

## BUILDING VOCABULARY USING POP SONGS

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### *Abstract*

*The objective of the study is to find out whether there is a significant difference between the vocabulary mastery of first semester students taught using English pop songs and that taught without using English pop songs as a medium. This study involved 64 students of first semester of STKIP Muhammadiyah Pringsewu Lampung in the academic year of 2012/2013 as the objects of the study. The result of the study shows there is a significant difference in the student's vocabulary mastery between the experimental group who are taught using English pop songs and that taught without using English pop songs as a medium. The mean of post test score of the experimental group is 16.93 while the mean score of the control group is 14.54. The result of t-test shows that t-observed value which is higher than the t-value of the table ( $2.572 > 1.99$ ), with a probability value of 0.008 which is lower than the significance level ( $0.008 < 0.05$ ). In conclusion, the use of English pop songs could improve the students' vocabulary mastery.*

**Keywords:** Vocabulary, English Pop Songs

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In order to communicate using English in oral and written forms, the students should prepare themselves with vocabulary mastery. According to Wilkins in Harmer (2002) "Without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary *nothing* can be conveyed." The vocabulary mastery as one of language components will support the students' ability in communication both oral and written. Vocabulary is one of the core components of language proficiency and determines how well learners speak, listen, read, and write (Richards and Renandya, 2002: 255). The words that students choose in speaking will affect how well they understand what the speaker says. In writing, the students' vocabulary mastery describes how clearly they can convey the readers' mind. In reading, the students' vocabulary mastery

will affect their ability in comprehending and in understanding the writers' message through the writers' writing. For the first time, people will understand a sentence by looking at the vocabulary. In listening, the students' vocabulary mastery will influence their understanding in hearing the lecturers' explanation, the conversation of native speakers, and other speeches.

However, some problems have existed in almost all classrooms in university level that make the learners have less knowledge on vocabulary for the ultimate objective of learning the foreign language. The monotonous way on remembering the vocabulary becomes the basic problem of many students. The students usually just receive English words from their lecturer or lecturer and never try to improve their vocabulary mastery. Moreover, the lecturer lacks

creativity to improve students' vocabulary mastery. This situation happens also in the class of pronunciation, as one of language components, where the students feel difficult not only in pronouncing the words but remembering the meaning of vocabulary. Here, the problem that the researcher most concern in this research is the use of media in teaching vocabulary. The lecturer should prepare all the components in the teaching-learning process well. The components are the media, the materials, and the teaching method. In fact, the lecturers do not prepare them in balance. It means that the lecturer usually ignores one or the two components of the teaching-learning process. For example, the lecturer should prepare in arranging the materials which are based on the lesson plan well. In this case, the lecturer does not use the media to teach the new vocabulary. For example, when she or he teaches about how pronouncing words with a lot of new English words, she or he does not use any media to motivate their students. It can make the teaching-learning process ineffective and the students will get the consequence. They do not know what the lecturer explains.

There are many theories of teaching vocabulary that have been stated by the experts. Vocabulary has a very important role in gaining the success of language learning. Vocabulary can support the development of the four basic skills: reading, listening speaking, and writing. It can be said that each of the four language skills requires the mastery of vocabulary. Cameron (2001: 73) states that vocabulary development is about learning words, but it is about much more than that. It is true that learning vocabulary

cannot be separated from other language elements. After mastering new words, the students must be trained how the words are pronounced, spelled and used in a sentence. It can also be said that vocabulary is a basic part in mastering language.

There are some strategies on teaching vocabulary that have been observed by authors (Cross, 1991; Nation 1990, 2001; Gains and Redman, 1986; Allen, 1983). They classify the strategies into three categories such as; presentation strategy, practical strategy, and training strategy. The first is presentation strategies; presentation strategies are those that introduce the target vocabulary for the first time. These will involve either presentation of the meaning (i.e. concept) or the form. The meaning presentation is divided into three strategies according to Cross (1991: 72). The first is visual strategies (i.e. pictures, body, actions, real objects or video.) The second is verbal presentation strategies (i.e. definition, translation, and explanation) and the last is audio strategies (i.e. imitation of sound or having learners to listen to a tape-recording). Moreover, Gairns and Redman (1986: 66- 67) state that there are two categories of strategies in teaching vocabulary. They are visual (pictures, real object, gestures) and verbal (definitions and illustrative sentence, synonyms and antonyms, scales, explanations, translations).

The second is practical strategies as proposed by Nation (1990) and Gains and Redman (1986). It involves classroom review of the previously introduced vocabulary repeatedly as well as homework (i.e. classroom test, games, semantic maps, written repetition). It is

affirmed that repetition is meaningful in doing activities at the classroom (i.e. matching the words with pictures and completing the sentences) to help learners to memorize vocabulary as long as possible (Thornburry, 2004: 24).

