



## ***PLAYLISTS TO PROFICIENCY: ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF SPOTIFY ON ENGLISH VOCABULARY ACQUISITION***

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### ***Abstract***

*This study investigates students' vocabulary development and English learning activities after using Spotify as a learning medium in an Indonesian EFL classroom. The research employed classroom action research conducted in two cycles involving 33 twelfth-grade students. Each cycle consisted of three meetings and followed four stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. The findings reveal significant improvement in students' vocabulary mastery, with the mean score increasing from 68.18 (42% completeness) in cycle one to 80 (82% completeness) in cycle two. Learning activity scores also rose from 6.58 to 7.70. The study concludes that Spotify effectively enhances vocabulary acquisition and learning engagement.*

**Keywords:** *Learning Activity, Digital Learning Media, Vocabulary Mastery, Spotify*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Vocabulary is widely recognized as a fundamental component of English as a foreign language (EFL) learning, as it underpins learners' ability to develop communicative competence and master the language effectively. Nevertheless, scholarly attention to the enhancement of vocabulary mastery through innovative and up-to-date instructional media and strategies remains limited (Ur, 2022). Existing studies on innovative learning media have largely concentrated on the improvement of the four language skills, i.e., speaking, listening, reading, and writing, while vocabulary development has received comparatively less emphasis. However, the successful mastery of these language skills is highly dependent on learners' vocabulary mastery. Furthermore, the level of vocabulary mastery among Indonesian EFL students continues to require improvement (Rahmawati et al., 2023). In response to these gaps, this study focuses on enhancing students' vocabulary mastery through the use of a modern and easily accessible digital medium, namely the Spotify



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application.

Vocabulary is a fundamental component of language proficiency, as it plays a crucial role in English language learners' ability to communicate effectively and achieve overall language mastery. Accordingly, numerous studies have consistently identified vocabulary as a core element of language learning, emphasizing its essential contribution to learners' communicative competence (Butar & Katemba, 2023; Hudiananingsih et al., 2022; Kelendonu & Katemba, 2023; Mallisa & Mbato, 2023; Rahmawati et al., 2023). Although learners may still convey meaning with limited grammatical knowledge or imperfect pronunciation, communication becomes significantly constrained when adequate vocabulary knowledge is lacking (Rahmawati et al., 2023). Therefore, the effectiveness of learners' English language use largely depends on the extent to which they possess sufficient and appropriate vocabulary.

Effective vocabulary teaching and learning, therefore, has become a crucial concern in foreign language classrooms (Alsalihi, 2020). One of the primary issues arises from learners' low interest in learning English, which is often attributed to the continued use of outdated teaching techniques and instructional media. In response to the demands of the current educational era, foreign language instruction requires more innovative approaches that integrate technology to provide varied and engaging learning experiences. This view is supported by Kelendonu and Katemba (2023), who emphasize that EFL learners encounter considerable challenges in developing vocabulary knowledge due to low motivation and limited engagement resulting from the persistent use of traditional instructional media and classroom practices.

Considering this evidence, it is crucial to integrate up-to-date digital learning media into the instructional practices to assist the students in acquiring English vocabulary (Rahmi, 2014). Contemporary learning media that can provide authentic learning materials play a significant role in enhancing learners' learning outcomes, as they facilitate clearer input and more engaging learning experiences to the students (Sudjana & Rivai, 2013). Consequently, technology-based instructional media have been increasingly viewed as a viable alternative for addressing learners' low interest in vocabulary learning in EFL contexts (Widiantari, 2023). The use of engaging and varied digital media can foster learners' motivation, which in turn encourages more active participation and involvement in

EFL classrooms. However, the study that focuses on the enrichment of vocabulary mastery using an innovative latest media and tip receives only little scholarly attention (Mallisa & Mbato, 2023). It shows the gap between the importance of students' vocabulary mastery and the study that focuses on vocabulary mastery using innovative media.

Spotify is one of the media that can be categorized as an innovative digital media. It is an application that is classified as one of music streaming platform providing complete playlists that has a variety of features like digital music and podcasts. Spotify also provides the song playlists to the user so they can play as well as find songs in the digital music section in this application. According to Setyobudi & Jannah (2022), Spotify is an application that can be defined as one of music streaming applications that has variety of features like digital music, podcasts, as well provides a song lyric for the user and they can play and find song in the digital music section in this application. According to Septia & Ningsih (2023), Spotify application is popular widely around the world that offers variety of features including podcast, digital music, and video streaming. There are variety of devices that can easily connect to Spotify.

