

## TEACHING ENGLISH FOR IMPROVING STUDENTS' VOCABULARY THROUGH ENGLISH SONG IN THAILAND: A CURRICULUM FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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### ABSTRACT

*Artikel ini membahas tentang peningkatan kosakata siswa melalui lagu berbahasa Inggris di sekolah dasar di Thailand. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kemampuan siswa kelas enam SD Lukmalnul Hakeem dalam menguasai kosakata melalui lagu berbahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan metode Penelitian Tindakan Kelas (PTK). Teknik yang digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data adalah perencanaan, pelaksanaan, observasi dan refleksi. Peneliti memilih 30 siswa kelas enam Lukmanul Hakeem. Instrumen yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah lirik lagu. Lagu dapat dipercaya untuk membantu mengingat kosakata dan menggunakan lagu-lagu yang menarik dalam belajar bahasa Inggris. Menghafal lagu dapat digunakan untuk meningkatkan kosakata bahasa Inggris sehingga tujuan pembelajaran bahasa Inggris sebagai alat komunikasi dapat tercapai dengan optimal. Hal ini dapat dilihat dari hasil penelitian yang menunjukkan bahwa ada peningkatan dari Siklus I ke Siklus II dalam partisipasi siswa dalam pengenalan, diskusi dan praktek. Pada Siklus I nilai rata-rata siswa adalah 67,43, sedangkan pada Siklus II nilai rata-rata siswa adalah 85. Dapat disimpulkan bahwa lagu memiliki dampak yang signifikan terhadap peningkatan kosakata siswa.*

**Kata kunci:** PTK, lagu bahasa Inggris, peningkatan, kosakata

### ABSTRACT

The article deals with improving students' vocabulary through English song at primary school in Thailand. The research aims to improve the sixth-grade students of SD Lukmalnul Hakeem in mastering vocabulary through English song. The research was conducted by Classroom Action Research (CAR). Techniques used to collect the data are planning, implementing, observing and reflecting. The researcher selected 30 students of sixth grade Lukmanul Hakeem. The instrument used in the research was the song lyrics. Songs can be trusted to help remember vocabulary and used the songs are interested in learning English. Memorizing song can be used to improve English vocabulary so that the purpose of learning English as a communication tool can be achieved optimally. It can be seen from the result of the research showed that there was improvement from Cycle I to Cycle II in the students' participation in introduction, discussion and practice. In the students' achievement Cycle I was 67,43, the average score of the Cycle II was 85. It can be concluded that songs have a significant impact on improving students' vocabulary.

**Keywords:** CAR, English song, improving, vocabulary.

### INTRODUCTION

The primary school curriculum is designed to give children of school-going age a strong foundation in learning. Learn about the school syllabus, subjects and programs. The primary school curriculum framework emphasizes the central principle of agency that is threaded throughout the three pillars of the curriculum: the learner, learning and teaching and the learning community.

Augmenting the focus of the "written, taught, and assessed" curriculum with the human elements the learner and the learning community underlines that everyone connected to the school community has voice, choice and ownership to impact learning and teaching. These holistic components complement and reinforce each other to form a coherent whole.

The Primary School sets out to meet the diverse needs of the students through the Primary Years Program, by ensuring that learning is

engaging, relevant, challenging and significant. The school follows a interdisciplinary model, whereby themes of global significance frame the learning throughout the primary years, including early childhood. This means that students are encouraged to make connections between subject areas, and traditional curriculum areas are used as lenses to help students inquire into big ideas.

