

Applying Songs as a Teaching Strategy to Teach Vocabulary at the Tenth Grade of SMA Negeri 13 MBD

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ABSTRACT

This study focused on teaching students vocabulary through song as the teaching method. It aimed to determine whether there are any differences in students' vocabulary achievement after being trained using appropriate and can be used or not. This study was conducted in a tenth-grade class at SMA Negeri 13 MBD. The data was collected from the result of students' test in cycle 1 to cycle 2 and the results of questionnaire. The result of this study showed that song as teaching method was successfully implemented to increase and enrich students' vocabulary, which can be seen on students' score in students' result of cycle 2, 75% students were able to reach the indicator of success with the range scores from 71-100. The questionnaire also showed that students responded positively to implementing the song method. Song as the teaching method was effective in motivating and engaging students to learn and memorize the vocabulary during the learning process, and it was appropriate for assisting students to learn language from home and also can help students to create their sentence.

Keywords: *Song Method, Teaching, Vocabulary, Action Research.*

INTRODUCTION

Mastering English should start with learning vocabulary, which is the roof of the language. It is essential because it leads someone to develop it into sentences to share ideas, information, and messages in building communication. Learning vocabulary is essential in the EFL context, so the government declared it as a regular subject from elementary to university. To understand language, students must learn from usage, word meaning, and pronunciation (Brewster et al., 2003). It can be learned integratively through listening and repeating, listening for specific phonological information such as consonants, vowel sounds, source syllables, and stress patterns. It can also be learned by looking at or observing the written text for shape, first and last letters, spelling, and grammatical information.

Vocabulary is essential because it can help students improve their knowledge of foreign languages. In the teaching and learning process, when a teacher gives instructions, she or he tends to use English without any translation. Learning vocabulary is an essential part of learning English. The more words someone knows, the more they will understand what they hear and read, and the better they will be able to say what they want to when speaking or writing. Schmitt (2000) states that vocabulary is a language element that learners need to master to master a second

language. If they have mastered vocabulary as well as possible, they can master four basic English skills. According to Guccirush (2010), learning vocabulary is important; increasing students' vocabulary allows students to use more descriptive words to communicate their thoughts better.

Vocabulary is the main point in achieving success in second language use. To expedite many things in students' activities, a large vocabulary is beneficial to understand all aspects like their society, history, economy, and so on. In language learning, mastering vocabulary plays a crucial role. David Wikis in Thornbury (2002) stated that "Without grammar, very little can be conveyed; without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed," As emphasized by Nation (2011), vocabulary learning is essential to mastering a second language and has a vital role in completing communication aspects, either for spoken or written. This means that vocabulary is needed in all aspects. *Vocabulary* is the essential element that will make the language meaningful.

Learning a language cannot be separated from learning vocabulary. It is one of the essential things that the students should master. By mastering vocabulary, the students can communicate in a specific language, including oral and written English. The students can still speak, although other components are still needed. Vocabulary learning is a significant element in learning a foreign language because the meaning of complex and new words is highlighted in classrooms or books; it is essential for language teaching and learning (Alqahtani, 2015). It is considered a dominant predictor of reading comprehension and a correlate for academic success; however, schools have been doing little to emphasize vocabulary building at the primary level (Biemiller, 2004). Vocabulary comprehension is needed for students to learn English fluently. The student must understand and memorize the vocabulary in fluent English.

Knowledge of vocabulary is often viewed as an essential tool for language learners because the limited vocabulary in the second or foreign language impedes successful communication and writing. In vocabulary learning, it is necessary to know the meaning of a particular word and its usage (Alqahtany, 2015; Seashore, 1984). Due to its significance, vocabulary knowledge is a prerequisite to comprehending various texts. When students learn vocabulary, they also learn how to pronounce the word correctly; when they deal with word meaning, it means they know how to understand vocabulary, and usage is the way to use it. So, vocabulary is a collection of words, phrases, and sentences that students can learn and memorize.

Learning English is not as easy as learning a first language. Learners must master vocabulary first because a low vocabulary can also make them unable to express their communication. There are reasons why vocabulary is more essential to master than another component of language skills. According to Thornbury (2002), "Without grammar, very little can be conveyed; without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed." It means that without vocabulary, students cannot master English well. It is found that there are difficulties in learning vocabulary in the class. The students have a problem with memorizing and understanding vocabulary. They quickly forget new words, and sometimes forget how to pronounce them.

There are many ways and methods to teach or learn English creatively and enjoyably. One of them is by using the song. Learning vocabulary with songs as a suitable method can produce an enjoyable learning atmosphere in classroom activities. Moreover, it can help students acquire new vocabulary and improve the spelling and pronunciation of words. According to Murphey (1992), "Listening to a song allows students to focus on their understanding of English language, rhythm, tone, and beat. The song makes it easy for the teacher to enrich the student's vocabulary.