Considering the variety of devices, Spotify has a potential to be used as digital media to optimize students' vocabulary acquisition. Spotify is a useful media that is interesting that can encourage students' motivation in learning process and improve their vocabulary mastery by listening to the song, reading the lyrics, and helping them to understand the word and its contextual meaning (Nuraeni & Warni, 2023). It can help them to expand and memorize vocabulary even more. There is no limitation for learner to use it and learning new word by using Spotify. Supported by Butar & Katemba (2023), EFL students' vocabulary can be expanded by listening authentic songs on Spotify. The lyrics feature that is offered on Spotify helps the familiarization of word and remembering it as they listen to the authentic one (Setyobudi & Jannah, 2022). This activity is attracted to the learner as they motivated learning vocabulary through Spotify.

Previous research has investigated the use of Spotify in English language learning; however, studies that employ Spotify as an instructional medium for improving vocabulary mastery remain scarce. The research conducted by Melvina et al. (2023) focused on EFL students' perception on using the Spotify app toward pronunciation. In addition, the research by Sihombing & Simanjuntak (2023) studied a comparative analysis on the

enhancement of listening proficiency between upper and secondary participants using Spotify and utilized podcast feature on Spotify. Meanwhile, another study conducted by Nuraeni & Warni (2023) explored the EFL students' perception on the use of Spotify application.

Although previous studies have examined Spotify for pronunciation and listening, research exploring its impact on vocabulary acquisition within a CAR framework remains limited. For filling this research gap and for assessing the efficacy of Spotify application for acquiring English vocabulary mastery, the present study is centred to answer the following research questions as: 1) Can Spotify application improve Indonesian EFL students' vocabulary mastery? 2) Can Spotify application improve learning activities in Indonesian EFL class?

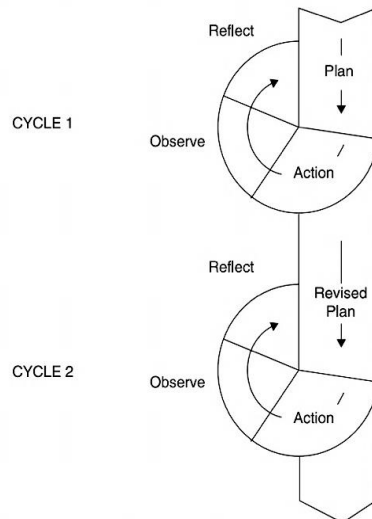
## **RESEARCH METHOD**

The present study applied classroom action research (CAR) as the design study. It is a reflective and systematic process conducted by teachers or researchers to identify classroom problems and implement actions aimed at improving instructional practices and learning outcomes. According to Burns (2009), action research focuses on identifying problematic classroom conditions and introducing planned interventions to bring about improvement in teaching and learning practices.

This study followed the CAR cycle model proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart, as adapted in Burns (2009), which consists of four interconnected stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. The research was conducted in two cycles, with each cycle comprising three meetings. The final meeting of each cycle was devoted to assessing students' vocabulary mastery. The cycles model used in here adapted from Kemmis McTaggart in Burns (2009), as follows:

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the instructional actions were contextually appropriate and aligned with the existing curriculum.



**Figure 1.** *CAR Cycles Model by Kemmis McTaggart (Burns, 2009)*

This study utilized both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data were obtained through a vocabulary test, while qualitative data were collected using observation sheets and field notes. The vocabulary test served as the instrument for quantitative data collection. The test was developed based on vocabulary aspects proposed by Harmer (2001), which include word meaning, synonyms, and antonyms. The test was administered at the end of each cycle to measure students' vocabulary mastery. Students were considered to have achieved individual completeness if they obtained a minimum score of 75, in accordance with commonly used mastery learning criteria (Burns, 2009). Classical completeness was achieved when at least 75% of the students reached the minimum mastery score, which is a standard criterion frequently applied in classroom action research.

