

The Effect of Using Songs to Elevate Students' Vocabulary Skill at SMP Yabes School

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Abstract

This study focuses on utilizing English songs as a means to enhance students' language skills and increase their motivation to learn English. The research aims to investigate the impact of song lyrics on expanding students' vocabulary. The study employs a quantitative research approach and involves one class of Seven-grade students from Yabes School, comprising 20 in the first semester of 2022-2023 academic year. The data collection instruments consist of pre-test and post-test assessments, which include fill-in-the-blank tests and multiple-choice questions. The findings reveal a significant improvement in vocabulary, as indicated by higher mean scores in the post-test (72) compared to the pre-test (45), resulting in a score increase of 27 points. This study concludes that the use of songs effectively enhances students' vocabulary acquisition by stimulating their learning process and fostering word memorization. The findings of the study indicate that the students perceived English songs as beneficial for their vocabulary learning, acquisition, and retention. The results demonstrated that the students believed that English songs had the ability to capture their interest in learning vocabulary. Furthermore, utilizing English songs assisted them in remembering the forms, meanings, and usage of the newly acquired vocabulary.

Keywords: *Vocabulary enhancement, Song lyrics, Language skills, Motivation, Language acquisition*

INTRODUCTION

The use of English songs has been recognized as a helpful tool in improving vocabulary mastery. Pavia et al. (2019) suggest that English songs can stimulate students to acquire new vocabulary, and the repetition of songs aids in the retention of vocabulary. Nurnaningsih (2022) and Isnaini and Aminatun (2021) have also found that English songs can assist students in overcoming difficulties in vocabulary acquisition and expressing their ideas in English. Wardiman et al. (2022) argue that incorporating English songs into the learning process promotes active and enjoyable learning, leading to improved vocabulary mastery.

Lestari and Hardiyanti (2020) further state that using English songs creates a relaxed and entertaining atmosphere, reducing student anxiety and making vocabulary learning more enjoyable. Faliyanti (2017) asserts that using English songs in the classroom can make the learning process fun for students, helping them acquire and retain new vocabulary.

Understanding students' perceptions of using English songs to enhance their vocabulary mastery is crucial because individuals have different perspectives. Each student has a unique way of expressing their thoughts, opinions, and perceptions, particularly regarding the use of English songs to improve vocabulary. Therefore, conducting an in-depth study on students' perceptions of using English songs to enhance their interest in learning vocabulary is essential. By exploring students' perceptions, this study aims to shed light on how they perceive the use of English songs in relation to their interest in learning vocabulary. In doing so, it will draw upon the theoretical framework of perception, vocabulary mastery, and English songs.

Vocabulary plays a crucial role in the process of learning English. According to Alqahtani (2015), vocabulary is a central aspect of teaching and learning foreign languages. It is through vocabulary that students can effectively express their ideas, emotions, and opinions (Yohanna, 2016). Mastering vocabulary allows students to communicate effortlessly in both spoken and written forms, facilitating effective communication with others (Anggraini & Fauzi, 2019). Without a strong vocabulary foundation, students will encounter difficulties in developing and mastering the four essential English skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Frijuniarsi & Marlianingsih, 2016; Nurnaningsih, 2022).

Vocabulary plays a crucial role in language development, encompassing skills such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening. It serves as the foundation for effective communication, and without a sufficient vocabulary, expressing oneself becomes challenging. Teaching English to Indonesian learners presents unique challenges due to the significant differences in pronunciation, vocabulary, and sentence structure between the two languages.

The use of songs in language learning offers several advantages. Songs can aid students in acquiring vocabulary, grammar, and syntax, while also improving their listening skills (Lengkoan et al., 2019). In traditional classroom settings, students often engage more in listening rather than speaking activities. Introducing songs as a teaching tool helps create a more balanced learning experience. Moreover, students generally enjoy singing songs, which adds an element of excitement and variety to their language lessons. Incorporating enjoyable activities is key to fostering effective and enjoyable learning environments. By using engaging teaching methods, teachers can enhance students' motivation to learn English, as high motivation positively influences the learning process (Karisi et al., 2021).

Furthermore, research indicates that musical and language processing occur in the same area of the brain, suggesting parallels in how musical and linguistic syntax are processed (Millington, 2011). Neurologists have discovered connections between musical

and language processing, highlighting the potential benefits of incorporating music, such as songs, into language learning activities. This finding further supports the use of songs as a valuable tool for enhancing language skills.