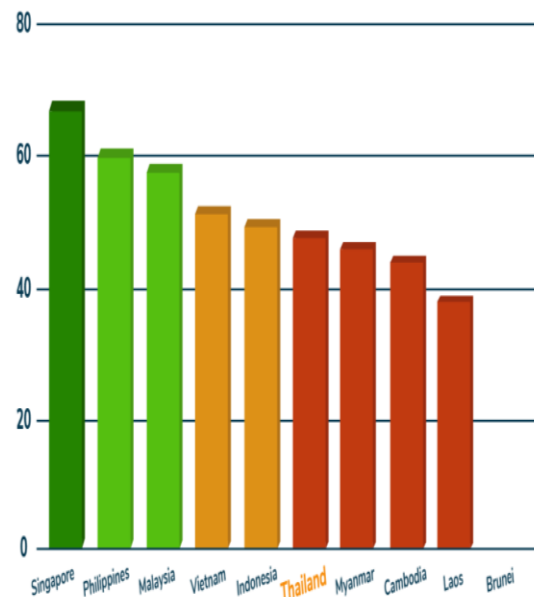
The primary school is both a curriculum framework and a philosophy that facilitates structured inquiry. Through inquiry, the students are encouraged to question, wonder, doubt, speculate and generalize as part of

their learning journey to construct meaning about the world around them. Students have the opportunity to explore significant local and global issues and are also encouraged to consider situations critically from multiple viewpoints.

Vocabulary is one of important Vocabulary is one of the important components to be taught to the students. It is the main aspects in acquiring and understanding the language. McCarthy (1990) explains that vocabulary is the biggest component of any language development. Then, teaching and learning of new vocabulary is a challenging process for both students and teachers. It requires lots of efforts from both sides, so that the students can obtain knowledge well.

Teaching vocabulary is a fairly difficult process for students and teachers, a process that requires many ways from both parties so that the teacher can convey it well and students can receive it well. Of Thailand's population of 69.3 million people, only 27% have been reported able to speak in English. Furthermore, this figure only captures the number of individuals who are able to communicate in English at some level but does not guarantee their level of fluency. Measured by the Education First Standard English Test (2019), Thailand ranked 6th in English proficiency among 9 ASEAN countries, scoring 47.61 which falls under the Very Low Proficiency group. In Indonesia, English as a foreign language has a prominent role in an international communication, especially in the frame of improving a competition force among nations (Suprijadi, 2014).

**Figure 1. English Proficiency of ASEAN Country**



Vocabulary is one aspect of language that must be considered. It is the main aspects of acquiring and understanding language. Vocabulary is generically defined as the knowledge of words and word meanings. More specifically, we use vocabulary to refer to the kind of words that students must know to read increasingly demanding text with comprehension (Hiebert, 2005) as cited in. There are many ways that students can obtain and learn foreign languages for example by using songs. Memorizing songs is believed that not only makes students interested but songs can also help them learn vocabulary more easily. A study by BrightByte (2018) found that many learning apps implemented in schools were not correlated to improvements in learning outcomes, regardless of the immense price these schools have paid to obtain their licenses. It is predicted that the cause of this is that learners do not follow the recommended 'dosage' of the app, potentially exacerbated by students' low learning motivation. When apps are unable to boost and encourage

learning motivation, it comes as no surprise that academic improvements do not arise as a result.

On certain occasions, it is also not rare to find that the effectivity of such learning apps are often unknown due to the lack of a real-time, updated monitoring system to record

learners' current competency and improvements. Reliable feedback on learning progress is a necessity in order to continuously adapt to changing needs and provide support accordingly.

Songs can be a good learning resource for English classes. Those are because English songs are already known enough by some students. The class also can be fun and joyful learning. It needs not too much time or meeting to do. Teachers are required to be creative in class so that children become more interested in English. Therefore, their interest in English will be an important foundation to achieve more satisfying English skills.

In Thailand, English language teaching often incorporates songs, with studies indicating its effectiveness in enhancing vocabulary and pronunciation. While the exact percentage varies, research suggests a positive impact on student motivation and engagement when songs are used as a teaching tool. according to Geringer (2003), the most important factor in student learning progress is the teachers, and teacher quality outweighs other factors such as motivation, funding, and class sizes. Qualified teachers can create the best environment for learning. As for Thailand (Education in Thailand, Wikipedia), a survey, in collaboration with the University of Cambridge, measuring the qualifications of four hundred Thai teachers of English, found that a full 60% of them had knowledge of English and teaching methodologies below that of the syllabus level at which they were teaching. Of the remaining top 40%, only 3% had a reasonable level of fluency, and only 20% were teaching class-levels for which they were both qualified and competent. Noopong (2002) also reported that 65% of primary school teachers who were teaching English had not taken English as their major of their studies, and only around 70% of secondary school English teachers graduated with a bachelor's degree in English. Dhanasobhon (2006) explained that at the secondary level, there is a shortage of teachers of English because English majored graduates love to work in other

higher salary jobs such as flight attendants, or in hotel and tourism businesses, or with private companies.

