



Using Songs to Facilitate English Vocabulary Learning Among Indonesian High School Student`s

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Article Info	Abstract
<p>Received: 2026-05-30 Revised: 2026-06-09 Accepted: 2026-06-10</p> <p>Keywords: English Songs; Vocabulary Mastery; EFL Learning; Junior High School Students</p> <p>DOI: 10.24256/ideasv14i1.9385</p> <p>Corresponding Author: Sri Ratna Nur Citra Dewi citradewicitra044@gmail. com English Language Education Research Program, Faculty of Letters and Culture, Universitas Negeri Gorontalo</p>	<p><i>This research investigated the effectiveness of using English songs to improve vocabulary mastery among eighth-grade students at MTs Al-Huda Gorontalo. A quantitative approach with a pre-experimental one-group pre-test-post-test design was employed. The participants consisted of 26 students from one eighth-grade class. The treatment was conducted in four sessions using two English religious songs, Thank You Allah and Insya Allah by Maher Zain. The vocabulary instruction focused on three categories: nouns, verbs, and adjectives. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and a paired sample t-test. The results showed a substantial improvement in students' vocabulary mastery after the treatment. The mean score increased from 67.50 in the pre-test to 89.62 in the post-test. The paired sample t-test revealed a statistically significant difference between the two tests ($t = -9.802, p < 0.05$). These findings indicate that song-based instruction significantly enhanced students' ability to recognize and understand targeted vocabulary items.</i></p>

1. Introduction

Vocabulary is a fundamental component in learning English because it directly affects learners' ability to understand messages and communicate

effectively. Vocabulary mastery enables students to comprehend learning materials, express ideas, and develop the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Asyiah (2017) states that vocabulary plays a crucial role in improving learners' English proficiency, while Juliana and Manurung (2022) emphasize that vocabulary mastery is a key factor in successful English learning. However, students with limited vocabulary knowledge often experience difficulties in understanding texts, spoken language, and classroom instruction (Syafrizal & Haerudin, 2018). In this research, vocabulary mastery is operationally defined as students' ability to recognize, understand, and correctly use targeted words in context, particularly in the categories of nouns, verbs, and adjectives.

Despite its importance, vocabulary learning in many traditional classrooms remains problematic. Teaching practices are often monotonous, teacher-centered, and heavily dependent on textbooks and translation-based activities, which limit students' active engagement with new vocabulary (Hudson & Whisler, 2007). In addition, students frequently lack exposure to accurate pronunciation and authentic language input, which negatively affects their confidence and communication skills.

Nation (2001) further highlights that effective vocabulary acquisition requires repeated exposure to words in various contexts, a condition that is often difficult to achieve due to time constraints and curriculum demands. These challenges indicate the need for alternative learning media that can provide meaningful input, contextualized language use, and increased learner motivation. One alternative that can be applied to overcome these challenges is the use of songs as a medium for language learning.

Songs are closely connected to students' daily lives, making them a natural and engaging tool in the classroom. Through songs, learners are exposed to new vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, and pronunciation features in a meaningful and enjoyable context. In addition, songs can increase students' motivation and create a more interactive learning environment, which supports vocabulary acquisition.

In line with this perspective, several previous studies have examined the effectiveness of English songs in improving students' vocabulary mastery. Widyaningrum (2022) found that students taught using English songs achieved significantly higher post-test scores compared to those taught using conventional methods. Similarly, Hania (2023) reported that the experimental group showed a substantial improvement in vocabulary mastery, supported by statistically significant results.

Rahmah (2015) also revealed that the use of English songs from YouTube effectively enhanced students' vocabulary achievement. In addition, Pohan (2014) demonstrated consistent improvement in students' vocabulary mastery through classroom action research using songs, while Safitri (2018) confirmed that English songs significantly increased students' vocabulary scores in pre-experimental research.

Although these studies confirm the effectiveness of songs in vocabulary learning and also focus on specific aspects such as nouns, verbs, and adjectives, previous research has tended to use popular songs from various genres, and some of them have used children's songs, whereas this research applies specific selection criteria: English-language songs with religious themes, which align with the research context a religious based school. Therefore, there is a clear research gap in investigating how religious-themed English songs contribute to vocabulary acquisition, particularly regarding specific word categories.

Based on this gap, this research aims to investigate the effectiveness of English songs in improving students' vocabulary mastery and to identify which aspects of vocabulary (nouns, verbs, and adjectives) are most influenced by song-based learning. The research questions are:

(1) To what extent does the use of English-language songs improve students' vocabulary mastery?

(2) Which aspects of vocabulary (nouns, verbs, and adjectives) are most affected by song-based learning?

The distinct contribution of this research lies in its focus on English religious songs as instructional media within an Islamic junior high school context and its emphasis on analyzing vocabulary mastery based on specific word categories. Therefore, this research is expected to provide both empirical evidence for EFL vocabulary instruction and practical insights for teachers working in similar educational environments.

