



## Exploring College Student Vocabulary Acquisition Through Songs

Dorthea Lerebulan<sup>1\*</sup>, Piter Titirloloby<sup>2</sup>, Lendy Mailuhuw<sup>3</sup>  
<sup>1, 2, 3</sup> Universitas Lelemuku Saumlaki, Saumlaki, Maluku, Indonesia  
\* Correspondence: [thealere1@gmail.com](mailto:thealere1@gmail.com)

### Article Info

#### Article history:

Submitted : 04-07-2025  
Accepted : 03-12-2025  
Published : 05-12-2025

#### Keywords:

Acquisition; College Student; Song; Vocabulary

#### Copyright & License:



#### How to cite this article:

Lerebulan D, Titirloloby P, & Mailuhuw L., (2025). Exploring College Student Vocabulary Acquisition Through Songs, *Kamboti: Jurnal Sosial dan Humaniora*. 6(1). 42-56.  
<https://doi.org/10.51135/kambotivol6issue1page42-56>

### Abstract

*The research objectives of this research are to explore the experiences of second semester students in learning English vocabulary using songs and to explore second-semester students' perceptions of the use of songs in vocabulary acquisition. The method used was qualitative descriptive. In this study, the researcher used interviews, open questionnaires, and documentation, and to analyze the research results, the researcher used thematic analysis method which was combined with thematic content analysis. The results showed that learning English vocabulary through songs provided a fun and meaningful learning experience for second-semester students in the English Education Study Program at Lelemuku Saumlaki University.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

To be proficient in English, it is essential to master vocabulary. According to Kurniawati, (2023), vocabulary includes knowing words, their meanings, and how to use them appropriately in communication. Suci & Setyowati, (2023) emphasize the importance of vocabulary in language comprehension and expression, noting that strong grammar skills alone do not guarantee effective communication if learners lack sufficient vocabulary. Meganathan et al., (2024) reinforce this idea by stating, "Very little can be conveyed without grammar, but nothing can be conveyed without vocabulary." Moreover, vocabulary acquisition is a multifaceted process that involves more than simply memorizing word lists. It requires deep engagement with language, including understanding word meanings, usage, collocations, synonyms, antonyms, and grammatical functions. Thahura, (2022) defines vocabulary acquisition as the process by which learners actively develop and internalize new words.

At Universitas Lelemuku Saumlaki, English education students are expected to develop a strong vocabulary foundation to support their future academic and professional success. A rich and functional vocabulary is essential for helping students comprehend academic texts, express ideas clearly in speaking and writing, and participate actively in English language learning environments. However, based on preliminary observations conducted during classroom activities, it was identified that many second-semester students in the English Education Study Program still face considerable challenges in acquiring and retaining new English vocabulary. For instance, students often struggle to recall basic words during speaking activities and rely heavily on their first language when reading or writing in English. These findings are supported



by interviews, which revealed that many students have limited vocabulary that negatively affects their academic performance, including their ability to understand lecture materials, analyze reading passages, express opinions in discussions, and produce coherent written texts.

This issue significantly affects students' overall language development, as vocabulary is fundamental to all other language skills. Students with insufficient vocabulary often struggle to decode texts, interpret spoken information, and write effectively. Their limited vocabulary restricts their ability to comprehend course materials, grasp new academic concepts, and respond accurately to assignments and assessments. As a result, their learning progress stagnates, hindering both academic and personal development. Addressing this vocabulary gap is therefore essential to improving students' language competence and helping them meet the expectations of their academic program.

One of the underlying causes of poor vocabulary development is the use of traditional instructional methods that rely heavily on rote memorization. In many classrooms, vocabulary teaching is reduced to listing and translating words without sufficient context or application. Although such methods may promote short-term memorization, they do not support long-term retention or practical usage. Students frequently forget the words they memorized because they were not given opportunities to use them in meaningful communication or engaging activities.

Based on classroom observations and interview results, students need interactive tasks that allow them to practice and apply vocabulary across speaking, listening, reading, and writing activities. Classroom environments that lack participation, creativity, and collaboration tend to reduce students' motivation and limit learning outcomes. Therefore, it is essential to design lessons that integrate vocabulary instruction with real-world use, critical thinking, and active engagement. One promising approach for promoting vocabulary learning is the use of songs in the classroom. Songs provide authentic language input and introduce vocabulary in rhythmic and memorable formats. According to Rohmah & Indah, (2021), songs improve vocabulary retention by engaging students' emotions and offering repetition in a natural context. Music and lyrics activate both auditory and emotional memory, making it easier for students to internalize new vocabulary.

Similarly, in a study conducted by Meganathan et al., (2024), the researchers found that repetition and melody in songs help embed new vocabulary into long-term memory. Furthermore, students reported improvements in pronunciation and accent by imitating the way words are sung by native speakers. Songs expose learners to colloquial expressions, cultural nuances, and natural language use that are often absent in textbook-based instruction. Through listening to and analyzing song lyrics, students encounter new words in meaningful and emotionally engaging contexts, which support better comprehension and retention.

In addition, songs can serve as a springboard for vocabulary-focused activities such as gap-filling, paraphrasing, word matching, and lyric rewriting. These activities encourage students to engage with vocabulary in varied ways, reinforcing their understanding of word meanings, usage, and pronunciation. Songs also promote collaboration, allowing students to share interpretations, discuss meaning, and practice language through performance. The integration of technology and multimedia tools further enhances the use of songs in vocabulary learning, as students can access lyrics, translations, and karaoke videos to support independent and interactive learning.

Using songs to teach vocabulary is highly effective because songs present vocabulary in rhythmic and memorable ways and provide rich linguistic input relevant to real-life communication. Rohmah & Indah, (2021) state that songs enhance vocabulary retention by engaging students' emotions and providing natural repetition. Supporting this idea, (Yufrizal, 2021), referencing Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis, explains that learners acquire language more effectively when they are motivated and emotionally relaxed. Pleasant melodies and emotional resonance in songs help lower the affective filter, creating a supportive environment that reduces anxiety and encourages active participation.