The use of English songs in class can help bring effective learning by providing fun learning classes, reducing student anxiety, fostering students' interest in learning and improving students' motivation to learn foreign language. The popularity of pop songs ensures that they are very potential to motivate students to learn language (Limbong, 2012). So that students will be more interested in learning through English songs that are considered fun and not boring. Some vocabulary that must be mastered by students through memorizing songs, namely the words that are in the lyrics of the song. Memorizing English songs is the way that allows students to repeat and remember the vocabulary. In addition, although most students regard learning by listening to English songs as entertainment, they also learn spontaneously and unconsciously, which is much more fun and efficient way to increase language awareness better than mechanically memorizing tedious course- books of vocabulary and grammar (Shen, 2003). Thus, memorizing English songs can be considered useful to learn vocabulary easily.

**Picture 1. Teaching vocabulary**





Picture 2. Teaching English song



Picture 3. Performance (Singing English Song)



Picture 4. Female Students' English Song together Practice



Picture 4. Male students performance together



According to the points had been explained above, The research aims to improve the students of SD Lukmanul Hakeem in mastering vocabulary through English song. The research question to be answered here is "How can English song improve the students' vocabulary?"

## METHOD

In this research, the researchers used CAR. According to (Cameron-Jone, 1983) action research is research conducted by researchers with a view to improve the professional practice of researchers and understand it better. There are four stages of each cycle, they are: (1) the planning of the action, (2) the implementation of the action, (3) classroom observation and (4) reflecting of the action (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988). This research was conducted at SD Lukmanul Hakeem, involving 30 students with 20 females and 10 males of class VI.

### 1. Planning

In the planning stage, the researchers prepared the research instruments, designed the lesson plans, selected the English songs, set the criteria of success and made the research schedule.

### 2. Implementing

In this stage, the researchers act as a teacher who implements the action, while the classroom English teacher takes a role as an observer who observes the action implementation.

### Cycle 1

In this section, the researchers applied the treatment to the students based on the lesson plan

prepared through song memorization. There are steps made in implementing the English songs memorization technique. The steps are:

- 1) Playing the song video and/or singing the song by the teacher.
- 2) Ask the students to do listening exercise given in the students' worksheet and discuss the answer together.
- 3) Lead the students to sing the song line by line until the students could memorize the song and could sing independently.
- 4) Lead the students to sing the song together with some fun supportive activities.

#### **a. Meeting 1**

Firstly, the researchers asked the students about their favorite English song. The song played first was Hero by Mariah Carey. It was played 3 times. First playing aimed the students can enjoy music first. After that, the teacher delivered the sheets which contain blank word/ phrase and asked students to fill it. Then the students have to collect the sheets. After that, the teacher delivered the second sheets. The last song was I have a dream by Westlife. It was done by the same treatment.

#### **b. Meeting 2**

In the second meeting, the teacher gave a different song to the students. In this meeting, the material was about comparison and contrast. Here, the same treatment as meeting 1 was applied to the students. The songs that the teacher chose was Flashlight by Jessie J and Heal The World by Michael Jackson. In the last 15 minutes, the students were asked to do posttest to know their improvement in vocabulary.

### **Cycle 2**

#### **a. Meeting 1**

In this meeting, the students were taught about passive voice. Here, the teacher tried to change the treatment. In this section, the teacher gave the explanation about the material first. After that, the teacher played the song. The song played in many times (up to the students' ability). The teacher also gave blank sheet to the students. And the students had to answer the vocabularies. While their doing the filling, the teacher also made a gesture of the vocab they needed. For example, they try to guest the word "run", so the teacher had to act "run" in front of the students. In the last

minutes, they had to collect the sheets. The song would be played were She will be loved by Maroon 5 and Someone like you by Adelle.