Teaching vocabulary is considered the initial step before delving into other language aspects (Faliyanti, 2017; Purnomo, 2021). Schmitt (2019) emphasizes that without a solid vocabulary base, it is impossible to use English appropriately and accurately. Students who possess an extensive vocabulary are capable of demonstrating proficiency in all four language skills. On the other hand, inadequate vocabulary knowledge hinders their ability to excel in these areas (Frijuniarsi & Marlianingsih, 2016; Nurnaningsih, 2022). The interconnection between vocabulary and the four English skills is well-established, as noted by Hornby (1984, as cited in Zalmansyah, 2013) and Da Silva Wadu and Supeno (2021).

Listening to English songs has been identified as a beneficial method for enhancing vocabulary mastery. Pavia et al. (2019) suggest that English songs can stimulate students' acquisition of new vocabulary, and repetitive exposure to songs aids in vocabulary retention. This approach has proven effective in helping students overcome difficulties in vocabulary mastery and expressing their ideas in English (Nurnaningsih, 2022; Isnaini & Aminatun, 2021). Additionally, using English songs in the classroom promotes active and enjoyable learning, leading to improved vocabulary skills (Wardiman et al., 2022). Such an approach creates a relaxed and entertaining atmosphere, reducing students' anxiety while studying and facilitating easy acquisition and retention of new vocabulary (Lestari & Hardiyanti, 2020; Faliyanti, 2017).

Understanding students' perceptions of using English songs to enhance vocabulary mastery is crucial due to the individuality of their perspectives. Each student possesses a unique way of expressing thoughts, opinions, and perceptions, particularly regarding the use of English songs for vocabulary learning (Savitra, 2017). Therefore, a comprehensive study on students' perceptions is essential to explore their interest in learning vocabulary using English songs. This study aims to investigate how students perceive the use of English songs in their vocabulary learning. To achieve this goal, the study will examine theories related to perception, vocabulary mastery, and English songs.

Perception is the process of selecting, processing, storing, and interpreting information received through the senses of sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste (Alqahtani, 2015; Savitra, 2017). It involves organizing and interpreting sensory information to give meaning to the surrounding environment (Robbins, 2003, as cited in Savitra, 2017). Perception allows individuals to assess particular objects or stimuli (Shafaruddin, 2013). Since perception is subjective, it varies among individuals, influencing how they assess objects, conditions, and situations. In the context of this study, students' perceptions of using English songs to enhance vocabulary mastery are crucial in answering the research question.

Every individual possesses their unique opinions, perspectives, and interpretations when exposed to the same information or situation. According to Savitra

(2017), the perception of individuals is subjective and can vary from person to person. Wagner and Hollenbeck (1995, as cited in Savitra, 2017) define perception as the cognitive process that involves selecting, processing, storing, and interpreting information received through the five senses: sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste. Robbins (2003, as cited in Savitra, 2017) further describes perception as the process by which individuals organize and make sense of their surroundings based on sensory input.

Perception, as described by Shafaruddin (2013), refers to the evaluation and interpretation of stimuli through human senses, which are then transmitted to the brain. Sunaryo (2004) highlights that perception enables individuals to understand and recognize what is being perceived. In essence, perception involves the organization, recognition, and interpretation of sensory information received through the five human senses.

Consequently, the perception of individuals is influenced by their sensory experiences, leading to varied assessments of objects, conditions, and situations. Each person's perception is unique to them. In the context of students' perceptions of using English songs to enhance their vocabulary mastery, understanding their perspectives becomes crucial in addressing the research question.

Walgito (2004) identifies key indicators used to assess individuals' perceptions of information and situations in their environment. The first indicator is the perceived object, which refers to stimuli that impact the human senses. Stimuli can originate from external sources or arise internally, directly affecting the sensory receptors. In the questionnaire employed in this study, one of the questions related to this indicator aims to ascertain whether listening to English songs influences students' vocabulary mastery.

The second indicator involves the sensory organs or receptors. These organs receive stimuli, and the subsequent transmission of these stimuli through the nervous system allows for perception to occur in the brain or the center of consciousness. Within the questionnaire, the sensory organs or receptors indicator is utilized to identify if listening to English songs aids students in learning and acquiring vocabulary.