Qualitative data were gathered through classroom observations and field notes. Observation sheets were used to record students' learning activities, participation, and engagement during the implementation of the action. Observations are particularly useful for capturing real classroom settings and actual learner behavior (Gunnulfson, 2021). Field notes were used as reflective instruments to document classroom conditions, instructional processes, and unexpected occurrences during the research implementation. Field notes also

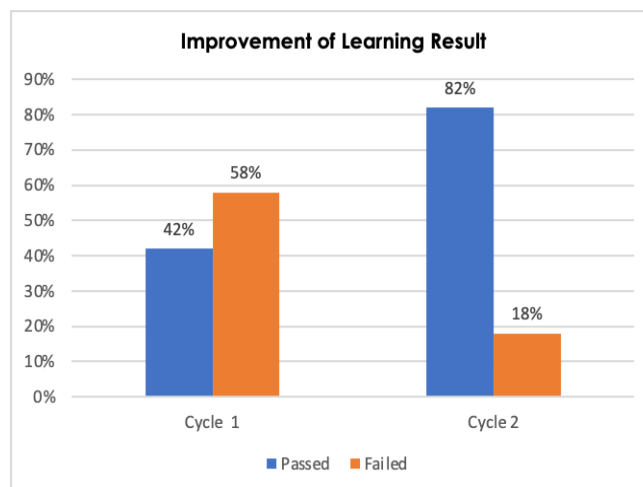
functioned as supporting documentation for reflection and decision-making in subsequent cycles (Deggs & Hernandez, 2018).

Quantitative data were analyzed by calculating students' individual scores, mean scores, and classical completeness percentages at the end of each cycle. These results were used to determine whether the instructional intervention led to improvements in students' vocabulary mastery. Qualitative data from observation sheets were analyzed by calculating the mean score of students' learning activities to identify patterns of improvement in engagement and participation across cycles. Field notes were analyzed descriptively to support and explain the quantitative findings.

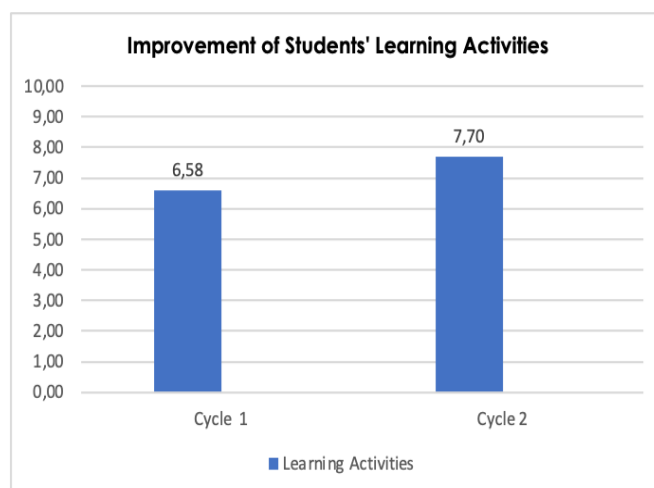
This study adhered to ethical research principles. Permission to conduct the research was obtained from the school authority, and informed consent was secured from the participating teacher and students. Students were informed about the purpose of the study, and their participation was voluntary. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the research process, and all collected data were used solely for academic purposes.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this research address the research questions for discovering the improvement of students' vocabulary mastery and learning activities using Spotify application in learning English from the first cycle to the second cycle. The graph showed improvement of learners' vocabulary mastery and learning activities, as follows:



**Figure 2.** *Improvement of Students' Vocabulary Mastery*



**Figure 3.** *Improvement of Students' Learning Activities*

The findings of this study indicate that the use of the Spotify application contributed to improvements in students' vocabulary mastery and learning activities. The evidence was the mean in cycle 1 of their vocabulary mastery was 68.18 and improved in cycle 2 to 80. For cycle 1, the number of students who passed the criteria were 14 with percentage of completeness 42%. Students who passed the criteria score in cycle 2 were 27 students with percentage of completeness 82%. It can be concluded that there were progression and improvement from cycle 1 to cycle 2. From cycle 1, the learning activities progressed to cycle 2. The first mean score that was 6.58 has improved to 7.70 in second cycle. It indicates that the learning activities in the second cycle was better than in the first cycle. The finding indicates that Spotify is a potential teaching media that can be helpful for teaching vocabulary component for Indonesian EFL students. It is also evidently successful to enhance the students' engagement in EFL learning activities.

The research questions of this research raise from the need that is found in preliminary study that the students were having lack of vocabulary and unmotivated in learning English. The problem occurs due to the use of conventional media in English classroom. This is in line with Mardiana (2020) who states that emergence and the value in this decade of digital media is crucial in every aspect in teaching English. Since it is attracting for the students, their learning motivation and engagement can be optimally reached by implementing digital media for teaching English (Butar & Katemba, 2023). Furthermore, students' attention when the materials are delivered using digital media can be

increasing more. When the learners have good motivation, it will be beneficial for their learning outcomes, including vocabulary mastery. It means that the digital media can bring some beneficial outcomes for EFL teaching and learning process.