Some relevant previous studies also report the benefits of using the song in teaching vocabulary. The first study by Millington (2011, 135-136) stated that listening to the song will help students learn more vocabulary quickly. Students are also more likely to remember

new words and English expressions. Songs also provide an opportunity for vocabulary practice. They are usually based around a theme or topic that can provide context for vocabulary learning. For example, the song Head, shoulders, knees, and toes could be used to review body parts, or I Can Sing The Rainbow might help examine color names. Most children's songs are characterized by monosyllabic words, many of which are frequently repeated. This repetition offers more significant exposure to this word and can improve vocabulary acquisition. Using songs is a great way to enrich students' vocabulary. Richard (2012) states that singing along with your favourite English songs will help you learn how to pronounce English words correctly and will also help to reduce your accent. Students will learn about the rhythm of sentences and how to link their words together when they speak.

Learning with songs can help students learn new words. It would be nice if students could learn vocabulary by using songs. Sometimes, outside the school, students will spend some time digesting the lyric and its meaning so that they understand it first. It indicated that using songs for classroom purposes rarely happens in the class. Students also realize they have less vocabulary and need to learn English in exciting ways to enrich their vocabulary. They also agree that learning English vocabulary through song to train students' vocabulary because it is an easy and exciting way to teach and learn vocabulary. Students in senior high school will be bright, and they will not lose their concentration in class, so at this point, students will not only be silent in learning English but also be more active.

The result of a preliminary study conducted for English teachers and students in tenth grade at SMA Negeri Tiakur by interviewing showed that students of ten graders still lack vocabulary. This could be proved by the result of the pre-test the researcher conducted during teaching practice there. Most students had low scores when they did their pre-tests. The problems dealt with a lack of understanding of word meaning in a context, putting it into sentences, remembering new vocabulary, and being passive in activating their background knowledge related to the topic discussion. The classroom observation supported the interview result: they were less actively involved in classroom activities. Most students did not bring their vocabulary to finding words they did not know and understand. When the teacher pronounces some words, they are still confused about the meaning of those words. Moreover, when the teacher asked them to read the passage to train their pronunciation, some students still had difficulty doing it. Only several students have good English and are actively involved in learning. Sometimes, the researcher saw from some students' faces that they were unmotivated to know when the teacher mostly used English. They prefer to play with their mobile phone, and when the teacher sees them, they stop playing and pretend to study even if they do not focus on what has been taught.

The interview with the teacher showed that the teacher agrees that most students in the social science program have problems mastering English because of a lack of vocabulary. He then explained that he usually tried to use various teaching strategies, but those still did not work well because his students mostly did not like English. So, it dialled in with their interest and motivation to learn English. When the researcher asked about using the song in teaching English, the teachers said that he rarely used it because sometimes he could not find it based on the topic discussed in the syllabus. Some Western songs can be used but are too fast to follow the students, so the teacher rarely uses songs in his classroom activities. He knew that his students loved to sing Western songs based on their interests, but it was still difficult for the teacher to determine Western songs to be used based on the syllabi.

METHOD

The researcher conducted “Classroom Action Research” as the research design to apply song as the teaching method. Action research consists of planning the action, implementing the action, observing the action, making an analysis, and reflecting (Carr and Kemmis 1986). The researcher used quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques to collect the data. Tests were performed using quantitative data, and qualitative data was obtained by questionnaire.

2.1. Test

The researcher applied songs and then gave some questions like completing the songs, making synonym antonyms, putting words in sentences and finding the meaning of the words for the students to find out the students’ vocabulary. The basic criteria in this research were: First, students' vocabulary improvement. The improvement was based on students' test results in which they could reach "good" and "excellent" level. Second, students gave positive responses to the implementation of this method. The positive responses could be described from the observation checklist and questionnaire results. Students' vocabulary was categorized to be enriching if 20 of 28 students in the class reach the "good" and "excellent" level with a total score among 70-100. To it was assessed the vocabulary test, the researcher used the following formula:

Classification	Score
Excellent	87-100
Good	65-86

Fair	51-64
Poor	<50

Adopted from peraturan bersama Direktur Jenderal Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah

Table 1. Scoring scale for students' score

2.2. Questionnaire

The questionnaire was written as a list of questions that the students would answer. It was given to all students in the class to obtain information about their opinions about the method's implementation.