Repetition in songs also facilitates the transfer of vocabulary from short-term memory to long-term memory, which is essential for successful vocabulary development (Bawawa, 2020). In addition, Hendriani et al., (2020) found that EFL students in Indonesia view songs as an effective medium for learning English,



particularly in improving vocabulary, speaking, listening, and pronunciation skills. Similarly, Ghidhaoui, (2024) emphasizes that learners recall new words more easily when they associate them with emotions and musical elements, such as happy or nostalgic melodies.

This research focuses on second-semester students in the English Language Education Program at Universitas Lelemuku Saumlaki, whereas previous studies have examined EFL learners from various educational levels and locations, such as students at SMP Negeri 16 Banda Aceh and in Malaysia. Furthermore, this study aims to explore vocabulary learning experiences through songs and examine student perspectives in greater depth. In contrast, Setyowati's study mainly focuses on general student perceptions, while the research by Meganathan et al. emphasizes learner autonomy in selecting learning strategies. The data collection method used in this study is in-depth interviews, while Thahura, (2022) employed a mixed-method approach combining quantitative and qualitative techniques. Therefore, this research is expected to provide new insights into students' experiences in learning vocabulary through songs in a higher education context, as well as address a gap in qualitative research that specifically explores students' perspectives.

## **II. METHOD**

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to explore the experiences of second-semester students in the English Education Study Program at Universitas Lelemuku Saumlaki in learning vocabulary through songs. The qualitative method was chosen because it focuses on understanding participants' experiences and interpreting the meaning of human behavior (Syafnidawaty, 2020). The research was conducted at Universitas Lelemuku Saumlaki, Tanimbar Islands Regency, Maluku Province, Indonesia.

The participants consisted of 20 second-semester students (5 males and 15 females). Purposive sampling was used to select nine students for interviews and sixteen for the questionnaire based on criteria such as prior experience learning vocabulary through songs and active participation in class (Lenaini, 2021)

The research instruments included a semi-structured interview guide and an open-ended questionnaire developed based on theories of vocabulary acquisition and affective learning. Both instruments were validated by two lecturers from the English Education Study Program to ensure clarity, relevance, and content validity. Data were collected through interviews, open-ended questionnaires, and documentation. The interviews were conducted individually and recorded with the participants' consent, while the questionnaires were distributed via Google Forms. Documentation, such as field notes and photos, was used to support the analysis.

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis combined with content analysis, following Braun and Clarke's six-phase analytical framework (Brough, (2024). This process helped identify key patterns and themes in participants' responses. To ensure credibility, triangulation was conducted by comparing data from different sources, and expert validation was applied to confirm the accuracy and reliability of the instruments.

## **III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **A. RESULT**

This section presents the results of data collection. The data are divided into two categories: interview findings and questionnaire findings. Each is analyzed according to identified themes.

#### **1. Result of Interview**

The interviews were conducted individually in a relaxed atmosphere, each lasting 6–10 minutes, and recorded with the participants' consent. The data were transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis, in which participants' responses were coded and grouped into themes. These themes provide

comprehensive insights into how students perceive the effectiveness of songs in mastering English vocabulary.

#### **a. Learning Vocabulary Through Songs: An Engaging Experience**

Interview Question 1: Have you ever learned English vocabulary through songs? How was your experience? This question aimed to explore the participants' past experiences with learning English vocabulary through songs. Interview Question 1: Have you ever learned English vocabulary through songs? How was your experience? The participants' responses revealed a strong and recurring theme: songs support vocabulary acquisition by increasing engagement and emotional connection. Most respondents indicated that they had learned English vocabulary through songs and described the experience as enjoyable, effective, and not boring. They perceived songs as a helpful and memorable medium that allows them to acquire new vocabulary and pronunciation in a fun and relaxed way.

For instance, ET stated, "My experience of learning vocabulary through songs is that it is easier to understand," suggesting that songs provide contextualized and clear input that enhances comprehension. Similarly, WD expressed, "Yes, I have learned through songs. I can acquire new vocabulary and learn it, and I can also learn pronunciation through songs," emphasizing the dual benefits of vocabulary development and pronunciation practice through listening and singing along.

RW highlighted the enjoyable aspect of the method by saying, "It was good because when I learn with song, that's not make me bored," indicating that songs can help sustain learners' attention and reduce the monotony often associated with traditional memorization techniques. HH also supported this view, stating, "Learning vocabulary through songs is more enjoyable," reflecting the positive learning environment that music creates, which increases motivation and emotional involvement.

Overall, the responses indicate that learning vocabulary through songs offers both cognitive benefits, such as vocabulary and pronunciation improvement, and affective benefits by making the learning process more enjoyable and emotionally engaging.

#### **b. Kind of Song that Use for Vocabulary**

This interview question asked participants, "What kinds of songs do you usually use for vocabulary learning?" The purpose of this question was to identify song types or genres that students considered effective for learning English vocabulary. The responses revealed a consistent preference for slow-paced songs, particularly those in the pop genre, as well as songs with emotional or spiritual messages. These types of songs were perceived as easier to understand because they feature clear pronunciation, slower tempo, and engaging lyrical content, all of which support better comprehension and vocabulary retention.

For example, A.E. stated, "I like pop songs, my favorite song is 'Let It Be'," indicating that pop songs with simple and meaningful lyrics are favored for vocabulary learning. Similarly, P.L. expressed the same preference: "Let It Be is my favorite song," reinforcing the appeal of classic pop music for language acquisition.

R.W. expressed a slightly different preference, though still aligned with the overall theme: "Jazz song is slowly but can make me feel calm." This suggests that the slow rhythm and calming effect of jazz music help create a more focused and relaxed learning experience. Likewise, S.W. mentioned another well-known slow pop song: "Slow song, for example: 'Baby' by Justin Bieber," highlighting the preference for popular songs with accessible and easy-to-follow lyrics.

These responses demonstrate that students tend to choose songs that are enjoyable and linguistically accessible. Slow songs, pop ballads, and emotionally expressive tracks appear to be the most effective for vocabulary learning because they allow students to clearly hear and understand the lyrics, making it easier to grasp meaning and remember new words. In summary, the participants' responses show that song selection plays an important role in the success of vocabulary learning through music. Songs with a slow tempo, clear lyrics, and emotional depth were consistently preferred because they enhance

comprehension, engagement, and vocabulary retention.

