# The Effectiveness of Popular Songs to Improve Students' Vocabulary: A Case of Eighth Grade Students at SMP N 6 Semarang

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## Abstract

The importance of having a broad vocabulary cannot be overstated when it comes to learning a language. Popular songs assist language learners focus on the language they're learning in a stress-free way while providing possibilities for enjoyment, fulfillment, reflection, and play. The purpose of this study was to find out the extent of students' vocabulary improvement which having treatment using popular song and without popular songs then to determine the substantial difference between it. The researchers conducted quantitative research, and conducted in a quasi-experimental style, with both experimental and control class included. The sample of this research was 62 eighth grade student from SMP N 6 Semarang. Class H is a group that used by the researchers to give a treatment, while the second group Class E receives no treatment at all, each class has 31 students. The treatment was given twice in the experimental class, it used Brave song by Sara Bareilles and Count on Me by Bruno Mars. The test considered 20 multiple choices questions. Wilcoxon SPSS found that popular songs improves 30 students' grades. One student's grades tie. Comparing beginning and current results, the popular songs-treated class earned 26.45 points on the descriptive test. Researchers tested kids' learning without popular music. The untreated class's descriptive test score was 80.16. 26 students in the popular music class scored higher on the Wilcoxon test. Asymp.Sig (2 tailed) is 0.013, which is greater than 0.05 per the Mann-Whitney test. The investigation on using popular songs to improve vocabulary found no significant difference between classes taught with and without popular songs. The N-Gain test scores 72,153, which is "Effective Enough." Despite no substantial difference, using popular songs to improve kids' vocabulary is effective.

**Keywords:** popular song, students' vocabulary, eighth grade students

## Introduction

Al-Arifi (2020:4) asserted that English is the international language of communication and comprehension since it is the language of conferences, forums, and political talks. One of the most crucial abilities people can develop is learning a language's vocabulary because doing so improves someone's ability to communicate and engage in daily life. learning a language is impossible without using vocabulary. According to Ririn Ambarini (2018:524)

Furthermore, the true goal of the learning process is to provide long-term experience. English as a second language should be taught verbally, informally, and within the context of play. teenagers develop a natural and conversational ability to communicate said Sukarno (2018:59)  For presenting language to teenagers, can be an enjoyable and appropriate situation based on teenagers' experiences.

Because language is very important, vocabulary mastery should be implemented as early as possible. It is possible to boost students' vocabulary knowledge by employing enjoyable strategies such as pop songs, As a result, young learners are better able to recall vocabulary terms and talk with greater eloquence. Burns and Broman (1975:42) argue that during the primary years, English as a second language should be taught verbally, informally, and within the context of play. Because of the unique characteristics of the students, an English instructor should not rely solely on the tactics offered in textbooks while teaching young learners.

The researchers discover that the students' language comprehension for young learners is still inadequate. When it comes to teaching terminology, teachers regularly utilize the same method, which contributes to this issue. Pupils have acknowledged their lack of interest, and there is no method for the teacher's approach to make learning English enjoyable for students. Based on this, the students' language mastery has to be improved. As a result, the researchers propose a method of teaching vocabulary through the use of Pop songs. Teaching aids, according to Ririn Ambarini (2018:10), are tools used to educate or instruct students in order to make the principles of teaching materials easier for them to understand. A song involves less stress, listening to music is still considered to be an enjoyable pastime because people believe songs to be authentic and engaging

Researchers conducted the research to determine the level of students' vocabulary improvement after being taught with popular songs versus without popular songs, and to identify significant differences between the two groups. The researchers hope that his research can bring good benefits such as students are able to enhance their vocabulary skills. Students will then have the chance to practice these abilities in the subsequent English chapter. Included in these competencies are reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Teachers might employ well-known English songs as a tool for teaching students vocabulary. There are several ways that can be used to teach vocabulary, but not all of them are helpful at enhancing students' vocabulary skills. As a direct result of the study's findings, educators are more cautious when selecting an effective method for teaching vocabulary.

