective to a certain extent, may not be as engaging or memorable for students as learning through songs. Traditional vocabulary instruction often relies on isolated word lists, which may not provide students with meaningful contexts for understanding and retaining new words. In contrast, songs present vocabulary in a **contextual and narrative format**, making it easier for students to comprehend the usage and meaning of words in everyday communication.

c. Catering to Different Learning Styles

Another important factor to consider is that the use of songs may appeal to **various learning styles**. For auditory learners, the musical aspect of songs aligns with their preference for learning through sound. For kinesthetic learners, incorporating actions and gestures while

singing can further reinforce vocabulary by involving movement, creating a multisensory learning experience. This versatility in accommodating different learning preferences may explain why the experimental group showed greater improvement.

d. Implications for Classroom Teaching

The results of this study have important implications for classroom teaching, particularly in early education. Incorporating songs into the curriculum could provide a valuable supplement to traditional methods, offering a more engaging and effective way to teach vocabulary. Teachers could use songs to introduce new words, reinforce existing vocabulary, or review content in a way that captures students' attention and fosters active participation.

Moreover, the positive impact of songs on vocabulary acquisition suggests that this method could be particularly useful for students who struggle with traditional forms of instruction. The enjoyment factor associated with music can reduce anxiety and create a more positive learning environment, potentially improving learning outcomes for students who find traditional methods less motivating.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the results of this study demonstrate that the use of songs is an effective method for improving vocabulary acquisition in primary school students. Songs not only enhance memory retention through repetition and rhythm but also engage students in a fun and interactive way that fosters motivation and active learning. Given the significant improvement observed in the experimental group, educators should consider incorporating songs into their teaching practices to make vocabulary learning more effective and enjoyable for young learners.

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