### **c. The Role of Song Structure in Vocabulary Retention**

Interview Question 3: Which part of a song helps you the most in remembering or understanding new vocabulary? This question aimed to identify which specific section of a song most effectively supports students' ability to remember and understand new vocabulary. The participants' responses revealed a clear and consistent theme: the chorus enhances memorability through repetition. Most respondents stated that the chorus (reff) is the most helpful part of a song for vocabulary learning due to its repetitive nature. Repetition is a well-documented strategy in language acquisition, and this naturally appears in the chorus of most songs.

For instance, MU commented, "The chorus, because we hear it repeatedly so it's easy to remember." Similarly, PL emphasized, "The chorus always plays again and again," reinforcing the idea that frequent recurrence supports memorization. RW expressed a similar view: "Reff is always repeated so it's easy to remember," highlighting how musical structure aligns with cognitive strategies in vocabulary learning. Additionally, WD noted, "Section 1 and chorus are easy to remember," suggesting that not only the chorus but also early parts of a song often delivered with clear pronunciation can aid comprehension.

Beyond supporting memorization, the repetitive nature of the chorus helps students learn contextual usage and pronunciation. By repeatedly listening to or singing the same phrases, learners develop familiarity with the vocabulary, making it easier to recall and apply in different contexts.

In conclusion, the findings indicate that the chorus functions as an effective linguistic feature in songs. Through repetition, rhythm, and contextualized exposure, the chorus promotes deeper processing and retention of vocabulary. This highlights the importance of selecting songs with a clear and repetitive structure in language teaching, especially those in which the chorus reinforces target vocabulary naturally and engagingly.

### **d. Memorizing Vocabulary through Songs: The Power of Repetition and Emotion**

Interview Question 4: Do you find it easier to memorize vocabulary when learning through songs? Why? This question aimed to explore whether students perceive songs as an effective medium for memorizing English vocabulary, as well as the factors that contribute to this perception. All participants unanimously agreed that learning vocabulary through songs significantly enhances their ability to remember new words. A central theme that emerged was that repetition and enjoyment facilitate memory retention.

Participants consistently emphasized the repetitive nature of song lyrics, which naturally supports the internalization of vocabulary. SW stated, "It's very easy because when we play a song over and over, we remember every word," highlighting the cognitive benefits of repeated exposure within an enjoyable context. Similarly, AE elaborated, "Yes, I do. I find it easier when I learn vocabulary through songs because the melody makes me remember the words easier, and I always repeat the song to remember the word of the song." This illustrates how melody and repetition work together to strengthen memory retention by providing a multisensory learning experience that combines rhythm, sound, and linguistic input. MU also noted, "Lyrics can be repeated over and over again," reinforcing the idea that frequent exposure aids vocabulary acquisition in second or foreign language learning.

Beyond repetition, emotional engagement also emerged as an influential factor. RW expressed, "It's easier because we involve feelings, and that makes it more memorable," emphasizing the affective component of music in learning. Emotional involvement enhances cognitive processing, making new vocabulary more personally meaningful and easier to retain.

In conclusion, the participants' responses show that songs serve as effective tools for vocabulary learning not only because they provide repeated exposure to target words, but also because they



engage learners emotionally and make the learning process enjoyable. These combined factors—repetition and emotional resonance appear to be the key reasons why students find it easier to memorize vocabulary through songs.

#### **e. Comparative Advantages of Learning Vocabulary Through Songs**

Interview Question 5: What are the advantages of learning vocabulary through songs compared to reading a dictionary or textbooks? This question aimed to explore students' perspectives on the comparative benefits of learning vocabulary through songs versus traditional methods such as dictionaries or textbooks. The responses revealed a strong and consistent theme: songs offer contextual, auditory, and emotional benefits that exceed those provided by traditional methods. While textbooks and dictionaries supply formal definitions and lists of vocabulary, songs present a more dynamic and integrated approach to language learning. They combine contextual usage, auditory reinforcement, and emotional engagement, making vocabulary more relatable, memorable, and easier to acquire.

SW articulated this difference by stating, "When we read books, we only read, but when we use songs, we listen to the pronunciation and enjoy it more." This reflects how songs provide authentic pronunciation and allow learners to experience language aurally, something often missing from textbook-based learning. PL added further insight into the habitual exposure songs offer: "It's easier to remember because songs or music become part of our lives. I do everything while listening to songs, so indirectly our brains absorb the songs we keep listening to. Automatically, we also acquire new vocabulary and of course we will also know the meaning." This suggests that language acquisition can occur passively yet effectively when learners are continuously exposed to lyrics in their daily routines.

RW introduced a temporal dimension to the advantage of songs, explaining, "There are always new songs as time goes by, so when we hear new songs, we also learn new vocabulary and slang, which gives us more information and knowledge." This implies that songs keep vocabulary learning current and culturally relevant, including idiomatic expressions and informal language that are rarely found in textbooks. AE also emphasized the semantic depth of vocabulary in songs: "The benefit is I find vocabulary that has subtle meaning and advanced vocabulary like slang," highlighting how songs allow access to nuanced expressions that enrich learners' vocabulary.

In conclusion, the findings indicate that songs serve as an immersive and multifaceted vocabulary learning tool. They not only complement but often surpass traditional materials by embedding language into meaningful, emotional, and auditory experiences. Songs promote incidental learning, encourage contextual understanding, and sustain learner engagement, all of which are essential for successful vocabulary development in second or foreign language learning.

#### **f. Difficulties in Learning Vocabulary Through Songs**

Interview Question 6: What difficulties do you face when learning vocabulary through songs? This question was designed to identify the potential obstacles students encounter when using songs as a medium for learning vocabulary. Although most participants acknowledged the benefits of learning vocabulary through music, their responses revealed a contrasting reality: fast lyrics, unfamiliar vocabulary, pronunciation issues, and lack of interest are the key challenges. A primary difficulty mentioned by several participants is the speed of the lyrics, which often hinders comprehension. MU stated, "Fast lyrics and unfamiliar vocabulary often make it difficult for us to understand," emphasizing how rapid tempo can overwhelm learners especially when combined with unknown words resulting in cognitive overload.