## Literature Review

1. Vocabulary

Vocabulary is a group of words that are used together and have the same meaning. In other words, a vocabulary is a collection of words with the same meaning. Th.Cicik Sophia (2021:280) stated that when we have a large vocabulary and the ability to use words appropriately in different situations, it is much simpler for us to communicate with one another. The main goal of a student's education should be to help them learn more words. In order for teachers to reach this goal, they need to have a good understanding of how language works and how creativity works. Vocabulary is a collection of terms used by a language, organization, person, line of business, or field of study. Due to the importance of the basics, newcomers need a solid foundation.

2. Vocabulary Mastery

Burhayani (2013:69) said "Vocabulary is central to language teaching and learning. It means that by mastering vocabulary, of course with grammar, the learners will produce so many sentences easily either in spoken or written one" Then Burns and Broman (1975:295) explain that vocabulary is the collection of words utilized by an individual, group, or occupation. Nearly every individual speaks a vast number of languages, many of which share many similarities yet are distinct in significant ways. According to Fadila (2020:9) When kids are learning a language, the first thing they should acquire is vocabulary.

Anyone who wants to learn the language's grammar and the skills of listening, speaking, writing, and reading must first acquire a substantial command of the vocabulary. Mastery, according to The American Everyday Dictionary, is the process of becoming an expert in a certain profession. According to The Oxford English Dictionary, "mastery" refers to the expertise or body of knowledge required to earn a master's degree. Mastering vocabulary is knowing how to spell, use, and pronounce words.

3. Teaching Vocabulary

According to Mofareh (2015:24) Vocabulary development is a contentious issue in English language education. Teachers will encounter issues throughout the teaching and learning process, and they will battle with deciding how to instruct students in a way that results in satisfying outcomes. Students must make a serious effort to expand their vocabulary on a regular basis, as having a wider vocabulary is the most significant aspect in improving their ability to utilize English as a second language. Burns and Broman (1975: 296-311), stated numerous ways of teaching vocabulary techniques

a. Firsthand Experiene

Schools should increase pupils' real-world experiences. School and extracurriculars affect children's speaking, writing, reading, and hearing vocabularies. Teachers should discover what experiences silent pupils require. Language teachers favor vocabulary study but have little public backing, per Stuart Webb (2017:5).

b. Books

Books, especially those that encourage thought and dialogue, help expand vocabulary. Books are helpful. Paul Nation (2017:8) says the book opens with a chapter on learning-related words. Students need fascinating, easy-to-read books to learn language and ideas through context.

c. Context Clues

Children learn context-specific terminology by reading widely. Reading broadly can assist with word meanings. Diverse literature helps readers understand word nuances. Th.Cicik Sophia recommends using text medium to instruct (2021:275). Learning-promoting activities boost thoughts, attention, and skills. Word order reveals meaning. Conjunctions and adverbs link paragraphs.

d. Material Aids

Visual aids should propose new keywords. Internet dictionaries, thesauri, and other resources benefit young learners. Visuals engage students, say Mohd Haniff and Mohd Tahir (2020:3237). They said younger children use this method. Studies have studied how images can improve language learning.

e. Content Area

Every topic needs vocab. Correct definitions are needed for math, health, science, and social studies. Choosing textbooks with clear descriptions decreases vocabulary difficulty. New York's Common Vital Learning Requirements educate English language learners and establish literacy standards for important disciplines, including science. MH Graves thinks children struggle with academic language and terminology (2016:4).

f. Oral and Written

Encourage speaking and writing. Teachers should encourage students to avoid fillers. Poor speaking Vocabulary problems produce poor oral expression. Real-world vocabulary storage practices might boost pupils' speech growth, say teachers. RE (2020:1)

g. Teacher Model

When reading or explaining, professors may utilize jargon. Verbalize report. Teachers must read and narrate many stories to improve students' reading, speaking, and comprehension. One semester. Oversimplify children's novels. Use new words in retellings and dramatizations. Sophia Cicik (2021:273) suggests engaging content. A teacher's energy is copied. Context enhances word comprehension, say researchers. Taffe,Ogle,Fisher,Blachowicz (2013:6)

h. Morphology Study

Antonyms, synonyms, homonyms, homographs, root words, figures of speech (metaphor, simile, personification), exaggerations, word connections, and inflectional techniques are studied. Be careful with synonyms. Paraphrasing is the best way to grasp figurative or indirect language. Mohammad Sadegh Rasooli (2014:1341) "Unsupervised morphology segmentation, FST-based morphology expansion, and reranking models"