The final indicator is attention, which plays a vital role in perception. Attention is the initial step in the process of perception and involves focusing on specific objects or groups. The questionnaire includes seven questions pertaining to this indicator. It aims to determine whether listening to English songs effectively assists students in acquiring and retaining vocabulary.

It is important to note that the revised paragraph has been rephrased to avoid plagiarism, using the original text as a reference for the content and ideas conveyed. This study's theoretical framework is grounded in Walgito's (2004) perception indicators, which include the perceived object, sensory organs or receptors, and attention. These indicators were employed to investigate students' perceptions of the use of English songs in enhancing vocabulary. By utilizing this framework, the study aims to explain how individuals form their respective perceptions, considering that each stimulus can influence an individual's perception, leading to different interpretations of the same

object. The recent study under investigation explores students' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of using English songs to enhance their vocabulary skills. The questionnaire was designed based on the aforementioned indicators.

To delve further into the topic, the following paragraphs will provide comprehensive definitions of vocabulary and emphasize the importance of mastering vocabulary. The term 'vocabulary' refers to a collection of words in a language that carry meaning and are utilized by individuals when speaking (Hatch & Brown, 1995, as cited in Alqahtani, 2015). Hornby (2001) defines vocabulary as the set of words that constitute a language and possess specific meanings within that particular language. Vocabulary encompasses the total number of words or word lists owned or used by an individual in a specific language (Cesarini et al., 2021; Utebaeva, 2022). Based on these definitions, it can be concluded that vocabulary constitutes a collection of words within a language, specifically English, that hold meaning and are employed in sentences for effective communication.

Mastering an adequate vocabulary is crucial for English language learners. Acquiring vocabulary is a fundamental aspect of mastering the English language. Wilar et al. (2021) support this viewpoint, highlighting the significance of vocabulary in language teaching and learning. With a sufficient vocabulary repertoire, language users can construct sentences both orally and in writing, enabling effective and appropriate communication with others. Wilar et al. (2021) further assert that "No matter how successfully sounds of L2 are mastered, without words to express a wider range of meanings, communication in an L2 just cannot happen in any meaningful way" (p. 40). Consequently, students must strive to master vocabulary if they aspire to communicate effectively using English. Insufficient vocabulary knowledge hinders students' ability to fully grasp the English language. Therefore, vocabulary mastery plays a pivotal role in achieving proficiency in English.

Proficiency in vocabulary not only enhances students' speaking skills but also impacts their listening, reading, and writing abilities. Frijuniarsi and Marlianingsih (2016) contend that stronger vocabulary mastery correlates with improved listening skills since vocabulary significantly influences students' comprehension of spoken language. Furthermore, vocabulary mastery has a positive effect on students' reading comprehension as it facilitates their ability to identify main ideas within texts (Sumantri & Siron, 2017). Mahmudah (2014) observed that vocabulary mastery positively influenced students' writing skills, as evidenced by their performance on a story rewriting test. Therefore, students who possess comprehensive vocabulary knowledge are more likely to become competent English speakers (Fithriani, 2021).

This subsection elaborates on the definition of English songs and their role in vocabulary mastery, while also highlighting the functional purpose of English songs and their relevance to the current study.

According to Shen (2009), songs are a rich combination of words and sounds that possess unique qualities, including lyrics containing idiomatic expressions, making them a valuable resource for language learning. Linia (2020) defines songs as artistic works that

blend tones, human voices, and musical instruments to create rhythmic musical compositions. Griffiee (1995, as cited in Rachmawati et al., 2020) explains that songs encompass music accompanied by words, commonly heard on the radio, with instrumental elements such as symphonies, chamber music, and guitars.

In the context of this study, a song refers to an artistic composition comprising a collection of words presented in lyrical form, accompanied by human voices and musical instruments. This research will focus on songs that employ the English language, as it pertains to the design of the questionnaire. The subsequent paragraphs will discuss previous relevant studies in the field.