Using a method is very needed to support students' motivation in learning English, especially in mastering vocabulary. Media help the teacher teach a lesson to make the teaching-learning process more enjoyable. It is essential to introduce the words by using the real object. So, the media has become an alternative way to solve this problem. One of the methods to make teaching vocabulary effective is using songs, as we know that students need a pleasant atmosphere in learning vocabulary. The teacher must make it enjoyable for students to study vocabulary because using the song to teach vocabulary gives good weather for students in the class. It is believed to help students solve problems in the classroom and be more effective because the students who do not like to speak in large classes are more comfortable. Besides that, the media is also fun and supports the teaching and learning process in mastering vocabulary. The song is a good resource for English teaching (Richard, 2012).

According to Gairns & Redman (1998), song as a method could facilitate the teaching-learning process. Besides that, teaching vocabulary through song is fun, and it is easy to improve students' vocabulary. It also improves students' motivation to learn, and they will be enthusiastic to follow the activities, such as singing, finding the meaning, identifying, and memorizing words (Shen, 2009). The song is one type of listening activity that has broad potential. Most children love to sing, and teachers naturally use songs to teach the concepts and language in a fun way..

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

2.3. Findings

The researcher conducted the research in two cycles. Each cycle consisted of three meetings, including the test at the end of each cycle. On November 18th, 19th, and 20th, 2020, the researcher conducted the first cycle in class X MIA 2 of SMA Negeri 13 Tiakur, with 28 students participating. After they finished their activity, the teacher and researcher did the test. The results of the students' test can be seen in the chart below.

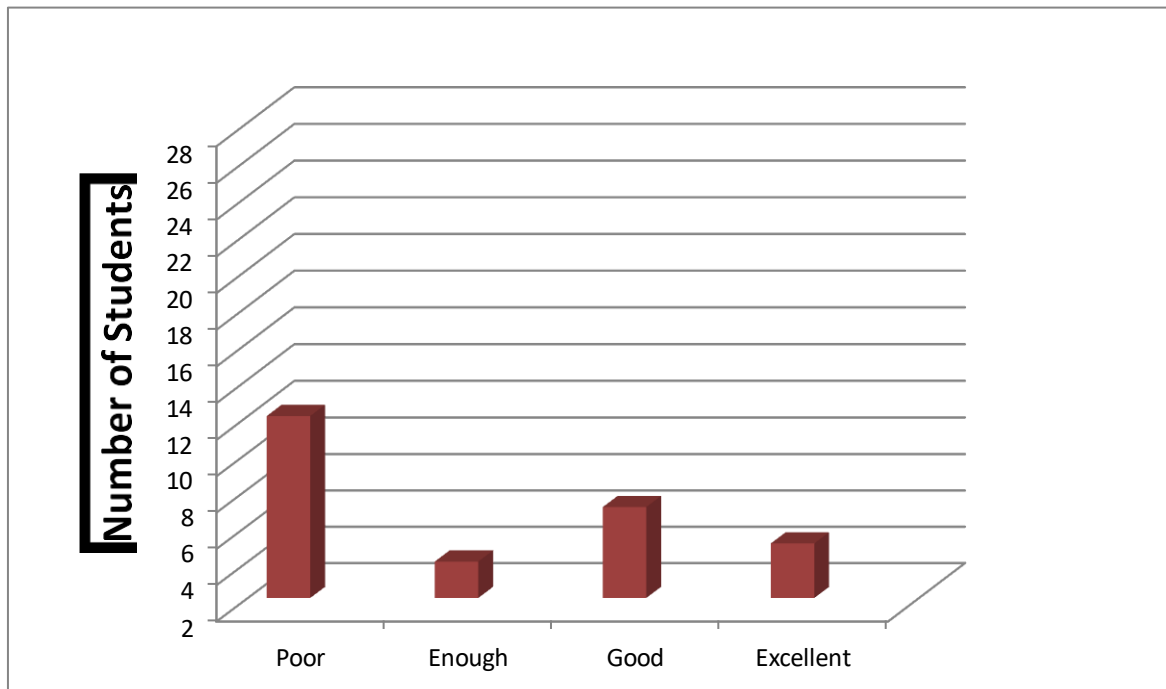


Figure 1. Percentage of students' achievement in first cycle

Figure 1 explains the result of the students' test. It shows that 17,8% of the students/5 students stood at the "excellent" level, while 25% of the students/7 students placed in the "good" level, 14,2% of the students /4 students predicated in "enough" level, while the rest 42,85% of the students/12 students qualified at the "poor" level. Having analyzed the students' test results, the researcher found problems in this cycle. Based on the result of the first cycle, it can be concluded that the application of the Song Method did not work effectively because the result of students' achievement did not achieve the indicator of success.