4. Popular Songs

Music linked to infants to adults. They enjoy singing and listening to music whenever they wish. When paired with language teaching, songs can be quite successful. According to John Spitzer and Ronald G. Walters (2015:3), "even if we're dealing with a "folk song," someone must have been the first to sing those words, that melody, and to put words and music together." Popular songs are ones made to reach a broad audience and released in many ways. Folk and popular music are utilized in the classroom to represent a way of life and customs.

Meriam Webster (2020) describes a popular song as one generated for widespread recorded sales. We've always loved popular music. "Switched on Pop" (2019) by Nate Sloan & Charlie Harding claims we hear today's top singles everywhere, from cars to grocery stores to dentist appointments. Music can help students increase their vocabulary. Song encourages linguistic study. Popular songs improve students' vocabulary. This research will help eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 6 Semarang learn new words using song lyrics. To study how songs like "Count On Me" by Bruno Mars and "Brave" by Sara Bareilles can motivate young people to utilize more words.

## Method

This study examined how popular English songs affected pupils' vocabulary. The researchers used quantitative study with experimental and control groups. This study was quasi-experimental a method that involves contrasting the experimental group that was given treatment with the group that served as the control. The research design of this experimental method used in this research is a pretest-posttest design. The sample used in this study used a random sampling method in the eighth-grade students of SMP N 6 Semarang in academic 2021/2022 VIII H as an experimental group and VIII E as a control group. The test will be given for pre-test and post-test and considered 20 multiple choices questions. This research's multiple-choice test results were automatically analyzed using SPSS v.26 software.

1.  Normality test

    Normality tests assess if data comes from a normally distributed population. Normal distribution is the ideal data distribution, characterized by the mean, median, and mode.

    If Sig.value > 0,05, the data distribute normally

    If Sig.value < 0,05, the data not distribute normally

2.  Wilcoxon test

    Wilcoxon test is a non-parametric statistic that compares two paired samples or a treatment's effectiveness. Use Wilcoxon for non-normal data. Note the Wilcoxon test's direction and relative difference. Wilcoxon test for n>25

    Hypothesis accepted If Asymp.Sig<0,05

    Hyphotesis is rejected If Asymp.Sig>0,05

3.  Homogeneity test

    The homogeneity test examines two or more distributions to determine whether or not they have equal or unequal variances.

    If Sig. on Based on Mean >0,05 = the data is homogen

    If Sig.on Based on Mean <0,05 = the data is not homogen

4.  Mann-Whitney test

    To test There is a significant difference in the students' vocabulary abilities in the experimental class and those in the control class.

    Hypothesis is accepted If Asymp.Sig. < 0,05

    Hypothesis rejected If Asymp.Sig > 0,05

5.  N-Gain Score Test

    The N-gain score test aims to determine the effectiveness of using a method in one group pretest-posttest design research and research using experimental and control groups. The gain score is the deviation between the post-test and pre-test scores

$$\text{N-Gain Score} = \frac{\text{Posttest score} - \text{Pretest score}}{\text{Ideal Score} - \text{Pretest score}}$$

*Table 1.Percentage Category*

| Mean Percentage | Category |
| --- | --- |
| <40 | Not effective |
| 40-55 | Less effective |
| 56-75 | Effective enough |
| >76 | Effective |

*According to Hake, R.R (1999)*

## Finding and Discussion

In the study's data description section, the researchers supplied pre- and post-test vocabulary scores. Before receiving treatments, both the experimental and control groups took a pre-test. After treatments, post-tests were given. The experimental group's post-test was played as a song, while the control groups was not. Pre-test and post-test score tables:

*Table 2. Students' Score*

| No | Experimental (8H) | | Control (8E) | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | **Pre** | **Post** | **Pre** | **Post** |
| 1 | 50 | 100 | 75 | 75 |
| 2 | 70 | 70 | 75 | 85 |
| 3 | 60 | 100 | 65 | 70 |
| 4 | 50 | 55 | 40 | 55 |
| 5 | 45 | 90 | 90 | 90 |
| 6 | 60 | 80 | 70 | 90 |
| 7 | 70 | 95 | 55 | 100 |
| 8 | 70 | 100 | 55 | 60 |
| 9 | 60 | 85 | 45 | 85 |
| 10 | 75 | 100 | 55 | 75 |
| 11 | 25 | 55 | 95 | 95 |

| 12 | 85 | 100 | 75 | 95 |
| 13 | 70 | 95 | 65 | 75 |
| 14 | 65 | 80 | 45 | 95 |
| 15 | 70 | 100 | 30 | 45 |
| 16 | 70 | 100 | 45 | 80 |
| 17 | 45 | 100 | 50 | 75 |
| 18 | 80 | 100 | 75 | 85 |
| 19 | 55 | 65 | 55 | 65 |
| 20 | 55 | 90 | 45 | 90 |
| 21 | 95 | 100 | 55 | 75 |
| 22 | 85 | 90 | 90 | 95 |
| 23 | 60 | 100 | 55 | 60 |
| 24 | 60 | 85 | 35 | 65 |
| 25 | 85 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| 26 | 30 | 60 | 70 | 80 |
| 27 | 85 | 95 | 85 | 85 |
| 28 | 50 | 100 | 55 | 85 |
| 29 | 40 | 60 | 70 | 80 |
| 30 | 40 | 85 | 75 | 85 |
| 31 | 35 | 80 | 70 | 90 |

*Descriptive Statistics*

| | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pre-test Experimental Class | 31 | 25 | 95 | 61.13 | 17.593 |
| Post-test Experimental | 31 | 55 | 100 | 87.58 | 15.104 |
| Pre-test Control Class | 31 | 30 | 100 | 63.39 | 17.860 |
| Post-test Control Class | 31 | 45 | 100 | 80.16 | 13.631 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 31 | | | | |

Pre- and post-tests for two courses are shown. All classes took pre- and post-conference examinations. 25-95 on the pre-test. The control group's lowest pre-test score is 30. Control group average is 63.39. Control group average is higher. Two classes took post-tests after twice treating the experimental class. The experimental class averaged 87.58, with scores of 55 and 100. The control class's post-test score was 80.16 (45-100). The researchers may conclude that the experimental group did better on the post-test.

1. Normality test

*Tests of Normality*

| | Class | Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a] | | | Shapiro-Wilk | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Statistic | df | Sig. | Statistic | df | Sig. |
| Students Learing Outcomes | Pre-Test Experimental | .112 | 31 | .200* | .976 | 31 | .707 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Post-Test Experimental | .214 | 31 | .001 | .796 | 31 | .000 |
| Pre-Test Control | .165 | 31 | .032 | .967 | 31 | .453 |
| Post-Test Control | .155 | 31 | .056 | .945 | 31 | .116 |

\*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Based on the information presented above, the researchers can draw the distinction that the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Saphiro-Wilk tests both produce two values of Sig > 0.05. As a result, the researchers can draw the conclusion that $H_0$ is not accepted and the data do not follow a normal distribution.

2. Wilcoxon test

The Wilcoxon test is used to determine whether or not a particular approach applied to a sample is effective. The researcher's strategy for increasing students' vocabulary in the experimental class is to use popular songs as the instrument for teaching them new words. This Wilcoxon test is used to compare the results of the experimental group before and after they get treatment. The hypothesis is there are differences in vocabulary mastery of pre-test and post-test students, which means that there is an effect of using the Popular Song method on vocabulary mastery in the experimental class  if Asymp.Sig<0,05