In addition to tempo, slang and abbreviated words also emerged as barriers. PL noted, "Abbreviated words and slang often cause confusion when heard, and sometimes I encounter new vocabulary that makes me want to find out what it means." This indicates that informal or non-standard English commonly found in songs can be challenging for non-native learners, particularly when vocabulary is

culturally embedded or context dependent. AI pointed out another issue, namely the presence of unfamiliar vocabulary, while acknowledging that repeated exposure may help resolve it: "New words, but if they are played often, we will automatically feel familiar with them." This suggests that although initial difficulty exists, frequent listening can gradually support comprehension and vocabulary retention.

An interesting challenge highlighted by RW relates to personal preference and emotional engagement: "The difficulty lies in whether we like the song or not. For example, we listen to songs to learn. This is a very good song with a lot of vocabulary, but do we like the song? If not, it will definitely be difficult to remember the lyrics and vocabulary in it." This underscores that a lack of interest or emotional connection can reduce motivation and hinder learning, even when a song contains rich linguistic content.

Overall, the findings indicate that while songs provide substantial advantages for vocabulary development, they are not without limitations. Factors such as lyric speed, slang usage, pronunciation challenges, and personal disinterest may reduce the effectiveness of songs as learning tools. Therefore, educators and learners should select songs that balance linguistic richness with clarity, cultural accessibility, and learner preference to optimize vocabulary learning outcomes.

#### **g. Emotions and Motivation in Vocabulary Learning Through Songs**

Interview Question 7: How do you feel when learning through songs? Do you feel more motivated? This question sought to uncover the emotional responses students experience when learning vocabulary through songs and whether such feelings influence their motivation to learn. The findings revealed a strong and consistent theme: positive emotions foster motivation. Most participants stated that songs not only made the learning process enjoyable but also enhanced their enthusiasm and willingness to study. Emotions such as happiness, excitement, gratitude, and even occasional sadness were frequently mentioned, indicating that music engages learners on a deeper emotional level, making the learning experience more meaningful and memorable.

SW provided a vivid illustration of this emotional and motivational effect, stating, "I feel happy and excited, for example, when listening to the song 'Baby,' but it also motivates me, like the lyrics 'Bless the Lord oh my soul,' which make me feel grateful to God." This response demonstrates how music can create a joyful atmosphere while inspiring personal reflection, thereby linking learners' values with language acquisition. AE further emphasized the emotional versatility of songs in learning by saying, "I feel motivated, enjoy, make me happy but also can make me feeling blue," showing that a wide range of emotions even sadness can promote deeper engagement and retention of vocabulary.

WD offered a concrete example of motivation derived from lyrical messages: "I feel more motivated. For example, the song 'Never Give Up' encourages us not to give up easily." This shows how empowering song lyrics can support positive attitudes not only toward language learning but life in general. EF summarized the emotional environment created by songs by stating, "It's enjoyable and relaxing," suggesting that relaxation reduces anxiety and increases mental openness for acquiring new vocabulary.

In conclusion, the emotional impact of songs plays a significant role in vocabulary learning. Songs function not merely as linguistic resources but also as emotional and motivational catalysts that enhance students' engagement and persistence. By creating an enjoyable, reflective, and relaxing learning environment, songs stimulate intrinsic motivation an essential contributor to successful vocabulary acquisition and long-term language learning.

#### **h. Sustaining Song-Based Vocabulary Learning in the Classroom**

Interview Question 8: Do you think using songs for vocabulary learning should be continued in class? Why? This question explored students' opinions regarding the continuation of songs as a vocabulary-

learning tool in classroom instruction. The responses revealed a dominant theme: songs should be adapted to students' preferences and learning goals. The majority of participants strongly supported the continued use of music in the classroom, citing cognitive, emotional, and motivational benefits. However, they also emphasized that implementation must be strategic and consider students' needs, including preferred music genres, language proficiency levels, and the integration of supportive materials such as lyrics and translations.

AE affirmed the value of songs as a learning medium by stating, "Yes, because it can refresh our brain." This brief but meaningful comment reflects the idea that music creates a mentally stimulating environment, reducing monotony and promoting cognitive alertness during learning. MU highlighted the importance of student-centered selection of songs, explaining, "Yes, but you have to pay attention to the students' preferences, such as what songs they like. That way, the class will definitely be fun." This response suggests that relevance and familiarity with the music enhance students' engagement, motivation, and comprehension. When learners connect emotionally and culturally with the songs used, the vocabulary becomes more memorable.

PL offered a practical suggestion regarding instructional support, stating, "It is possible, but only the lyrics should be displayed without subtitles so that we can find out what they mean from the lyrics, rather than just listening and absorbing them, because if we only listen to the song, it will definitely be difficult." This comment indicates that students appreciate guided exposure such as displaying lyrics while still being encouraged to infer meanings independently, which promotes active vocabulary acquisition.

Overall, these responses highlight that while songs are a valuable instructional resource, their use should not be intended solely for entertainment. Instead, they must be carefully selected and incorporated into structured learning activities aligned with students' linguistic levels and curriculum objectives. Additionally, involving students in choosing the songs can increase their sense of ownership and participation in the learning process.

In conclusion, students believe that song-based vocabulary learning is effective and should be sustained in the classroom. However, to maximize its benefits, teachers should adapt song choices to students' preferences and combine them with supportive techniques such as lyric analysis, translation exercises, and contextual discussions. This approach ensures that songs function not merely as background audio, but as intentional, engaging, and pedagogically relevant tools for vocabulary development.

#### **i. Recommending Songs for Vocabulary Learning to Others**

Interview Question 9: Would you recommend using songs for vocabulary learning to other students? Why or why not? This question aimed to explore whether students who have experienced learning vocabulary through songs would recommend this method to their peers. The responses produced a unified theme: songs are effective and relatable for other learners. Most participants expressed strong support for recommending song-based vocabulary learning, highlighting both their personal benefits and its broader applicability. Their answers emphasized that songs simplify the learning process, promote relaxed and meaningful engagement, and create a more enjoyable and motivating atmosphere for vocabulary acquisition.

