



Enhancing English Vocabulary Mastery through Song Method

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Abstract

In the era of globalization, early foreign language proficiency—particularly in English as the most widely used international language across various domains—has become a necessity. Introducing basic English vocabulary to children serves as a crucial first step in developing their language competence. This study aims to enhance students' mastery of English vocabulary related to facial body parts through the application of the song method among second-grade elementary school students. The research employed a pre-experimental design with a one-group pretest–posttest approach. The participants consisted of ten students who received instruction through educational songs themed around body parts. Data were collected via observation, interviews, and both pre-tests and post-tests. Analysis using the paired t-test revealed an improvement in the mean score from 32 in the pre-test to 75 in the post-test, with a significance level of $0.000 < 0.05$. These results indicate that the song method significantly improves students' vocabulary mastery. Interactive and enjoyable song-based learning was found to stimulate memory retention, enhance pronunciation, and foster a positive learning atmosphere. Therefore, the song method can be considered an effective alternative strategy for teaching English to young learners at the elementary level.

Keywords: Vocabulary Mastery, English Language Learning, Song Method, Elementary School Students

A. Introduction

In the era of globalization, English language proficiency has become increasingly important, even from an early age. As an international language, English is essential not only in academic contexts but also in everyday life and the professional world of the future. Therefore, introducing English to elementary school students serves as a crucial



foundation. One of the key components of language learning is vocabulary mastery, as vocabulary forms the basis for other language skills, including reading, writing, speaking, and listening (Nation, 2022). However, in practice, vocabulary learning often remains monotonous and less engaging for children, making it necessary to employ methods that align with the learning characteristics of young learners. Songs represent one such method—enjoyable, easy to remember, and well-suited to the active, visual, and kinesthetic learning styles of children. In practice, the integration of songs into language learning has been shown to increase motivation, enhance memory retention, and facilitate natural pronunciation and intonation in English (Murphey, 2020; Lynch, 2021). According to Simatupang et al. (2023), English is categorized as a local content subject in Indonesian elementary schools, meaning it is not a compulsory subject at this level. Nevertheless, given the importance of English as an international language, more intensive instruction is necessary, particularly from an early age. Many second-grade elementary students face various challenges in learning English, especially in mastering topics related to body parts (Eryanti et al., 2018).

Several problems experienced by second-grade elementary school students in learning English about body parts, especially the face, hands, and feet, include:

1. students find it difficult to recognize and remember the names of body parts in English, especially facial parts such as *eyes*, *nose*, *mouth*, and *ears*;
2. students are not yet able to connect English words with the correct body parts visually and practically;
3. students experience difficulties in pronouncing body part vocabulary correctly, resulting in frequent mispronunciations.

Previous studies have shown that songs can be an effective medium in second language teaching. Millington (2020) stated that songs provide meaningful contexts that make it easier for children to understand word meanings through repetition and rhythm. Cameron (2019) also emphasized that songs create an enjoyable learning atmosphere and can increase student engagement. In Indonesia, research by Rahmawati and Sari (2023)



proved that children's songs with the theme of body parts successfully improved vocabulary mastery by up to 35% among first-grade elementary students. Similar research by Nugroho (2022) showed that the combination of songs with body movements could accelerate the process of vocabulary comprehension and retention. Nevertheless, there are several gaps in the literature that have not been widely discussed in detail, particularly regarding the use of songs in teaching vocabulary related to facial body parts to elementary school students with a structured quantitative approach. In addition, most previous studies were conducted in international schools or those using foreign curricula, so the results may not necessarily be generalizable to the context of public elementary schools in Indonesia. Therefore, this study seeks to make a new contribution by applying the song method contextually and systematically to improve the English vocabulary mastery of second-grade elementary school students.

This study was designed to address the main research question, namely whether the song method is effective in improving English vocabulary mastery related to facial body parts among second-grade elementary school students. The objective of this study is to examine the improvement in students' vocabulary mastery after participating in song-based learning. The research was conducted at a public elementary school in Semarang, Central Java, with a sample of 10 second-grade students. The song used was a modified version of the popular "Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes," focusing on facial vocabulary such as *eyes*, *nose*, *mouth*, and *ears*, accompanied by simple body movements. The research design employed was pre-experimental with a one-group pretest–posttest model to quantitatively measure learning improvement.

The structure of this article is organized as follows: the first section presents the introduction, which includes the background, significance of the study, and research problem; the second section discusses the literature review and relevant theoretical framework, particularly concerning the song method in foreign language learning; the third section describes the research methodology, including the design, participants, instruments, and data analysis techniques; the fourth section presents the research findings and discussion; and the fifth section contains the conclusion, practical implications, and recommendations for future research.