*Ranks*

| | | N | Mean Rank | Sum of Ranks |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Post-test Experimental Class - Pre-Test Experimental Class | Negative Ranks | 0[a] | .00 | .00 |
| | Positive Ranks | 30[b] | 15.50 | 465.00 |
| | Ties | 1[c] | | |
| | Total | 31 | | |
| Post-test Control Class - Pre-test Control Class | Negative Ranks | 0[d] | .00 | .00 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Positive Ranks | 26[e] | 13.50 | 351.00 |
| Ties | 5[f] | | |
| Total | 31 | | |

a. Post-test Experimental Class < Pre-Test Experimental Class

b. Post-test Experimental Class > Pre-Test Experimental Class

c. Post-test Experimental Class = Pre-Test Experimental Class

d. Post-test Control Class < Pre-test Control Class

e. Post-test Control Class > Pre-test Control Class

*Test Statistics[a]*

| | Post-test Experimental Class - Pre-Test Experimental Class | Post-test Control Class - Pre-test Control Class |
|---|---|---|
| Z | -4.790[b] | -4.473[b] |
| Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 |

a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

b. Based on negative ranks.

It may be deduced that no children' grades fell in the experimental class, 30 kids' grades improved, and one student's score stayed identical from the pre-test. While no students in the control group saw a drop in their grades, 26 improved and 5 maintained their grades from before the pre-test.

It has been determined, on the basis of the output statistics, that the value of Asymp.Sig (2-tailed) is 0.000. Because the value of $0.000 < 0.05$, it is possible to draw the conclusion

that the "hypothesis is accepted." As a result there is an effect of using popular songs on increasing the vocabulary of the students at SMP N 6 Semarang.

3.  Homogeneity test

*Test of Homogeneity of Variance*

| | | Levene Statistic | df1 | df2 | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Students learning outcomes | Based on Mean | .524 | 1 | 60 | .472 |
| | Based on Median | .122 | 1 | 60 | .728 |
| | Based on Median and with adjusted df | .122 | 1 | 57.204 | .728 |
| | Based on trimmed mean | .354 | 1 | 60 | .554 |

According to the information presented above, we can deduce that the Sig value for the Based on Mean is 0.472, which indicates that it is higher than 0.05. Therefore, we must reach the conclusion that the value data for both the experimental class and the control class are homogen to one another.

4.  Mann-Whitney

*Ranks*

| | Class | N | Mean Rank | Sum of Ranks |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Students learning outcomes | Post-Test Experimental Class | 31 | 37.13 | 1151.00 |
| | Post-Test Control Class | 31 | 25.87 | 802.00 |
| | Total | 62 | | |

*Test Statistics[a]*

| | Students learning outcomes |
|---|---|
| Mann-Whitney U | 306.000 |
| Wilcoxon W | 802.000 |
| Z | -2.484 |
| Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) | .013 |

The experimental class's post-test average is 37.13 and the control class's is 25.87. Asymp. shows that students in experimental classes benefit from learning vocabulary through popular songs. Sig (2-tailed) = 0.013 > 0.05, which means the method is insignificant. To show that music therapy boosts students' vocabulary. Popular songs can enhance vocabulary.

*Table 3. N-Gain Score Test*

N-Gain Score Test Calculation Result

| No | Experiment Class | No | Control Class |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 100.00 | 1 | .00 |
| 2 | .00 | 2 | 40.00 |
| 3 | 100.00 | 3 | 14.29 |
| 4 | 10.00 | 4 | 25.00 |
| 5 | 81.82 | 5 | .00 |
| 6 | 50.00 | 6 | 66.67 |
| 7 | 83.33 | 7 | 100.00 |
| 8 | 100.00 | 8 | 11.11 |
| 9 | 62.50 | 9 | 72.73 |
| 10 | 100.00 | 10 | 44.44 |
| 11 | 40.00 | 11 | .00 |
| 12 | 100.00 | 12 | 80.00 |
| 13 | 83.33 | 13 | 28.57 |
| 14 | 42.86 | 14 | 90.91 |
| 15 | 100.00 | 15 | 21.43 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 16 | 100.00 | 16 | 63.64 |
| 17 | 100.00 | 17 | 50.00 |
| 18 | 100.00 | 18 | 40.00 |
| 19 | 22.22 | 19 | 22.22 |
| 20 | 77.78 | 20 | 81.82 |
| 21 | 100.00 | 21 | 44.44 |
| 22 | 33.33 | 22 | 50.00 |
| 23 | 100.00 | 23 | 11.11 |
| 24 | 62.50 | 24 | 46.15 |
| 25 | 100.00 | 25 | |
| 26 | 42.86 | 26 | 33.33 |
| 27 | 66.67 | 27 | .00 |
| 28 | 100.00 | 28 | 66.67 |
| 29 | 33.33 | 29 | 33.33 |
| 30 | 75.00 | 30 | 40.00 |
| 31 | 69.23 | 31 | 66.67 |
| MEAN | 72,1537 | MEAN | 41.484 |
| MINIMUM | 00 | MINIMUM | 00 |
| MAXIMUM | 100 | MAXIMUM | 100 |