#### **b. Meeting 2**

In this meeting, the teacher gave the same treatment to the students, as the previous meeting. In this meeting, the teacher discussed parallel structure. The songs played were Beautiful in White by Westlife and Life Is Worth Living by Justin Bieber.

### **3. Observing**

In this study, the observation of students' new vocabulary mastery was conducted to obtain data and to find out about how well the implementation of memorizing English songs techniques could achieve the research objectives.

In this stage, researchers collected data related to the implementation of actions using several instruments. The first is the observation checklist that is filled by the observer. The second is the field notes made by the teacher. Those two instruments were used to gain the data related to the students' participation. The third is the result of vocabulary tests conducted by students at the end of each cycle, it aims to obtain data about student vocabulary mastery. The fourth is the result of a questionnaire given to students at the end of the study, which aims to find information about student responses to the use of techniques to memorize English songs.

### **4. Reflecting**

In this stage, the researchers reflects the data from the action with activities reflecting the implementation of the cycle obtained through observations and the implementation of techniques to memorize English-language songs in the teaching-learning process. The results are compared with the designed success criteria. The criteria for success were achieved. If it failed, the researcher will continue the study to the next cycle.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Result**

#### **1. The Importance of Vocabulary**

According to Thornburry (2002: 13), without grammar very little can be conveyed but without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed. While Allen (1983: 2) states that Learners often believed that

all they needed was a large number of words. They thought they could master the language by learning a certain number of English words. So, vocabulary is really important because it is main key to understand more about English.

## 2. Song as media

Songs as learning media that can make learning fun and not boring. Song can balance intellectual and emotional intelligence so that they will provide good results for students. Songs can stimulate brain function, the meaning of songs provide stimulation for the growth of memory functions to learn vocabulary, language, listening and speaking. The learners need a way of teaching that is practical and fun teaching methods so that they can integrate themselves into English, for example singing English songs can make students integrated into English (Gushendra, 2017). There are several benefits of using songs in language learning. First of all, they can encourage students to use English. Furthermore, listening to English songs helps students support words and meanings more easily the compilation of songs is supported by images and actions. Finally, songs can stimulate a positive emotional attitude toward language learning.

## 3. Teaching and Learning English by Using Song

Song and teaching learning is three aspects that relate each other because song could make teaching and learning become easy and relax. Besides that, song can improve several skills of English that one of them is vocabulary. Millington (2011: 134) Songs play an important role in the development of young children learning a second language. A testament to this is the frequency with which songs are used in English Language Teaching classrooms all over the world. This paper begins by looking at why songs can be considered valuable pedagogical tools. In particular, it will discuss how songs can help learners improve their listening skills and pronunciation, and how they can be useful in the teaching of vocabulary and sentence structures.

## 4. The Steps of Teaching English by Using Song

Shin and Crandall (2017: 19), Step for teaching songs to YLs

- Introduce the topic of the song.
- Review the vocabulary students already know.
- Pre-teach the new vocabulary.
- Listen to the song (with the teacher singing, or with an audio recording or video).
- Teach the song line by line.
- If there are multiple verses and a refrain, follow these steps: Teach the refrain line by line.
- Teach the tune of the verse using "la lala" instead of the lyrics (be sure to add the refrain with the lyrics at the end of the verse).
- Teach the verses one by one, always singing the refrain after each one.
- Point out words that rhyme at the end of each line and practice repeating them when teaching each verse.

## Data analysis

The result of the research showed that there was improvement from Cycle I to Cycle II in the students' participation in introduction, discussion and practice. In the students' achievement Cycle I was 67,43, the average score of the Cycle II was 85.

Table 1. Test Results in Cycle I

No	Explanation	Score
1	The highest score	84
2	The lowest score	52,3
<b>The average score</b>		<b>67,43</b>

Table 2. Test Results in Cycle II

No	Explanation	Score
1	The highest score	100
2	The lowest score	70,5
<b>The average score</b>		<b>85</b>

Based on the results obtained on student learning outcomes, student activities and teacher activities in cycle II showed a significant increase due to the use of songs.