The result of the present study has already confirmed the previous theories stated the importance of digital media in current English language teaching practice. It is proven that Spotify application, as a digital media, can improve students' vocabulary mastery as well as the EFL learning activities. It means that Spotify application can be considered as an effective digital media that can be used for acquiring English vocabulary mastery.

Students' improvement of their vocabulary mastery is caused by the authentic material they are listening and reading on Spotify. They become more familiar with English word by using Spotify. During the present study, the students were taught using Spotify application by conducting these following activities. The activities given to them were listening to English song, checking the lyrics, and interpreting the meaning, synonym, as well as antonym of new vocabulary they found on the song. At the last stage of every meeting, the students were instructed to listen the whole part of English song on Spotify application again. Then, the students interpreted the whole contextual meaning of the song both individually and in a group work. This activity was conducted during first and second meeting of each cycle with different English song in each meeting. Students demonstrated increased engagement when using the Spotify application and showed greater autonomy in learning English.

The findings of the present study are in line with Widianari et al., (2023) who states that several chance of the use of digital media to develop learner language skills, motivation, and self-determined. Digital application and media are appropriate for improving learners' skills and can be an alternative for the current conventional learning. Supported by Hudiananingsih et al., (2022), digital platform impacts student's vocabulary mastery if it is integrated with authentic material. Furthermore, learner ability to acquire the language skills (i.e., reading, listening, speaking, and writing) can be assisted by using digital media.

The students find Spotify as an application that can be used easily in an enjoyable way while learning English, especially in learning vocabulary. The present of the song and its lyrics on Spotify application improved their vocabulary mastery due to contextual

vocabulary learning. Because of this, the students' motivation can be growth so they can involve in learning activities for acquiring new vocabularies. In other words, the students' engagement while learning English and acquiring vocabularies while using Spotify application can be better. In line with Mallisa & Mbato (2023), the contextual approach of Spotify for vocabulary learning shows that it is an interesting and accessible media that can be integrated into language learning. Furthermore, S. A. Rizqi & Nugrahini (2023) states that Spotify has impact in learners' vocabulary mastery because they can gain a lot of word repertoires and this is showed by the scores of students' vocabulary test that have a significant progression after using Spotify application.

The findings of the present study confirm the solution for some issues related to the students' lack of vocabulary found in the preliminary research. Before conducting this study, the researcher found that the students had lack of motivation in learning English in EFL classroom. This problem occurred due to the limited learning media that can increase the learning motivation in class. This is in line with Rahmawati et al., (2023) who explain that factors behind students' problem in learning vocabulary are the lack of interesting media because the teachers still use conventional learning. As a solution, from the observation during the learning process using Spotify application, the students are more comfortable while learning English in their classroom and gained better self-confident during the lesson.

This fact has been proven by the field notes collected by the observer. The result shown in observation sheet confirms that there is significant improvement of students' learning activities in asking the material given, answering teachers' questions, doing the assignment individually and in group as well finding other learning resources. It is in line with the statement of Makodamayanti et al., (2020), digital media in any kind of form provides a relief of students in learning and they are more likely to enjoy it and confident rather than feel less confident, anxiety and burden in learning. As might be expected digital platform can overcome students' burden and anxiety in learning English.

As a conclusion, it needs to be stressed that the research finding has shown that Spotify application can improve students' vocabulary mastery along with students' learning activities. The result in the form of numerical score and description of the research have confirmed it. In line with this statement, Since Spotify application appealed as engaging and

motivating for the students, they are more likely to listen to them repeatedly. They find enjoyment as well as gaining a lot of vocabularies. The song lyrics are automatically updated with fresh word definitions. Considering these benefits, Spotify can be chosen as the most frequently used platform to listen music or song as well as to improve their English competencies, especially vocabulary mastery (Kelendonu & Katemba, 2023). As a result, it is recommended that the teachers can teach English using the benefits of Spotify application.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study investigated the use of the Spotify application as a digital learning medium for improving EFL students' vocabulary mastery and learning activities. The findings indicate that the integration of Spotify in vocabulary instruction was associated with improvements in students' vocabulary mastery and increased classroom learning activity. The use of authentic audio materials provided through Spotify supported students' exposure to varied vocabulary and encouraged more active participation during the learning process. These findings suggest that technology-based media such as Spotify can serve as a practical alternative for vocabulary instruction in EFL classrooms. Accordingly, English teachers are encouraged to consider integrating accessible digital applications to support English vocabulary acquisition.

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