PL stated, "Of course, because learning English, which is a foreign language, is certainly difficult. You should start by listening to songs so that you can become familiar with it and learn without stress." This response underscores the accessibility and anxiety-reducing nature of learning vocabulary through songs, especially for beginners who may feel overwhelmed by traditional approaches. Likewise, SW provided a personal reflection: "Absolutely, cause according to my experience if we always listening to song, we can find or remember the new vocabulary." This illustrates how repeated exposure and auditory reinforcement contribute to vocabulary retention, a benefit the respondent believes others can also experience.

AE further emphasized the cognitive and emotional advantages, stating, "Definitely, using songs



refreshes students' brain, because if we just learn from the text or audio book or so on, I think it's not effective too and this also creates a new learning atmosphere." This comment suggests that songs not only enhance memory but also prevent monotony by introducing a more dynamic and stimulating learning environment.

In summary, the responses indicate that students who have used songs to learn vocabulary view the method as beneficial, enjoyable, and adaptable for others. They believe that songs offer a relatable and engaging entry point for language learning, particularly for those who struggle with more conventional methods. Therefore, participants strongly support the continued use and broader implementation of songs in English vocabulary instruction. Their positive experiences reinforce the role of music as a valuable pedagogical tool in language education.

## **2. The Result of the Questionnaire**

The questionnaire was distributed via WhatsApp to second-semester English Education students at Universitas Lelemuku Saumlaki from June 5 to June 16, 2025. Students completed it at their convenience, resulting in 16 out of 20 students responding with an 80% response rate. This was deemed representative and provided valuable qualitative data. The responses were then analyzed to identify key themes related to students' experiences and perceptions of learning vocabulary through songs.

### **a. Type of Song that Prefer to Use for Learning English Vocabulary**

Questionnaire Q1: What type of songs do you prefer to use for learning English vocabulary? Why? This question aimed to identify students' preferences regarding the types of songs they find most effective and enjoyable for learning English vocabulary. The responses revealed a prominent theme: slow, pop, and meaningful songs are easier to process and understand. Most respondents reported a preference for pop songs, particularly those with a slower tempo, clear pronunciation, and relatable lyrical content. They explained that these features help them follow the song more easily, enhance enjoyment, and support vocabulary retention due to the songs' memorability and emotional appeal.

MU stated, "Pop, because in my opinion pop songs can help me and I can find new vocabulary." This highlights both the familiarity and educational potential of pop music, indicating that its accessible language supports vocabulary acquisition. Similarly, BP mentioned, "Pop songs, because it's cool and also by listening to songs can help me to find new vocabulary," which reflects not only linguistic benefits but also the importance of personal interest and cultural relevance in motivating learners. TM added, "Pop, because I enjoy listening to it and I think pop songs are easier to memorize in English," emphasizing that enjoyment plays a key role; when students are emotionally engaged, they tend to pay closer attention and remember vocabulary more easily. NF also noted, "I like songs with clear lyrics and simple melodies that are easy to understand," reinforcing the idea that clarity and simplicity help learners process and absorb new words more effectively.

These findings indicate that students are selective when choosing songs for vocabulary learning, favoring those that balance linguistic clarity with personal appeal. Pop and slow-tempo music are considered particularly suitable for language learners because they offer understandable input together with enjoyable listening experiences. In conclusion, songs that feature slow tempo, clear lyrics, and meaningful messages are preferred and perceived as the most effective for vocabulary learning. This insight can guide educators in selecting musical materials that align with students' interests and support their vocabulary development goals.

### **b. Songs Help Understanding and Remembering Vocabulary**

Questionnaire Q2: Do you think songs help you understand and remember new vocabulary? Explain why or why not. ET described the effect of repetition succinctly by stating, "Yes, because the song is often played repeatedly," highlighting how frequent exposure strengthens vocabulary recall an essential aspect of incidental learning. DL provided a more detailed explanation that reflects both active and passive learning processes: "For me, songs are very helpful in understanding and remembering

new vocabulary. Because when we sing and come across new words in the song lyrics, we will definitely memorize those words right away and find out their meanings, and I think it really helps me to understand and remember new vocabulary." This response emphasizes that learners engage with lyrics not only through listening but also by singing along and searching for meanings, which facilitates deeper cognitive processing.

Additionally, NF noted the role of enjoyment and rhythm, writing, "Yes, songs help me remember new words because they're catchy and fun." This illustrates how emotional engagement and musical appeal contribute to attention and motivation two key factors in long-term vocabulary retention. AE commented on language accessibility by stating, "Yes, because the lyrics are not too hard and still use beginner level." This suggests that learners benefit most from songs appropriate to their proficiency level, making it easier to understand and remember words within their zone of proximal development.

Overall, the consistency across responses indicates that songs are not only enjoyable for students but also function as an effective cognitive tool. Through repetition and meaningful context, songs allow learners to internalize vocabulary naturally, without the pressure typically associated with textbook-based memorization. In conclusion, all participants believe that songs play a valuable role in supporting vocabulary learning. The combination of repetition, context, melody, and emotional connection helps learners understand and retain new vocabulary more effectively. These insights reinforce the pedagogical potential of music as an instructional aid in language classrooms.

### **c. Students' Experiences in Learning Vocabulary Through Songs**

Questionnaire Q3: Please describe your experience in learning English vocabulary through song. This question aimed to gather deeper insights into students' personal experiences with learning English vocabulary through songs. The responses revealed a dominant theme: learning vocabulary through songs is enjoyable, useful, and supportive of pronunciation development. Most participants described their experience as positive and engaging. They noted that songs not only enhanced their vocabulary acquisition but also helped improve listening skills and pronunciation accuracy. Compared to traditional vocabulary drills, learning through songs was viewed as a more enjoyable and effective approach.