## **Discussion**

### **Research Design**

This study employs a quantitative research method to investigate the impact of English songs at primary school Lukmanul Hakeem students' vocabulary acquisition. A quasi-experimental design with a Pre-test and Post-test Control Group is utilized. The participants are divided into two groups: an experimental group that learns vocabulary through English songs and a control group that follows traditional textbook-based instruction. Pre-tests and post-tests are administered to measure vocabulary improvement, while quantitative data collection techniques ensure objective analysis.

The research procedure begins with a pre-test to determine students' initial vocabulary levels. The experimental group undergoes English song-based instruction for 4-6 weeks, while the control group receives conventional teaching. Throughout this period, students in the experimental group are exposed to a variety of English songs selected based on their vocabulary relevance and linguistic complexity. The teaching process includes listening, singing along, and engaging in activities related to the song lyrics to enhance vocabulary retention.

Following this intervention, a post-test is conducted to assess vocabulary development. The collected data is analyzed using statistical methods, particularly the t-test, to determine significant differences between the two groups. Additionally, descriptive statistical analysis will be used to provide insights into students' vocabulary acquisition progress. The study anticipates that the experimental group will show greater vocabulary gains, reinforcing the effectiveness of using English songs in vocabulary learning. The findings are expected to contribute to innovative language teaching strategies, particularly for young learners.

### **Research Participants**

The participants of this study consist of 30 primary students at Lukmanul Hakeem Thailand, comprising 20 female students and 10 male students. They are selected using a purposive sampling method, ensuring that all participants have a similar baseline level of English vocabulary knowledge. The students are divided into two equal groups: 15 students in the

experimental group and 15 students in the control group.

The experimental group engages in vocabulary learning through English songs, while the control group follows conventional teaching methods. Throughout the study, both groups are provided with the same vocabulary content, but the instructional approach differs. The experimental group actively participates in listening, singing, and engaging in activities related to the song lyrics to reinforce vocabulary retention.

Following the intervention, both groups take a post-test to measure vocabulary improvement. The collected data is analyzed using statistical methods, particularly the t-test, to determine significant differences between the two groups. Additionally, descriptive statistical analysis will be used to provide insights into students' vocabulary acquisition progress. The study anticipates that the experimental group will show greater vocabulary gains, reinforcing the effectiveness of using English songs in vocabulary learning. The findings are expected to contribute to innovative language teaching strategies, particularly for young learners.

### **Instruments**

This study aims to improve students' vocabulary through English songs. Through two cycles, the learning process is carried out and runs well in sixth grade students of Lukmanul Hakeem Thailand. Based on the scores obtained, in cycle II it has reached the target score. It is believed that target score achieved by the students is affected by the way teachers comprehensively gave the well-structured instruction, so vocabulary achievement of the students will lead to productive skills, such as; writing, and speaking. Furthermore, it is also leads to students' higher order thinking since the students have much opportunities to go beyond the core skills, and it will be more useful integrated with social media. It is also revealed an interactive teaching materials becomes one of the major factor affecting English learners' achievement. Therefore, researchers will not continue to cycle III. It is proven that using this method can improve students' vocabulary mastery.



## CONCLUSION

There are some conclusions drawn based on the data above. **First**, memorizing English songs can be considered as the right technique to improve students' vocabulary mastery, especially students of sixth class at Lukmanul Hakim school in Thailand. This can be seen from the scores of students on the vocabulary test which increased from the three vocabulary tests given in the preliminary study, Cycle I, and Cycle II. **Second**, from the revised teaching strategy in Cycle II, it was found that the technique of memorizing English songs would be more promising in helping students' vocabulary mastery problems. **Third**, memorizing English songs can be a good technical choice in building a crowded classroom atmosphere to generate students' participation in teaching and learning activities. This is because, from the observation checklist, it was shown that the students could actively participate in the teaching and learning activity that was conducted by using English songs memorization. **Fourth**, the active participation of the students in learning shows their motivation that would be able to build their enthusiasm in learning. Thus, it could be seen from the results that memorizing English songs can be a good technical choice in teaching and learning vocabulary. They stated that memorizing English songs is a very interesting teaching technique to be used because the material of English songs is fun and easy to be followed.

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