The average N-Gain score for the experiment class is 72,153 percent, or 72 percent is considered Effective Enough with a minimum of 0% and a maximum of 100%. The N-Gain score ranges from 0% to 100%. The control class averages 41,484% N-Gain, meaning 41% are less effective. Thus, the employment of Popular Song to boost students' vocabulary at SMP N 6 Semarang is Effective Enough. Traditional approaches are less successful for improving SMP N 6 Semarang students' vocabulary.

The researchers intended to know if teaching eighth-grade pupils at SMP N 6 Semarang using famous songs increased their vocabularies. The researchers wanted to know if using songs to learn helps pupils' vocabulary. The researchers examined students' vocabularies using popular songs. Wilcoxon found that 30 students' grades improved after song therapy. No grade changed. The class treated with songs improved 26.45 points on the descriptive test, from 61.13 to 87.58. Initial and current values showed this.

Researchers also tested how much pupils' vocabulary grew without using popular tunes. The descriptive test showed that the average value of the untreated class improved by 16.77 points, from 63.39 to 80.16. 26 pupils' scores climbed when evaluated using the same questions, whereas 5 children's scores remained the same in the class that didn't use popular song.

The researchers also tested whether popular song method boosted vocabulary and caused significant differences between control and treatment groups. Asymp.Sig (2 tailed) for the Mann-Whitney test is 0.013. Because this number is more than 0.05, there is no significant difference between popular song classes and others. According to Hake, R.R. (1999)

assessment standards, the class that used popular songs to increase students' vocabulary scored 72.153 percent on the N-Gain Score test.

Although the two classes taught using different methods did not have a significant difference, the learning method using popular songs to increase students' vocabulary was effective enough. We can also see a fairly good comparison of the scores obtained by the experimental class compared to the control class. Besides being effective in increasing students' vocabulary, learning by using popular songs also creates a different atmosphere in learning and is categorized as a fun learning method.

## Conclusion

Because English is usually the first foreign language offered to pupils, they must have a strong vocabulary to communicate effectively. Using famous songs to improve pupils' vocabulary is an enjoyable, relaxed way to acquire new words. This helps kids recall terminology. According to the Wilcoxon SPSS test, 30 students improved their grades after listening to famous songs. No student's grades slipped, and one's did not. According to the descriptive test, the class treated with popular songs gained 26.45 points, from 61.13 to 87.58. Initially and now values were compared.

Researchers also tested how much vocabulary kids learnt when taught without renowned tunes. The untreated class's average score rose 16.77 points, from 63.39 to 80.16, on the descriptive test. 26 students scored higher on the Wilcoxon test with the same questions, whereas 5 students scored the same in the class without popular music. Researchers used SPSS to run many tests and analyze the results. Asymp.Sig (2 tailed) is 0.013, which is greater than 0.05 per the Mann-Whitney test. The investigation on using popular songs to boost vocabulary found no significant difference between classes taught with and without popular songs. The N-Gain test scores 72,153, which is "Effective Enough."

Therefore, it is possible to draw the conclusion that, although there is not a significant difference, the utilization of popular songs in the process of enhancing students' vocabularies is efficient enough.

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