2. Method

This research employed a quantitative approach using a pre-experimental one-group pre-test–post-test design. The research was conducted at MTs Al-Huda Gorontalo. The participants were 26 eighth-grade students from Class VIII C, which was purposively selected based on previous English assessment results indicating that a considerable number of students had not yet achieved the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM), particularly in vocabulary-related tasks. The research instrument was a vocabulary test administered as both a pre-test and a post-test.

The test items were developed based on vocabulary found in the selected English religious songs and focused on three aspects of vocabulary: nouns, verbs, and adjectives. The test consisted of 20 items, 8 matching questions and 12 multiple-choice questions designed to measure students' ability to recognize and understand target words in context and for each correct answer was scored 1 point, resulting in a maximum score of 20. The vocabulary items were selected and adapted from previous studies and aligned with students' proficiency levels at the A1–A2 level of the CEFR and the Oxford 3000 Word List.

To ensure instrument quality, content validity was established through expert judgment by English education lecturers who evaluated the relevance, clarity, and suitability of the items. The test instrument was adapted from previous research

by Rahmah (2015), which had been validated, and then modified and adjusted to suit the context of the two religious English songs used in this research: "Thank You Allah" and "Insya Allah" by Maher Zain.

Vocabulary mastery was operationally defined as students' ability to correctly identify and understand target words, as measured by their scores on the vocabulary test. Revisions were made based on their feedback. The reliability of the instrument was tested using Cronbach's Alpha, yielding a coefficient of $\alpha = 0.886$ which indicates high internal consistency.

The research procedure consisted of three main stages. First, a pre-test was administered to measure students' initial vocabulary mastery. Second, the treatment was conducted over five meetings, each lasting approximately 40–45 minutes, using the English religious songs "Thank You Allah" and "Insya Allah" by Maher Zain. During the treatment, the teacher acted as a facilitator by introducing the learning objectives, playing the songs, guiding students to read the lyrics, and explaining the target vocabulary.

Students were actively involved in listening to the songs, identifying and categorizing vocabulary items (nouns, verbs, and adjectives), discussing word meanings, and completing vocabulary exercises individually and in groups. Furthermore, a post-test was administered to measure students' vocabulary mastery after the treatment. Prior to data collection, permission was obtained from the school principal and the English teacher, and students were informed about the purpose of the research.

Participation was voluntary, and students' identities were kept confidential to ensure ethical research practices. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to determine mean scores and inferential statistics using a paired sample t-test to examine the significance of the difference between pre-test and post-test results.

3. Result

The results of this research indicate a substantial improvement in students' vocabulary mastery after the implementation of song-based learning. Descriptive statistical analysis revealed that the mean score increased from 67.50 (SD = 13.134) in the pre-test to 89.62 (SD = 6.771) in the post-test. This increase of 22.12 points suggests a notable enhancement in students' vocabulary performance following the treatment. In addition, the decrease in standard deviation indicates that students' scores became more consistent after the intervention, reflecting a more uniform level of vocabulary mastery among participants.

To determine whether this improvement was statistically significant, a paired sample t-test was conducted. The analysis showed a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores ($t(25) = -9.802, p < 0.05$). This result confirms that the improvement in students' vocabulary mastery was statistically significant and not due to chance. Furthermore, the effect size was calculated using Cohen's d ,

yielding a value of $d = 1.92$, which is categorized as a large effect size. This indicates that the use of English religious songs had a strong and meaningful impact on students' vocabulary acquisition.

Further analysis based on vocabulary categories demonstrated that students improved across all three aspects assessed: nouns, verbs, and adjectives. The mean score for nouns increased from 8.42 in the pre-test to 10.81 in the post-test, showing the highest improvement among the categories. Similarly, verbs increased from 3.77 to 4.69, while adjectives showed an increase from 1.54 to 2.58, although with a relatively smaller gain compared to the other categories. This pattern suggests that song-based learning is particularly effective in facilitating the acquisition of concrete and frequently occurring vocabulary, such as nouns, while still supporting improvement in more abstract categories like adjectives.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Paired Sample t-Test Results

Test	N	Descriptive Statistics		Paired Sample T- Test		
		Mean	SD	T	Df	Sig.(2-tailed)
Pre-Test	26	67.50	(13.134)	-		< .05
Post-Test	26	89.62	(6.771)	9.802	25	

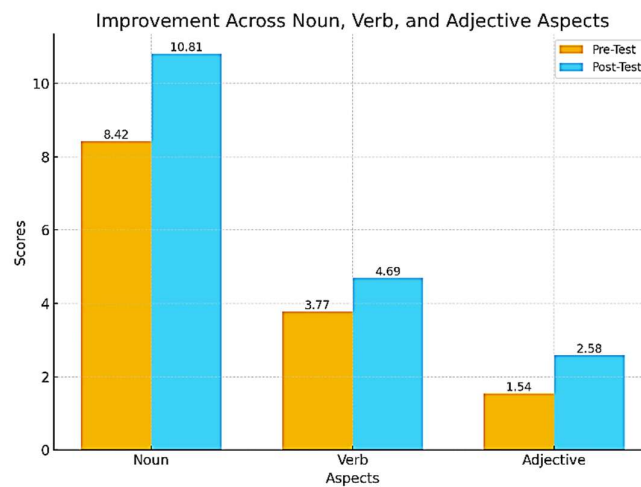


Figure 1. Comparison of Pre-Test and Post-Test Mean of Noun, Verb and Adjective Scores

Based on the comparison of the pre-test and post-test scores for the three vocabulary aspects nouns, verbs, and adjectives, it can be seen that the use of songs in learning resulted in improvement in all categories. Each aspect showed an increase in students' scores, which indicates that incorporating music into the

learning process helped students develop their vocabulary skills.