The third strategy is training strategies as proposed by Cross (1991) and Allen (1983). The purpose of strategy training is to teach learners strategies for independent vocabulary learning (i.e. guessing meaning from context, word-building, dictionary use and keeping vocabulary notes. It is in line with the forth principle as offered by Linse (2005: 127) to keep vocabulary notebook. Moreover, Schmitt (1999: 111) offers a method to teach learners how to organize a vocabulary notebook. In other words, there are some strategies that can be used to teach vocabulary. This study is concerned with the use of pop song. The discussion in the subsequent section will be done with pop-songs.

There are many requirements of the effective teaching and learning vocabulary as presented below:

#### 1) The Teacher

Teachers as facilitators have an important role in the success of the process of English teaching and learning. The teacher should master the vocabularies that are taught. Besides, teacher should be able to create a comfortable learning environment, so that the students can learn well. In developing the material, teacher should consider the students' interest, need and ability.

#### 2) The Student

The students as the center in the teaching learning process are individuals who have

different characteristics and intelligences. Nation in Cameron (2001: 84) says that the vocabulary that is taught to the children should be repeated for several times. It is difficult for children to learn new words quickly, they need to practice regularly, consolidate and recycle words in different context. Furthermore, children will learn better, if their senses are involved in the process.

#### 3) The Material

Materials are the important parts of stimulus that influence students' motivation. The material should be designed to attract the students' interest and motivation. The activities in the learning process should stimulate the students to move actively so that the students can feel comfort.

#### 4) The Method and Technique

A method is a step-by-step description of a procedure of doing something which is based on a number of assumptions of an approach (Sugeng, 1997: 91). There are some methods in the teaching vocabulary, for example: Translation Method, Total Physical Response Method, and others. Sugeng (1997: 91) also states that a technique is a detailed description of actions that the learners and teacher do in a classroom interaction session. A technique contains the steps and actions that really happen in a classroom. According to Ur (1996: 63) there are different ways of presenting new vocabulary. In the following, different techniques of presenting the meaning of new vocabulary are shown:

- a) Concise definition
- b) Detailed description (appearance and qualities)

- c) Illustration (picture and object)
- d) Demonstration (acting and mime)
- e) Context (story or sentence in which the item occurs)
- f) Synonym and antonyms
- g) Translation

#### 5) The Media

Media in teaching learning process are used as a means of achieving the learning objectives. Media help the teacher in teaching a lesson in order that the teaching learning process will be more interesting. Children should learn the concrete words. Therefore, it is important to introduce the words by using the real object.

As mentioned before, one way of teaching vocabulary for children is by bringing the representative things such as: book pencils, rulers etc. However, it is impossible to bring “a plane, a car, a house” in the classroom. So that, media becomes the alternative way to solve it. The media can be visual media or audio visual media. Those medias are important to help convey meaning and to help pupils memorize new vocabulary. Media helps the teacher in teaching a lesson in order that the teaching learning process will be more interesting. Media can be in the form of printed media, still media, audio media, visual media, and audiovisual media. There are some criteria in choosing media used in the process of English teaching and learning. Sudjana and Rivai (2005: 4-5) list six criteria for the selection of media.

The criteria are shown:

- a) The media match the teaching objectives.
- b) The media support the content of teaching materials.
- c) The media are easy to be obtained.

- d) Teachers are able to use the media.
- e) There is time to use the media, and.
- f) They are relevant with students’ cognitive level.

According to Richard (2002) a song is a relatively short musical composition for the human voice, which features words or lyrics. Sometimes it has rhymes and uses a language style that is different from the language style which is used in a scientific or formal text. The words within a song are sung in particular tones, rhythms, speed and style.

A song usually is accompanied by music instruments, which perfect and beautify its performance. It means that the students simply enjoy hear the songs. It can be said that the need for the egocentric language is fulfilled partly through songs. The touch of music instruments sometimes makes a song have more emotion value than a poem. Because of the specially, more and more people can enjoy songs easier than they can enjoy poems.

Songs have rhymes and rhythms. They also use beautiful words and convey subjective feelings. Kamien (1997) stated that song is a relatively short musical composition for the human voice that is possibly accompanied by other musical instrument which features words or lyrics. A song is often employed in literature to refer to a lyric poem adapted to expression in music. This definition, then, supports the previous statement which declares that songs have rhymes and rhythms are considered as inevitable parts of poem.