ET highlighted a straightforward benefit from this learning method: "My experience is that I remember faster and know more new vocabulary." This demonstrates how rhythm and repeated exposure to lyrics can accelerate word recognition and memory retention. ER described the experience as both enjoyable and challenging, saying, "My experience is kinda fun and challenging... now I've become quite proficient." This response reflects the transformative aspect of learning through songs, where sustained exposure contributes to gradual linguistic improvement. Meanwhile, BP emphasized the multiple skills supported by songs, stating, "When I'm listening to English songs I feel it's easy to understand because from continuing to hear the song I get the new vocabulary, know the pronunciation and also know the meaning." This illustrates how vocabulary learning, pronunciation, and comprehension are interrelated and reinforced through authentic language in music.

Overall, students' reflections highlight the multidimensional advantages of incorporating songs into vocabulary learning. Songs not only build vocabulary knowledge, but also strengthen pronunciation, foster listening comprehension, and increase learners' confidence in understanding English more naturally and enjoyably. In conclusion, participants' experiences were overwhelmingly positive. Music was perceived as an effective, enjoyable, and beneficial tool for vocabulary development, offering a meaningful alternative to rote memorization.

### **d. Emotional Responses to Learning Vocabulary Through Songs Compared to Other Activities**

Questionnaire Q4: How do you feel when learning vocabulary through songs compared to other learning activities (e.g., reading texts, grammar)? This question explored students' emotional experiences when learning vocabulary through songs compared to more traditional activities such as reading texts or studying grammar. The responses revealed a consistent and significant theme: learning

vocabulary through songs is more enjoyable and less stressful. The majority of respondents stated that songs create a positive, relaxing, and motivating learning atmosphere. In contrast to conventional methods like reading or grammar drills, songs were perceived as engaging and refreshing, providing a break from the monotony of textbook-based instruction.

ER expressed, "Learning through songs makes me enjoy learning vocabulary more," indicating that songs transform vocabulary learning from a tedious task into something pleasurable. Enjoyment plays a crucial role in enhancing focus, reducing anxiety, and increasing learners' willingness to engage with the content. Similarly, NF commented, "I feel more motivated and enjoy it," suggesting that songs not only evoke enjoyment but also serve as a motivational force that supports consistent vocabulary practice. BP highlighted the emotional excitement of learning through music: "Listening to song is cool, exciting, and also entertaining." This reinforces the idea that music can create a fun and emotionally stimulating experience, which may improve memory and long-term retention. ET provided a calmer perspective, stating, "I feel calmer while listening to music," emphasizing music's ability to lower stress levels compared to grammar exercises or reading comprehension tasks.

Overall, these responses demonstrate that learners associate positive emotional states with music-based vocabulary learning. This finding is important because affective factors strongly influence language acquisition. When learners feel relaxed and motivated, they are more receptive to new information and more likely to retain vocabulary in the long term. In conclusion, students overwhelmingly prefer learning vocabulary through songs due to the enjoyment, motivation, relaxation, and engagement it provides. These emotional benefits not only enhance the learning experience but also contribute to stronger vocabulary retention and greater learner persistence.

#### **e. Song as Effective Tool for Learning Vocabulary**

Questionnaire Q5: Are songs an effective tool for learning vocabulary? Why or why not? This question explored students' overall evaluations of the usefulness of songs as a medium for vocabulary learning. The responses consistently revealed a central theme: songs effectively support vocabulary learning and other language skills. Most respondents agreed that songs help them enrich vocabulary, improve listening comprehension, and enhance pronunciation. Their comments highlighted not only linguistic benefits but also the emotional and motivational advantages that songs contribute to the learning process.

TM stated, "In my opinion, vocabulary is very good because it helps remember words and become more fluent in English." This reflects how song-based learning supports both vocabulary retention and fluency development, likely due to repeated exposure to natural expressions and sentence patterns. PL provided a brief yet meaningful statement: "Yes, because it's fun and enjoy," implying that positive emotions triggered by music increase learners' engagement and reduce the stress commonly associated with vocabulary memorization. NF emphasized the memorable aspect of music, explaining, "Yes, songs are a great way to learn vocabulary because they're engaging and memorable." This supports the idea that enjoyment and emotional involvement promote better retention. In addition, LI reinforced that songs enhance multiple skills simultaneously: "So effective because it improves our understanding and pronunciation." This highlights the value of songs as integrated learning tools that expose learners to authentic pronunciation, natural rhythm, and sound patterns elements often difficult to capture through text-based materials alone.

Overall, the responses indicate that students perceive songs not merely as supplementary resources but as effective strategies for acquiring and internalizing English vocabulary while simultaneously developing other language skills. The combination of enjoyment, repeated exposure, familiarity, and meaningful context makes songs a compelling and powerful medium in language learning.

#### **f. Challenges in Vocabulary Learning Through Songs**

Q6: What challenges do you face when learning vocabulary through songs? The findings reveal that although students enjoy using songs as a tool for vocabulary learning, they also encounter several

challenges that hinder their progress. One of the most prominent difficulties reported is the fast-paced delivery of lyrics, which makes it hard for students to catch and understand the words being sung. As W D explained, "The challenge is when singers sing songs too fast, making it difficult to understand the lyrics." This issue is often intensified by unclear pronunciation and varied accents, which prevent students from accurately identifying words. Supporting this concern, ER stated, "Some singers use different accents, which confuse me."

Another major obstacle is the frequent use of slang and idiomatic expressions in songs, which are often unfamiliar to learners and not commonly found in traditional vocabulary lists. For instance, W D noted, "Sometimes the lyrics use slang that I don't know," while PL identified "Pronunciation, and slang" as key challenges. These informal language elements require cultural and contextual knowledge that students may not yet possess.

In addition to these auditory and linguistic barriers, several respondents expressed difficulties in understanding new and unfamiliar vocabulary in general. HH stated, "The new vocabulary I read was one of the challenges," emphasizing how a high frequency of unknown words can become overwhelming. Similarly, ET remarked, "There are still many words that I don't know and how to pronounce the singer's words word by word," indicating that even with written lyrics, learners still struggle with vocabulary recognition and correct pronunciation.

Despite these obstacles, students remain enthusiastic about learning vocabulary through songs, suggesting that with appropriate instructional support such as pre-teaching vocabulary, providing lyric guides, or selecting level-appropriate music the effectiveness of songs as a language learning tool can be further enhanced.