Among these three aspects, nouns showed the most noticeable progress. The average noun score increased from 8.42 in the pre-test to 10.81 in the post-test, making it the **highest improvement** compared to the other word types. This suggests that songs were especially helpful for learning nouns, possibly because nouns often appear repeatedly and are easier for students to connect with the context or images described in the lyrics.

The adjective aspect also showed improvement, with scores rising from 1.54 to 2.58. Even though this aspect had the lowest initial score, the increase shows that students gained a better understanding of descriptive words after being exposed to them through the songs.

The verb aspect experienced the smallest increase, moving from 3.77 to 4.69. Although the improvement was statistically significant, it was not as large as the gains in nouns or adjectives. This may be because understanding verbs requires more attention to forms and usage, which may be more challenging for students when learning through songs.

Based on this results indicate that learning vocabulary through songs is effective, The analysis shows that among the three vocabulary aspects, the noun aspect experienced the greatest improvement (from $M = 8.42$ to $M = 10.81$). Thus, it can be concluded that the **noun aspect** is the most affected by song-based learning, with the strongest improvement. This learning method helps keep students engaged and supports meaningful vocabulary development across different types of words.

4. Discussion

The findings of this research demonstrate that the use of English songs significantly improved students' vocabulary mastery, as evidenced by the substantial increase in mean scores and the statistically significant results. However, beyond this numerical improvement, it is important to understand how and why song-based learning contributed to vocabulary acquisition. From a theoretical perspective, these findings support Krashen's Comprehensible Input Theory, which emphasizes that language acquisition occurs when learners are exposed to meaningful and understandable input.

In this research, English songs provided such input through clear pronunciation, contextualized vocabulary, and repeated exposure to lexical items embedded in the lyrics. These features allowed students to process new vocabulary more effectively and retain it over time. In addition, the findings can be explained through multimodal learning and Paivio's Dual Coding Theory, as vocabulary was presented through both auditory (music and rhythm) and visual (lyrics and videos) channels. This combination enhances cognitive processing and strengthens memory retention, making vocabulary learning more effective.

Further analysis based on vocabulary categories revealed that nouns

showed the greatest improvement, followed by verbs, while adjectives demonstrated relatively smaller gains. This pattern may be attributed to the nature of nouns, which are generally more concrete and easier to visualize, allowing learners to associate meaning more quickly.

Verbs, which often appear frequently in song lyrics, also benefited from repeated exposure. In contrast, adjectives tend to be more abstract and context-dependent, requiring deeper cognitive processing, which may explain the relatively lower improvement. These findings indicate that while song-based learning supports vocabulary acquisition across categories, its effectiveness varies depending on the type of words being learned.

The results of this research are consistent with previous research, such as Widyaningrum (2022) and Hania (2023), which reported significant improvements in students' vocabulary mastery through song-based learning. Similarly, Rahmah (2015) and Safitri (2018) found that English songs effectively enhanced vocabulary acquisition, supported by statistically significant results. However, this research extends previous research by focusing specifically on vocabulary categories (nouns, verbs, and adjectives) and by employing English religious songs within a religious-based school context. The contextual relevance of the songs may have contributed to increased student engagement and motivation, as the content aligned with students' cultural and educational environment.

5. Conclusion

Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that the use of English songs was effective in improving vocabulary mastery among eighth-grade students at MTs Al-Huda Gorontalo. The students showed significant improvement in their vocabulary achievement after participating in song-based learning activities. English songs provided meaningful input, repeated exposure to vocabulary, and an enjoyable learning environment that supported students' vocabulary acquisition.

Despite the positive findings, this research had several limitations. The research was limited to investigating vocabulary mastery among eighth-grade students at MTs Al-Huda Gorontalo, with participants drawn from only one class, namely Class VIII C, consisting of 26 students. The vocabulary taught and assessed in this research was restricted to three categories: nouns, verbs, and adjectives.

Other aspects of language learning, such as grammar, pronunciation accuracy, speaking fluency, and writing organization, were not explored in depth. In addition, the learning media used in this research were limited to two English religious songs by Maher Zain, namely *Thank You Allah* and *Insya Allah*. The treatment was also conducted within a limited period of five meetings and took place during the final sessions of the English class.

Based on these findings and limitations, it is recommended that English teachers consider incorporating English songs as an alternative learning medium to enhance students' vocabulary mastery and learning motivation. Future researchers are encouraged to conduct further studies using different research designs, larger samples, longer treatment durations, or different types of songs to strengthen and expand the findings of this research.

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