A rhyme is more than an ornament in poetry or songs. It provides pleasing sense impression; it helps to establish stanza form; it is an aid in memorizing; and it

contributes to unity of poem or a song. A rhythm which is the uniform of recurrence (repetition) of beat or accent is the measured flow of words in verse or prose. It is most often established by a combination of accents and numbers of syllables. Song is an ideal vocabulary learning media for students. It is because song helps students remember the vocabulary easily.

One of many songs genres is pop song that comes from pop music (a term that originally derives from and abbreviation of "popular".) which originated in its modern form in 1950's, deriving from rock and roll.

Some teachers underestimate the value of songs in the classroom, whereas the repetitive nature of songs and rhythm mean a lot because it could help learners to learn vocabulary and rhythm of a language. The activity of hearing song, subconsciously will enrich learners' vocabulary. Lynch (2002) says, 'songs are usually directed to the native-speaking population so they usually contain contemporary vocabulary, idioms, and expressions.'

As we know the comprehension of vocabulary relies on strategies that permit one to understand words and store them, to commit them to memory.

Furthermore, the use of song in vocabulary teaching also helps the teacher in teaching English in a way that is readably absorbed, fun, and much less frustrating than standardized textbook instruction.

Norton (2005) states that teaching vocabulary through songs allows the students to learn vocabulary in alternate way, one is that is less threatening yet still provides the repetition needed to learn

new vocabulary. It also provides students a chance work with their musical intelligence. Since the goal of the lesson is to give students a foundation and a means to learn and apply new vocabulary words.

Some researchers have conducts the research on the use of song in teaching vocabulary. Songs as teaching medium is very effective especially when teachers have to present new material. Using songs could motivate students and make them feel relax during teaching and learning process.

Sonianingsih (2004) in her paper entitled 'The Correlation between Students' Interest in English Song with their Vocabulary Mastery' reports that students' interests in English songs could help their vocabulary building. She found that most of the respondents learn English through songs, because they believe the repetitive words in the songs could be memorized in some different ways. Furthermore, Domoner (1993) in his EFL journal recommended using song for teaching phonetic, grammar, vocabulary and speaking skills. In his research, he finds that the topic of teaching vocabulary through songs is very appealing. Students will find words easier to remember and will be motivated in the class. Songs cover all teachers and students need in teaching and learning a language, because it is the easier way in learning a new language.

Song has always played a big part of human's lives, beginning with child's birth and mothers singing lullabies to their children. Song brings emotions to life and it also serves as a testimony of people from any land or time, it speaks for us where words fail (Medina, 2002).

Nowadays, it is almost impossible to escape from song. It is used in films, advertisements, radio, and even song is played in most shops, restaurants, and other public places. Current technological inventions, such as the iPod, mobile phone and MP3 player enable people to enjoy their favorite music anywhere at any time.

It is believed that song can be one of very useful media for introducing new English words to increase the English foreign Language students' vocabulary. Some researchers have conducted the study on the use of song in teaching vocabulary. The content of song is not only for entertaining, but also can offer a new way in learning a language. Song is a natural way for people to learn a language. Playing song can set a positive mood of the day or the beginning of the classroom, or to maintain the positive attitude during the day ( Brewer, 2005).

Lozanov(1978) states that the atmosphere created by the song enhances the ability to remember new vocabularies. It is because people found it much easier to memorize something that is fun and melodic than normal sentence. Moreover, song helps sustain students' attention and concentration (Brewer, 2005). He also states that using song as a teaching medium could motivate students and make them feel much less frustrating than standardized textbook instruction and create a peaceful classroom environment. It is proven by Zatikasari (2008), who found a positive mood during the lesson, because songs for students are natural and fun. Also by using song, Mega (2011) found more pleasant and comfortable learning atmosphere despite the boring routine class, because they could sing

along the song in the song in the class. Thus song evokes positive emotions which can bring and increases student confidence in the language acquisition (Medina, 2002).

Song also contains some elements of language that is used in everyday communication; therefore a variety of new vocabulary, grammar, a wide range of accents and cultural aspects can be introduced in a natural way (Lynch, 2005). In line with Siskova (2008), song can be used to understand and produce language, remember words over time and be able to recall them readily, and also strategy development for coping with gaps in word knowledge, including coping with unknown words or unfamiliar uses of known words. Song, for some people, has become an element in their daily that could not be separated, especially to most young people. Through songs students are exposed to the authentic examples. In addition, Brown (2001: 258) states that authentic language and real-world tasks enable students to see the relevance of classroom activity to their long-term communicative goals.

This indicates that song is a subject of everyday communication and it is something that is present in people's lives intentionally and unintentionally. It can be very beneficial for the method of using songs to teach English vocabulary since it increases the possibility that students will come across the taught material comprehensible (Siskove, 2008). In line with Mega (2011) found students were curious about the meaning of the words in the song and makes them understand the lesson easier.