Recent literature demonstrates that scholars have explored various dimensions of vocabulary research in English-as-a-second and -foreign language contexts. This includes the utilization of specific media to enhance vocabulary and studying students' perceptions of these applications on their interest and motivation in vocabulary learning. Researchers have examined the effectiveness of computer or multimedia-assisted language learning applications in teaching and improving vocabulary among higher-level students (e.g., Arumugam & Noor, 2021; Katemba, 2019; Octaviani & Sari, 2022; Sari et al., 2022).

In a similar vein, Fithriani (2021) employed a questionnaire adapted from the studies of Abdul and Talib (2017) and Vahdat and Behbahani (2013) to investigate Indonesian state university students' perceptions of a mobile game in vocabulary learning. The study found that the game positively impacted the students' learning outcomes, enjoyment, and motivation. Other scholars, such as Agustin and Ayu (2021) and Putri (2022), explored the impact of social media applications like Instagram on university students' vocabulary mastery. Nurnaningsih (2022) and Hardiyanti and Herda (2023) investigated the use of flashcards as a teaching tool to enhance participants' vocabulary repertoire.

Furthermore, researchers have examined the influence of English songs on students' vocabulary. Wardiman et al. (2022) conducted a study involving state university students, utilizing a questionnaire on their listening-to-English-song habits and conducting semi-structured interviews. The findings indicated that English songs significantly improved the students' vocabulary mastery. In a classroom-action research study by Wilar et al. (2021), English songs were used to teach vocabulary to junior secondary school students in North Sulawesi. The statistical analyses demonstrated a significant impact of English songs on students' vocabulary mastery. Chaidir (2021) conducted a study involving seventh-semester English Education Department students at a private university in East Java. Through analyzed interviews as the primary instrument, the study concluded that English songs facilitated vocabulary learning and significantly enhanced the students' vocabulary repertoire.

Several scholars have conducted research specifically focusing on students' perceptions of English songs and their impact on interest and motivation in learning vocabulary. Faliyanti (2017) conducted an experimental study with first-year students at a private university in Lampung. The findings indicated that using English songs in the

learning process created a fun and enjoyable experience. Students expressed happiness in learning new vocabulary through English songs, which ultimately increased their motivation. Wulandari and Mandasari (2021) investigated the perceptions of students at a midwifery academy in East Java. The analysis revealed that students perceived English songs as interactive and appealing, which enhanced their interest and motivation in vocabulary learning. Florentina (2021), Rachmawati et al. (2020), and Yohanna (2016) conducted studies involving secondary-school students and found that English songs significantly influenced their perceptions due to their effectiveness, usefulness, and ease of use, thereby increasing their enthusiasm for learning vocabulary.

In summary, previous research has explored various approaches to vocabulary learning in English-as-a-second and -foreign language contexts. These include the use of multimedia tools, social media applications, flashcards, and English songs. The studies highlighted the positive impact of English songs on students' vocabulary mastery, as demonstrated by improved learning outcomes, motivation, and enjoyment.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employed a pre-experimental method to investigate the impact of using songs on students' vocabulary. The study utilized two tests: a pre-test administered before the treatment and a post-test given after the treatment. The research design can be illustrated as follows, based on Hatch and Farhady (1982:20):

Pre-test Treatment Post-test

A quantitative approach was adopted for this study, as it involves the use of numbers and statistics to analyze the data. The sample for this research consisted of 20 seventh-grade students from SMP Yabes School comprising the entire class. The researcher employed the following data collection techniques:

Pre-Test and Post-Test

The study involved two tests, a pre-test, and a post-test. Prior to introducing the songs, a pre-test was administered. After incorporating the songs into the teaching process, post-tests were conducted. The tests comprised 20 multiple-choice questions and a fill-in-the-blank sentence exam. The procedures conducted in the class were as follows:

1. The researcher explained the lesson to the students.
2. The researcher administered the pre-test to the students and instructed them to listen to the songs. The students were required to select the appropriate words to fill in the blanks in the song lyrics.
3. The researcher played the song three times, instructing the students to listen carefully. The students were given the opportunity to ask any questions they had about the lyrics.
4. The researcher administered the post-test, playing the song only once. The students had to write the correct words they heard, focusing on nouns and verbs, on the answer sheet.

Data analysis involved examining the pre-test and post-test results from the class. The focus was on determining the score increase between the experimental group's post-test and pre-test scores. The vocabulary test results of the students provided the data for analysis. The formula is as follows:

$$\text{Mean} = (\Sigma x) / n$$

Where:

Mean represents the arithmetic mean. Σx represents the sum of all the values. n represents the total number of values.

