

In-Service Teachers' Perception on the Use of English Children'S Song to Enhance Vocabulary for Early Childhood

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ARTICLE

ABSTRACT

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This research purposes at exploring In-Service Teacher's Perception on the use of English Children's Song to Enhance Vocabulary for Early Childhood. This study uses qualitative method with descriptive approach. The data in this study are observation, interview and documentation. The source data came from two teachers in different school, SDN K and SDN S already be interviewed. The data were analyzed by using thematic. This study conveys three things result from two teachers' perception. The first, the characteristic of the song in English learning process for children. Perception of two teachers almost have same perception of characteristic of the song. To teach songs to children, songs must be adapted to the age of the child, songs that are happy, the words or sentences are not too long, and songs that contain children's lives. The second, English song can enhance vocabulary for children. Through the songs, children are easier to memorize and understand vocabulary, and it helps students to pronounce correctly. The third, English song can memorize vocabulary easily. Translating Indonesian children's songs into English can be a valuable instrument for improving vocabulary in a fun and engaging way.

INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, English language is considered as a foreign language and is included in the school curriculum. English is taught in almost all schools in Indonesia, from kindergarden, junior school, high school, and in the university. It is proven that English has become one of the subjects taught in elementary schools and even kindergartens, whether as a core subject or extracurricular activity (Miranti & Senny Hapsari, 2015) English is one of the subjects that must be taught to children. A fact, children who are learning English may experience stress due to their inability to understand it well. One of the obstacles for children in learning English is the lack of vocabulary they know, making it difficult for them to practice, communicate and speak. Therefore, teachers should understand this and find alternative ways or effective way to teach them (Sotardi, 2018). As mentioned above that one of the effective way in teaching vocabularies of English is through the use songs.

Currently, many teachers, educators, and even parents are teaching English songs to children, whether it's at school, at home, or in English language courses. It has become a common phenomenon where schools or teachers use songs to teach children and enhance their vocabulary in English. The problem is that teachers or educators directly teach English songs to children without knowing the songs and its meanings, which confuses the children. Based on the theory of Cooper et al., (2019) "Relate what you teach to what they already know in their own language. It means do not use the new language as the basic for teaching new concepts. Recognizing this issue, researcher wants to try using a method of transforming Indonesian children's songs into English. By transforming Indonesian children's songs into English, researcher will explore the understanding of teachers regarding the use of songs to enhance children vocabularies.

Early childhood education is fundamental in facilitating the linguistic development of young learners. The acquisition of vocabulary components are particularly crucial during this formative stage, as it lays the foundation for future language proficiency. Vocabulary is a crucial part of language learning. It is the foundation on which all other language skills are built. Early childhood is a critical period for vocabulary development. However, it should be acknowledged that teaching English to children poses many challenges and difficulties that need to be overcome with proper preparation. Through enjoyable actions, children can acquire language better because learning becomes natural to them, as these activities do not make them consciously aware that they are learning a language (Mejzini, 2016). Mejzini further complements that songs, rhymes, and chants are very valuable tools to explain them a foreign language. In fact, these are ways that assists children study in a great atmosphere without sense the pressure of studying foreign language.

According to Butler (2019) stated that vocabulary is considered a foundational element for language development. One of the effective ways in teaching vocabularies to young children is through the use of songs. Many varieties of media are used in learning English, include media song (A. W. K. Putri & Rustipa, 2023). English by using song is an excellent method to improve English, listening to music can help to learn more vocabulary quickly and it's easy to remember new word. Songs are catchy and fun, and they can help children learn new words in a memorable way. In addition, songs can provide children with opportunities to practice their pronunciation, and intonation, and learn new vocabularies.

By examining these perceptions, the study aims to provide valuable insights that can contribute to improving teachers' understanding and implementation of effective strategies for utilizing songs to enhance vocabulary development in early childhood education. Why is early childhood the right time to be taught a foreign language? Early childhood is a critical phase during which children experience their fastest growth in emotional, physical, cognitive, and language development (Er, 2013; Zeng et al., 2017). As Khumairo et al (2022) states that learning English about teachers' perception on using English children's songs as pedagogical tools in teaching English will assist teachers understand what needs to be improved from using songs pedagogically. Thus, this study aims to investigate in-service teachers' perceptions in using English children's songs to enhance vocabulary for early childhood.