B. Method

. This study employed a quantitative approach with a pre-experimental design, specifically a one-group pretest–posttest model. This approach was chosen because it allows the researcher to measure the effectiveness of an intervention (in this case, the song method) by comparing scores before and after the treatment within the same group. Although this design does not include a control group, it can still provide a strong initial indication of changes in the measured behavior or ability.

Sampling

The target population of this study consisted of all second-grade students in public elementary schools in Semarang City, Central Java, Indonesia. This school was selected because it represents the general characteristics of public elementary schools in semi-urban areas, which face limitations in foreign language learning media but still implement the national curriculum that includes English instruction starting from Grade 1. The unit of analysis in this study was the individual student.

The sample consisted of 10 second-grade students selected using purposive sampling with the following criteria: (1) having received basic English instruction in Grade 1, (2) having a minimum attendance rate of 90% during the current semester, and (3) willingness to participate in the entire research process. Purposive sampling was chosen because this study is exploratory in nature with a small population and aims to measure the direct impact of the intervention on a relatively homogeneous group. The limitation of this technique is the reduced generalizability of the findings, but its strength lies in controlling participant characteristics in accordance with the study objectives. The target sample size for this study was set at a minimum of 10 students, based on practical, logistical considerations, and the intensive nature of the intervention. All targeted participants were successfully involved, resulting in a 100% response rate. No questionnaire was used in this study because the main data were obtained from vocabulary tests and direct observations, which are more appropriate for measuring language ability changes in early childhood learners.



Collecting Data

Data were collected in three main stages, namely the pretest, treatment (intervention), and posttest. The main instrument was a contextual multiple-choice vocabulary test in English based on the theme “body parts” focusing on facial parts. The test consisted of 15 picture-based multiple-choice questions containing words such as eyes, nose, mouth, ears, hair, and teeth. The content validity of the instrument was examined through expert judgment by two elementary school English teachers and one lecturer in English language education, with the result showing more than 90% material relevance. The reliability of the instrument was tested through a limited trial and yielded a Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient of 0.82, indicating good internal consistency.

In addition to the written test, direct observation was conducted during the learning process to record students’ active participation, facial expressions, and accuracy in vocabulary pronunciation. Observations were carried out using a structured observation sheet. An additional method in the form of a brief interview with the class teacher was conducted after the intervention to obtain perspectives on changes in students’ learning behavior.

The intervention was conducted over 2 weeks with a total of 4 sessions, each lasting 60 minutes. The song used was a modified version of “Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes,” focusing on facial parts. The song was sung together with the students, accompanied by body movements matching the lyrics. This multisensory approach was chosen because it has been proven effective in enhancing memory in children through the combination of audio, visual, and movement (Murphey, 2020). Learning activities also included pronunciation drills, listening to lyrics, and song-based picture guessing games.

Data Analysis

The data from the pretest and posttest results were quantitatively analyzed using the paired sample t-test statistical method with the aid of SPSS version 25 software. This test was chosen because it is suitable for comparing two means from the same group before and after treatment. The data were first tested for normality using the Shapiro-Wilk



test, which showed a normal distribution ($p > 0.05$), allowing the use of the parametric t-test. The t-test results were then analyzed based on a significance value (p -value) < 0.05 to conclude whether there was a statistically significant difference. The effectiveness of learning through songs was also complemented by a descriptive analysis of changes in students' average scores as well as documentation of observations on participation and pronunciation.

The selection of a quantitative method with a pre-experimental design was considered appropriate for the purpose of this study, as it allowed for direct measurement of the impact of the intervention on the observed variables. Although not as strong as a true experimental design, this design provides relevant flexibility in the real classroom context where random group assignment is difficult to implement. In addition, the use of data triangulation methods (tests, observations, and interviews) strengthened the validity of the results and provided a comprehensive picture of the changes in students' abilities.

C. Results And Discussion

The use of creative and enjoyable learning methods plays a crucial role in improving English vocabulary mastery, particularly related to body parts, among second-grade elementary school students. One effective method is the use of songs as a learning medium, as songs can help students remember vocabulary in a more engaging and easily digestible way (Hidayati, 2022). In this study, the song method was applied to 10 second-grade elementary school students to help them understand and master vocabulary related to body parts in English.