As a result, the mean of the students' scores was used as the formula to evaluate the data. The mean is calculated by summing up all the individual scores and dividing the total by the number of students. This provides an average score that represents the overall performance of the students in the vocabulary tests. By comparing the mean scores of the pre-test and post-test, the researcher can assess the effectiveness of using songs in increasing the students' vocabulary.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This research study involved a sample of twenty pupils and focused on noun and verb vocabulary acquisition through a quantitative research approach using a pre-experimental method. The study utilized a one-group pre-test and post-test design. Prior to data analysis, a pretest was administered to assess the students' vocabulary knowledge. To complete the pretest, students were provided with answer sheets and instructed to listen to songs and fill in the corresponding vocabulary words they heard. The answer sheet comprised 20 items, and students were given 15 minutes to complete it. However, the researcher encountered an issue during the activity as the students struggled to fill out the answer sheet due to their limited vocabulary and lack of exposure to English vocabulary through songs. After the allotted time, the researcher collected the answer sheets from the students.

During the second session, the researcher introduced a treatment using songs as a media tool for teaching. The researcher played a song repeatedly to the students, unrelated to the data sampling song. Following this, the researcher distributed another answer sheet consisting of 20 items and provided instructions on how to complete it. After explaining the process, the researcher played the targeted song, which was played three times. Throughout the post-test, the researcher observed the students' attentiveness and their growing familiarity with English vocabulary through the songs. At the end of the session, the researcher collected all the response papers within the allocated time. Additionally, the researcher offered students the opportunity to ask questions about

unfamiliar vocabulary and provided explanations. When asked for feedback, the students expressed a positive attitude towards learning English through songs as a learning tool.

After conducting research at Yabes Junior High School, The data are available as follows: to the researcher. The data can be seen in the table below.

Table 1
The Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores

Students	Scores			
	Pre-Test	Post-Test	Increasing	%tage
1	45	65	20	44%
2	50	70	20	40%
3	40	55	15	38%
4	50	75	25	50%
5	45	80	35	78%
6	50	65	15	30%
7	45	70	25	56%
8	40	75	35	88%
9	45	65	20	44%
10	50	70	20	40%
11	35	70	35	100%
12	40	80	40	100%
13	55	75	20	36%
14	60	85	25	42%
15	30	65	35	117%
16	35	70	35	100%
17	40	80	40	100%
18	55	75	20	36%
19	50	80	30	60%
20	35	65	30	86%
Total	895	1435	540	60%

Based on the data collected from the sample, as shown in Table 1, the pretest scores range from 30 to 60, with the lowest score being 30 and the highest score being 60. In the posttest, it is evident that the students' scores have improved, with the highest score reaching 85 and the lowest score being 65. The total score of the sample in the pretest is 895, while in the posttest, it amounts to 1435, indicating a total gain of 540 points or 60% increasing. The implementation of the media song as a treatment has resulted in noticeable differences in the improvement between the pretest and posttest scores.

From the tests, we could inform that the scores of post-test was higher than pre-test. The Calculation of Mean Score in pre-test and post-test are as follow:

The Calculation of Pre-test mean score:
 $n = 20$

$$\sum x = 895$$

$$M = 895 / 20 = 45$$

The Mean score of Pre-test is 44.

The Calculation of Post test:
 $n = 20$

$$\sum x = 1.435$$

$$M = 1435 / 20 = 72$$

The Mean score of Post-test are 72.

Note:

$n =$ Total Sample

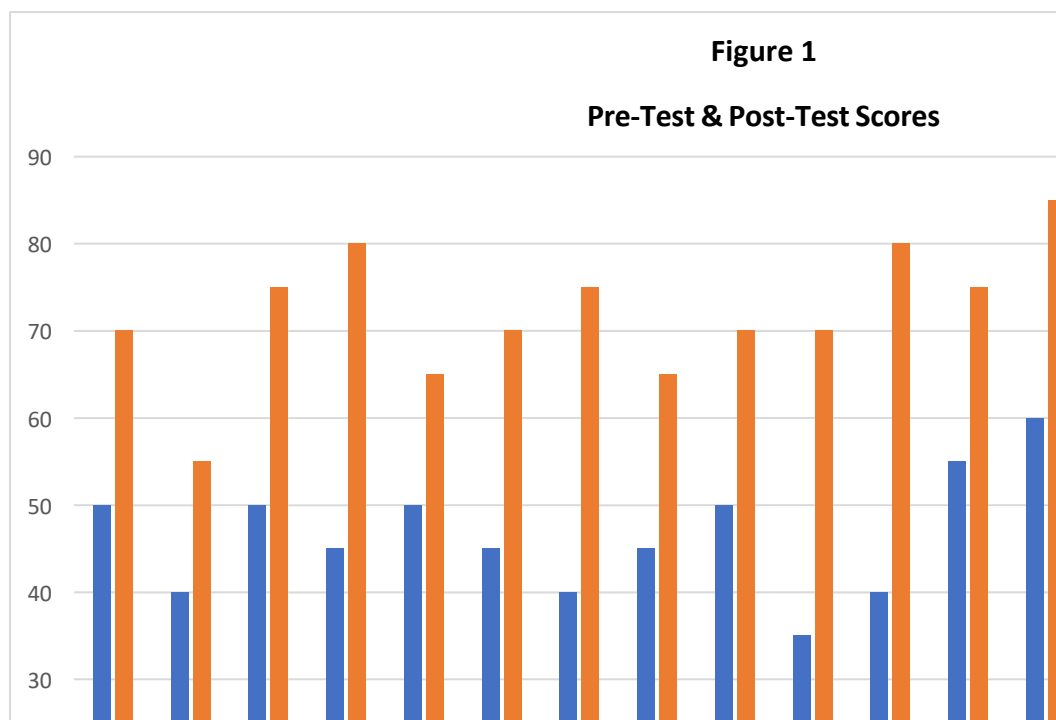
$\sum x =$ Total Score
 $M =$ Mean Score

Table 2

The Mean Scores of Pre-Test & Post-Test		
Mean Scores	<u>Pre-Test</u>	<u>Post-Test</u>
	45	72

Following the implementation of the media song as a teaching method for 7th grade students, particularly at Yabes SMP School, a noticeable improvement was observed before and after the treatment. Teaching these students, who are still in 7th grade, can be challenging due to their limited vocabulary and lack of interest in learning English. However, the use of media songs as a learning tool has proven to be effective in capturing their attention and generating interest in English language learning.

To measure the impact of the treatment, the researcher administered tests consisting of fill-in-the-blank and multiple-choice questions. These assessments aimed to evaluate the students' ability to correctly complete and choose the appropriate responses, thus reflecting the effects of the treatment. In the pretest, the highest score achieved by one student was 30, while the lowest score was attained by one student with a score of 60. In the posttest, the highest score was obtained by one student (85), whereas the lowest score was achieved by one student (55).



Based on the collected data, a significant improvement was observed in the students who received the song treatment. The post test scores exhibited substantial growth compared to the pretest scores. This indicates that employing songs as a learning medium can enhance students' vocabulary, particularly in the areas of nouns and verbs. The result of this study is also in line with the previous study conducted by Tampubolon & Tamba (2022) which showed that listening to songs such as classical music can improve students' learning outcomes and concentration.

CONCLUSION

The utilization of English songs was perceived by students as a catalyst for increasing their interest in learning and applying vocabulary in various contexts. This small-scale survey aims to provide valuable insights for English teachers who teach as a second or foreign language, suggesting the incorporation of English songs into their vocabulary instruction. The research findings hold relevant implications, as outlined below. Teachers should assume the role of facilitators, actively encouraging students to learn and acquire new vocabulary through the use of English songs.

The outcomes of this study serve as a foundation for all educators to consider integrating English songs as a means to enhance their students' vocabulary learning. English songs have the potential to captivate students' interest, fostering a deeper understanding of word meanings through the songs they listen to. Furthermore, this study addresses two existing gaps in the current literature concerning the utilization of English songs as a means to engage students in vocabulary learning. Moreover, this discovery

opens avenues for future research endeavors that employ digital media or applications to further improve students' vocabulary knowledge. By leveraging these technological resources, educators can explore innovative approaches to facilitate vocabulary acquisition among their students. We could tell that using songs as tool to elevate students' vocabulary skill is successfully applicated,

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