Based on the first cycle result showed that the implementation of the method did not work effectively yet because most of the students did not indicate their improvement in mastering vocabulary. It was proved in their test result that most of them were standing at a poor level. So, the researcher decided to do the second cycle.

The activity in the cycle was similar to the first cycle. However, in this cycle, the researcher focused more on students' problems found in the first cycle. The researcher would teach them how to motivate them to solve those problems. The second cycle consisted of three meetings. It was held on December 7th, 8th and 10th 2020.

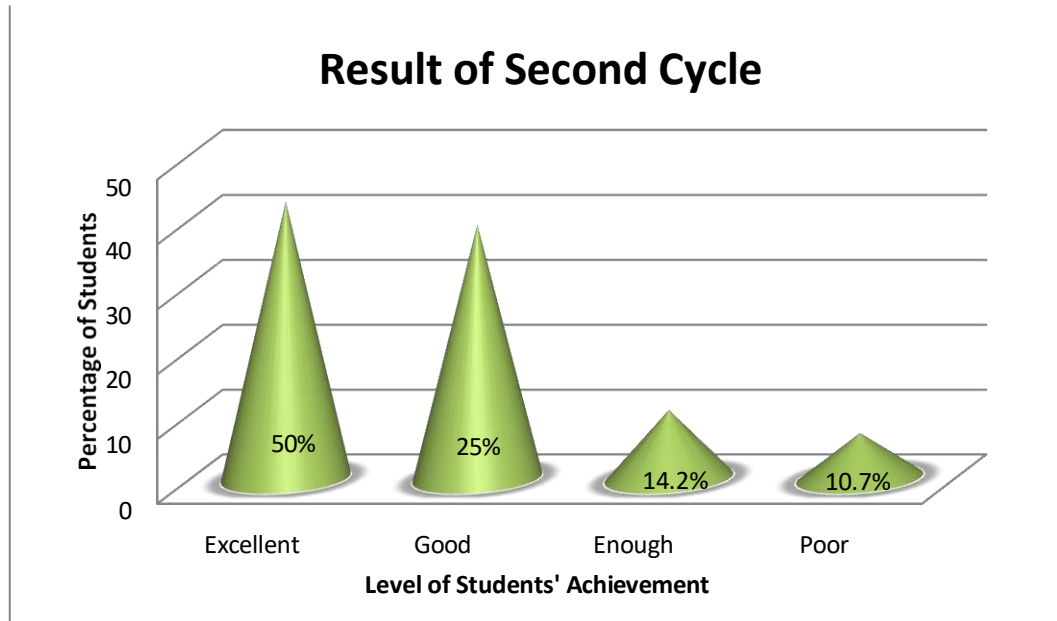


Figure 2. Percentage of Students' Achievement in Second Cycle

After the revision, the test result showed a good improvement in students' achievement compared to the test result of the previous cycle. The classification level of students' achievement remained the same, such as excellent, good, enough, and poor.

After the second cycle, the researcher reflected on students' perception of the method in this cycle. The researcher found that there was good change in students' achievement of the test. The students showed improvement from cycle to cycle. This was because of the revision from the first cycle. In the first cycle, most students had difficulties understanding the type of words, synonyms/antonyms, matching words, making sentences, completing the song and being unfamiliar with new words in the song. It was also proved by their test result in the first cycle.

DISCUSSION

The results of this research and the data collected showed that the students improved their vocabulary and answered some questions in their handouts. It can be seen from the result of two cycles and questionnaires that students collected. Implementing Song in the learning process can give students some benefits like improving their listening skills and vocabulary. Students are more active and can interact well with the teacher in the teaching process. T. Millington (2011), listening to a song will help students learn vocabulary quickly. It is added by (Thronbury, 2002, pp. 3-12) states that songs in foreign language classes may motivate students and create more relaxing foreign language classes.

CONCLUSION

After conducting the research within two months, the use of songs in the teaching-learning process ran well. It can increase students' vocabulary. By implementing it, the students can actively participate in the discussion process, learn many new words in the song, explore their opinions, and be independent learners. As a result, they are motivated to work in the discussion process, which can help them comprehend the song's lyrics song.

Besides, the most crucial point is that the students successfully reached the criteria of success in the research. This can be seen through their scores from the first cycle until the second cycle. The students who gained low scores in the first cycle changed their scores in the second cycle as targeted in the success criteria.

Furthermore, students have positive responses to the use of Songs. Based on their comments in the questionnaire, they expressed that they had been learning English using songs. MoSongsf them agreed that the song could increase their vocabulary well. Moreover, the researcher concludes that using the Song method has succeeded in increasing students' vocabulary at the X 2 grade of SMA Negeri 13 Tiakur.

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