#### **g. Benefits of Learning Vocabulary Through Songs**

Questionnaire Q7: What benefits have you experienced learning vocabulary through songs? Most participants reported that learning vocabulary through songs offers significant benefits. Songs are not only enjoyable but also serve as an engaging instructional tool that supports effective vocabulary learning. The responses indicated that songs help learners remember words more easily, expand their vocabulary, understand meanings within context, and improve listening skills. Additionally, the fun and relaxing nature of music enhances motivation and reduces the stress often associated with traditional learning methods.

Several participants expressed that they found it easier to retain new words when learning through songs. NF shared, "I remember words better, understand them in context and enjoy learning," highlighting how songs support both vocabulary retention and comprehension. Likewise, DL stated, "The benefit I experience from learning vocabulary through songs is that I can improve my vocabulary that is still lacking," suggesting that music helps learners address vocabulary gaps in an enjoyable way. ER added that songs not only introduce new vocabulary but also enhance listening comprehension, which is essential for foreign language mastery. TM further noted, "In my opinion, the benefits are numerous, such as memorizing vocabulary, discovering new words we haven't heard before, and becoming more knowledgeable," indicating that songs expose learners to broader language input, including expressions that may not appear in textbooks. TM also emphasized the mnemonic strength of songs by saying that vocabulary is "easier to remember" when presented through music.

In summary, the findings suggest that songs provide both cognitive and affective advantages in vocabulary learning. Through repetition, melody, and meaningful context, songs contribute to improved vocabulary retention, increased engagement, and a more enjoyable learning experience overall.

#### **h. Songs should be Used More in Vocabulary Learning**

Questionnaire Q8: Do you think songs should be used more in vocabulary learning? The majority of respondents agreed that songs should be used more frequently in vocabulary learning activities. Their



responses suggest that songs are not only enjoyable but also highly effective in helping learners absorb and retain new vocabulary. Students recognized the dual function of songs as both entertainment and a practical language learning resource, making them a valuable component of English instruction, particularly at the beginner and intermediate levels.

NF emphasized the motivational value of songs, stating, “Yes, songs should be used more because they’re fun and help us learn better,” reinforcing the idea that emotional engagement enhances learning outcomes. Similarly, WD supported the integration of songs in vocabulary learning, noting, “Yes, because it can help and improve our vocabulary,” which reflects a strong belief in the pedagogical benefits of music. Another respondent, AI, provided a more detailed explanation: “Well, the song must be used more in learning vocabulary because not only do we hear or get entertainment, but we can also learn new vocabulary and memorize according to our abilities.” This highlights how songs support differentiated learning, allowing students to acquire vocabulary at their own pace through repetition and contextual cues. ET also agreed, stating, “Yes, because it can increase vocabulary for beginners or people who are listening to the song,” indicating that songs are particularly beneficial for early-stage learners and those developing listening comprehension.

In conclusion, the students strongly supported the increased use of songs in vocabulary instruction. Their responses indicate that songs foster a relaxed yet effective learning atmosphere, enhance memory retention, and offer continuous exposure to vocabulary beyond the classroom. These findings suggest that integrating songs into regular vocabulary learning activities would be both motivating and pedagogically beneficial for learners.

## **B. Discussion**

This study examines the experiences and perceptions of second-semester students in learning English vocabulary through songs. The findings indicate that students perceive this method as enjoyable, effective, and meaningful. Unlike traditional approaches, songs provide real-life language exposure, enhance comprehension of meaning and pronunciation, and foster emotional engagement. This aligns with Krashen’s Affective Filter Hypothesis, showing that when learners feel happier, more motivated, and less anxious, vocabulary retention improves and the learning process becomes more memorable.

Repeated linguistic features in songs particularly in the chorus strengthen long-term memory, supporting the claims of (Bawawa, 2020; Zubenko et al., 2022). Learners acquire vocabulary through natural repetition without cognitive overload. Songs are therefore beneficial for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, especially when language exposure outside the classroom is limited. These findings are also consistent with (Mousavi et al., 2021), who explain that vocabulary acquisition progresses through three stages noticing, retrieving, and generating and songs allow these stages to occur naturally through listening, singing, and engaging with lyrics.

Students’ preferences for certain song types such as pop songs, slow-tempo music, and songs with emotional or spiritual meaning further support the effectiveness of song-based learning. These songs are perceived as easier to understand due to clearer pronunciation and meaningful content. This aligns with Al-habsyi & Widiastuty, (2024) who argue that songs as multimodal texts provide both linguistic and affective elements that facilitate comprehension. The affective involvement students experience when listening to songs they like encourages them to explore the meaning of new vocabulary, supporting the findings of (Ghidhaoui, 2024; Lee, 2023) that emotional connection helps strengthen memory and vocabulary absorption.

Despite these advantages, students reported several challenges, including fast-paced lyrics, unclear pronunciation, and the use of slang and abbreviations that are difficult to interpret. These challenges suggest that not all songs are equally appropriate for learners at different proficiency levels. Therefore, as noted by Meganathan et al., (2024) careful song selection and scaffolding such as providing lyric sheets or guided vocabulary activities are necessary to support comprehension. In addition, some students expressed that disliking a particular song can reduce motivation and learning effectiveness, indicating that learner involvement in song selection is essential for successful implementation.





Overall, students expressed strong approval of using songs in vocabulary learning. They believe this approach is effective, enjoyable, and relevant to their daily lives, and thus should continue to be applied in the learning process. Songs create a relaxed learning atmosphere, increase motivation, and encourage active engagement. These findings support previous studies (Meganathan et al., 2024; Suci & Setyowati, 2023; Thahura, 2022) which also highlight the benefits of songs for vocabulary development, pronunciation skills, and learning motivation. Therefore, learning vocabulary through songs can be considered a creative and successful strategy that not only addresses the limitations of traditional methods but also promotes both emotional and cognitive involvement in language learning.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted and analyzed, it can be concluded that learning English vocabulary through songs provides an enjoyable and meaningful learning experience for second-semester students in the English Education Study Program at Lelemuku Saumlaki University. This conclusion is drawn from two aspects investigated in this study: (1) students' experiences in learning vocabulary through songs, and (2) their perspectives on the use of songs as a medium for vocabulary acquisition.