Before implementing the song method, students tended to have difficulty remembering new vocabulary and were less motivated when learning through conventional methods such as lectures or solely using textbooks. This aligns with previous opinions stating that monotonous learning methods focusing only on reading can lead to boredom and a decrease in students' learning interest (Putra, 2018). After applying the song method, an evaluation was conducted through pretests and posttests,



which were analyzed using the T-Test to measure the improvement in students' vocabulary mastery. The data analysis results obtained from questionnaires filled out by 10 students, using pretest and posttest instruments consisting of 10 questions, were analyzed using the T-Test method after the filtering process. The details of the analysis results can be seen in Table 1 and Table 2 below.

Tabel 1. Post-test Score Recapitulation

No	Nama	Skor										Jumlah
		soal 1	soal 2	soal 3	soal 4	soal 5	soal 6	soal 7	soal 8	soal 9	soal 10	
1	KH	10	10	0	0	10	10	10	0	0	0	50
2	MI	0	0	0	0	10	10	10	0	0	0	30
3	YA	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	10
4	BR	0	10	10	0	10	0	0	0	10	0	40
5	RM	10	0	10	10	0	10	10	0	0	0	50
6	TA	0	0	0	0	10	10	0	0	10	0	30
7	NF	0	10	0	0	10	0	10	0	0	0	30
8	PA	10	0	0	0	10	10	0	0	0	0	30
9	SL	0	0	10	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	20
10	CP	10	0	0	0	10	0	10	0	0	0	30
rata rata											32	



Tabel 2. Post-test Score Recapitulation

No	Nama	Skor										Jumlah
		soal 1	soal 2	soal 3	soal 4	soal 5	soal 6	soal 7	soal 8	soal 9	soal 10	
1	KH	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	0	0	10	80
2	MI	10	10	10	0	10	10	10	0	0	10	70
3	YA	10	10	10	0	10	10	10	0	0	0	60
4	BR	10	10	10	0	10	10	10	10	0	10	80
5	RM	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	100
6	TA	10	10	10	0	10	10	10	0	10	0	70
7	NF	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	0	10	10	90
8	PA	10	10	10	10	10	10	0	0	0	0	60
9	SL	0	10	10	10	10	10	10	0	0	0	60
10	CP	10	10	10	0	10	10	10	0	10	10	80
rata rata											75	

Based on Tables 1 and 2 above, it can be seen that there was a change after the researcher used an intervention with the song method to help improve the mastery of English vocabulary related to body parts. Nurazizah (2023) examined the effectiveness of using children's songs as a medium for teaching English in elementary schools. The results of the study showed that songs not only help improve students' vocabulary retention but also increase learning motivation and enthusiasm. Songs with simple rhythms and lyrics make it easier for students to understand and remember English vocabulary, making the learning process more effective and enjoyable. Other research also shows similar results; Istiqomah (2023), in her study at SD N Watesalit 01 Batang, demonstrated that song media helps students learn vocabulary, improves memory, and effectively enhances English pronunciation. Songs also provide comfort and enjoyment in the learning process.

After observing the differences between pre-test and post-test scores following the intervention with the English song method, hypothesis testing was carried out using a T-test, conducted with the SPSS program version 16.0, with the following results:

Paired Samples Statistics



		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	pretest	32.0000	10	12.29273	3.88730
	posttest	75.0000	10	13.54006	4.28174

Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	pretest & posttest	10	.734	.016

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences							Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	pretest – posttest	-4.30000E1	9.48683	3.00000	-49.78647	-36.21353	-14.333	9	.000

The significance value (2-tailed) of 0.000, which is smaller than 0.05, indicates a significant difference between the variables before and after the treatment. This suggests that the treatment given had a meaningful effect on the changes in each variable. Based on the results of the T-test, a highly significant difference was found in students' abilities before and after receiving the intervention using the song method. These findings prove that the learning process will be more effective if the appropriate teaching method is used compared to learning without a method or with a less engaging model.

D. Conclusion

Based on the research results, the use of the song method has been proven effective and efficient in improving English vocabulary mastery among second-grade elementary school students. This learning method through songs provides an enjoyable learning experience because the songs are accompanied by body movements (action songs), are easy for children to sing both inside and outside the classroom, and have cheerful rhythms. Data analysis shows a significant effect between the implementation



of the song method and the improvement in pre-test and post-test scores. Therefore, it is recommended for future researchers to develop more varied song-based learning methods and explore their impact on other English skills, such as speaking and listening. In addition, using a larger and more diverse sample is expected to produce more representative results and a more comprehensive overview of the effectiveness of this method in learning English at various educational levels. Ask ChatGPT

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