In other study, Bacha (2003), found that the students were more willing to

participate in an activity if incorporates playfulness. In line with Brewer (2005), playing song can motivate, inspire, and build students' enthusiasm. The intrinsic motivation seems to stimulate students feeling and give them the desire to learn. This finding validates Thornburry (2002), he states that the learners need to be actively involved in the learning process so that the learners can get the meaning, because memory of new words can be reinforced if they are used to express personally relevant meanings.

However, time and efforts are needed in gaining and understanding new vocabulary, moreover, in foreign acquisition. Anderson (1999) cited in Angliawati (2011), states that the acquisition of vocabulary need to be part of an overall listening improvement program. Song can be one way in improving listening ability. Since songs linger in daily life, students will experience the target language easily. It will sharpen their listening comprehension skill, whereas it could also enhance their vocabulary mastery. If it applies to their habitual, it could create a love to the language as one of lifelong learning characteristics (Brown, 2001: 429) which would be beneficial for their communication skill.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study is classified as experimental research. This research randomly divided the students into two groups: an experimental group and a control group. The two groups received different teaching media treatments. The experimental group had English pop song as treatment and the control group received the conventional media as

treatment. Furthermore, the pre-test was given at the beginning of the experiment before the treatment was begun. In addition, the post-test was given at the end of the treatment after the last treatment was given.

The instrument that is used to collect the data is an English vocabulary test. The English vocabulary test in this research is in the form of multiple choices. The test consists of 30 items and each item consists of 4 alternatives for each question. The test is intended to measure how much student improves their English vocabulary mastery. The distribution of the test can be seen as follow.

## 3. RESULT

The researcher presents each hypothesis and the data in this research analyzed with the help of SPSS 2000 SutrisnaHadi and YuniParmadiningsih edition. The test taken is *t-test*. In *t-test*, if the value of *t-observed* is higher than *t-table*, the alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) is accepted, and the null hypothesis ( $H_o$ ) is rejected. Hypothesis alternative ( $H_a$ ) is as follows. *There is a significant difference between vocabulary scores of students who are taught using English pop songs and those who are taught by using conventional technique.* The formulation used is *t-test*. The summary of the result is as follows.

Table 2: The Students Scores of Vocabulary Post Test in the Experimental class and the Control Class

Class	n	$\bar{X}$	SD
Experimental class	29	16.93	3.453
Control class	35	14.54	3.459

Table 2 shows that the mean score of the experimental group (16.93) after the treatment is higher than that of the control group (14.54). The t-test formula is applied to test whether there are significantly and different results of the two groups. The result of the t-test can be described in the following table.

Table 3: The Resume of the T-Test Result of Vocabulary

Variables	d. f	t-observe	t-table	Interpretation
Control class and Experimental class	62	2.572	1.99	$t_{observed} > t_{table}$ = significant

From the table above, it shows that t observed is 2.572, with degree of freedom 62 and the significant level 5%. Statistically, if t observed > than t table, the difference is significant. In this case, the t-observed is 2.572 and the t table is 1.999. It means that t observed > t table, so the alternative hypothesis is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected. It can be concluded that there is significant difference between vocabulary scores of the students who are taught by using English pop songs and those who are taught by using conventional technique.

It means media helps the teacher in teaching a lesson in order that the teaching learning process will be more

interesting. Media in teaching learning process are used as a means of achieving the learning objectives. In order to achieve the objective of learning vocabulary, the requirements of effective teaching and learning English vocabulary are adequately met.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the research in STKIP Muhammadiyah Pringsewu Lampung, in class I A and class IB, whereas the I A (experimental class) consist of 29 students and I B (control class) consist of 35 students. Moreover, it is found that there is significant difference between vocabulary scores of students who are taught using English pop songs and those taught by using conventional technique. It can be seen from the t-test result which is higher than t-table. In this case, the t-test observed is 2.457 and t-table is 1.99, so  $2.457 (t\text{-test}) > 1.99 (t\text{-table})$ .

English pop songs can give a stimulus to students to learn vocabulary. The use of English pop songs in classroom can improve the students' vocabulary scores. It is an attractive and effective medium in teaching and learning vocabulary, because it helps them to memorize the vocabulary easily. It can be seen from the gain score of the experimental group and control group. The mean score on the table of gain score shows that the mean score of the experimental group (16.93) is higher than the mean score of control group (14.54). The probability value is lower than the significance level ( $0.008 < 0.05$ ). So, the hypothesis proposed in the research can be accepted.



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