In terms of learning experience, students demonstrated positive responses to the use of songs as a means of acquiring new vocabulary. Songs were perceived as helpful for understanding meanings, improving pronunciation, and strengthening memory through repetitive and melodic elements. They also create a pleasant learning atmosphere, reduce anxiety, and increase motivation, as supported by Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis as cited in (Yufrizal, 2021). Students' ability to memorize vocabulary more easily and apply it in context aligns with the vocabulary acquisition stages proposed by (Mousavi et al., 2021), including noticing, retrieving, and generating vocabulary.

Regarding students' perspectives, the majority expressed that songs should continue to be integrated into vocabulary learning because they are effective, engaging, and relevant to their daily lives. Songs offer more advantages compared to traditional methods such as reading from dictionaries or texts because they provide real-life context, evoke emotions, and are easily accessible. Students also suggested that songs should be selected based on their language proficiency level and musical interest to maximize learning effectiveness. Although challenges such as fast lyrics, unfamiliar slang, and genre preference still exist, students overall showed strong support for this learning approach.

The findings of this study affirm the significant potential of songs in enhancing vocabulary acquisition among EFL learners. Songs function not only as entertainment but also as multimodal, emotional, and contextual learning tools, consistent with previous research (Meganathan et al., 2024; Suci & Setyowati, 2023; Thahura, 2022). This study contributes by providing deeper insight into students' vocabulary learning experiences and perspectives in a higher education setting—an area less explored in prior research, which primarily focused on secondary school learners.

The novelty of this research lies in its focus on university students' lived experiences, highlighting the integration of emotional and cognitive dimensions in song-based learning. The findings show that emotional engagement plays a crucial role in vocabulary retention and motivation. Overall, the study demonstrates that songs serve both linguistic and affective functions that support long-term vocabulary development in EFL contexts.

However, this research has limitations. The small number of participants from a single institution limits the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the study focused on perceptions and self-reported experiences rather than measuring vocabulary improvement over time. Limited data collection duration also prevented further observation on long-term retention or comparisons across different music genres. Therefore, future research should involve larger and more diverse samples from different educational institutions. Studies may also adopt mixed-method or experimental designs to quantitatively measure vocabulary gains and long-term learning effects. Further exploration of song genres, cultural elements, or digital learning platforms is recommended to identify which features most effectively support vocabulary



acquisition and learner motivation.

## REFERENCES

- Al-habsyi, M. N., & Widiastuty, H. (2024). Case Studies on Vocabulary Mastery in EFL Learners Through English Song Exposure. *International Proceedings Universitas Tulungagung, 2003*, 863–873. <https://conference.unita.ac.id/index.php/conference/article/view/271>
- Bawawa, M. (2020). TEACHING ENGLISH VOCABULARY USING SONGS TO. *Kajian Linguistik*, 8(1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.35796/kaling.8.1.2020.29099>
- Brough, P. (2024). Advanced Research Methods for Applied Psychology. In *Advanced Research Methods for Applied Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003362715>
- Ghidhaoui, R. (2024). Transcending recreational functionality: Adult EFL learners' views on song-assisted language learning from an andragogical perspective. *Working Papers in Language Pedagogy*, 18, 17–36. <https://doi.org/10.61425/wplp.2023.18.17.36>
- Hendriani, S., Mukhaiyar, M., Kustati, M., Putra, H. E., & Saiful, J. A. (2020). Indonesian Efl Learners' Beliefs About Advantages of Songs in Language Learning. *Ta'dib*, 23(2), 237. <https://doi.org/10.31958/jt.v23i2.2489>
- Kurniawati, D. D. (2023). Improving students' vocabulary mastery by using guessing game on the seventh grade students. *Undergraduate Thesis, State Islamic University of Surakarta*. <https://eprints.iain-surakarta.ac.id/>
- Lee, S. (2023). *Factors affecting incidental L2 vocabulary acquisition and retention in a game-enhanced learning environment*. 35, 274–289. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0958344022000209>
- Lenaini, I. (2021). TEKNIK PENGAMBILAN SAMPEL PURPOSIVE DAN. 6(1), 33–39. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.31764/historis.v6i1.4075>
- Meganathan, P. M., Satyanarayana, S. D., & Arumugam, N. (2024). Exploring Vocabulary Growth Through Songs: an in-Depth Interview of Malaysian Undergraduate Students. *Journal of Language and Communication*, 11(2), 165–178. <https://doi.org/10.47836/jlc.11.02.05>
- Mousavi, S., Ghafoori, N., & Saeidi, M. (2021). NOTICING, RETRIEVING AND GENERATION: AN INVESTIGATION INTO VOCABULARY LEARNING AND RETENTION. *Revista Práxis Educacional*.
- Rohmah, N., & Indah, R. N. (2021). THE USE OF MODIFIED ENGLISH SONG TO IMPROVE. *Eltin Journal: Journal of English Language Teaching in Indonesia*, 9, 121–129. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.22460/eltin.v9i2.p121-129>
- Suci, I., & Setyowati, C. (2023). Efl learners ' perception of using english song lyrics for vocabulary acquisitions thesis. *[Undergraduate Thesis, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim]*. <http://etheses.uin-malang.ac.id/id/eprint/54375>
- Syafnidawaty. (2020). Qualitative Research. *Raharja University*.
- Thahura, A. (2022). Improving Vocabulary Acquisition Through Popular Songs. *[Undergraduate Thesis, UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh]*. <https://repository.ar-raniry.ac.id/id/eprint/24113/>
- Yufrizal, H. (2021). *An Introduction to Second Language Acquisition: A text book for esl learners and english teachers*. PT. RajaGrafindo Persada-Rajawali Pers.
- Zubenko, T., Gavrylenko, A., Zhyvotovska, T., & Vasylieva, N. (2022). SPACED VOCABULARY ACQUISITION WHILE INCIDENTAL LISTENING BY ESL Tetiana Zubenko , Anastasiia Gavrylenko , Tetyana Zhyvotovska , Nadiia Vasylieva. 2011, 79–87. <https://doi.org/10.20535/2410-8286.250501>