METHOD

The type of this research is descriptive qualitative. Researcher believes that by using descriptive qualitative, it can describe in-service teacher's perception on use children song enhance vocabulary in early childhood. As Tracy (2020) states that group or one and one interview, in-

person or online participant observation, and textual analysis (on paper or electronic media) are all included under the broad theory of qualitative method. The researcher conducted a translation of an Indonesian children's song into English. The song is "*Sayang Semua*". Then there four meeting in the form of applying the song, which be sung by first grade children, SDN S and SDN K. There were two meetings which a teacher teaches the song, from the meetings, researcher wants to know how the teacher's perception of the use of songs can improve English vocabulary skills and their perceptions about translation Indonesian song to English. To obtain valid research data, researcher has done observation, interview, and documentation. Researcher observed how the teacher teaches a song in the class and how students respond. Researcher have interviewed two teachers from different school. They are Mrs. Vr and Mrs. N. both of them are from English education, but different university. The interview was main method to collect the data. Documentations are in the form of photos and voice recordings, the researcher also included the vocabulary proficiency assessment of each grade 1 student from SDN K and SDN S. This assessment was based on the assessment of teachers Mrs. N and Mrs. Vr. They assessed based on their observations, the results of their observations and the results of the each student in learning English in current semester. The data was analyzed by using a thematic analysis approach. Qualitative data analysis involves tasks such as preparing and organizing the data, as well as describing and presenting the data, among other activities Marshal and Rosman (2016). Triangulation utilized to ensure the accuracy of the data collected for this study. Samsu (2017) defines that triangulation is the technique used to test data reliability by utilizing external factors or elements beyond the data itself for the purpose of verification or comparison.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In collecting the data result, researcher obtained in-service teachers' perceptions in using English children's song to enhance vocabulary for early child. In collecting the data result, the researcher obtained in-service teachers' perceptions in using English children's song to enhance vocabulary for early children.

Indicators	Question (number)
English	1,2,3,4
English song	5,6,7,8,9
Translation song	10, 11
Vocabulary	12,13,14
Implementation of song	15,16
Challenge	17,18
Atmosphere	19

Relevant	20, 21, 22
Satisfaction	23, 24, 25
Responses of students	26, 27
Suggestion	28

Table 1: The indicators of teacher's perceptions

Through several indicators that have been described, observed and analyzed in observations and interview, the researcher concluded three major result about teacher perceptions in using songs to enhance vocabulary.

1. The Characteristic of songs in English learning process

Using English songs with children is among the most effective methods for teaching English. Incorporating songs into the English learning process for children is backed by abundant resources and can greatly enhance their language development in an enjoyable way. Employing songs in education is crucial; they serve as valuable tools for teachers and educators to facilitate learning practices. Songs in the classroom foster a joyful and engaging learning environment. English songs typically feature simple language, which aids elementary students in learning English effortlessly. Furthermore, English songs can increase students' enthusiasm for learning, encouraging them to take a more active role in their education.

Moreover, a successful learning approach involves the fact that most children derive pleasure from singing and generally respond positively when songs are used in class. However, there are numerous additional benefits to using songs beyond mere enjoyment. Songs can introduce variety into the daily classroom routine, which stimulates interest and focus, thereby sustaining classroom motivation and potentially enhancing students' academic performance. Particularly through group singing, songs can foster a relaxed and informal atmosphere that reduces the classroom's intimidating nature. By alleviating anxiety, songs can increase students' engagement and enthusiasm for learning the target language. Since students often perceive songs as entertainment rather than educational tools, they find learning English through songs enjoyable. (Millington, 2011).

The songs taught to children are not just any songs. There are several or characteristics that are important for a teacher to consider. Mrs. Vr emphasized that

[Of course children's songs, then the sentences are short, easy to pronounce and cheerful].

[Pastinya lagunya anak-anak, kemudian kalimatnya pendek, gampang diucapkan dan riang].

Whereas, Mrs. N also argued that character of the song as follow

[Happy song, not too long, easy to remember. The songs must contain about color, animal names, family, daily activities and etc].

[Lagu yang gembira, tidak terlalu panjang, mudah untuk diingat. Isi lagu harus tentang warna, nama-nama binatang, keluarga, kegiatan sehari-hari, dan lain-lainnya].

In addition, Mrs. N added that the song taught to children must be adapted to the child's age because appropriate songs can stimulate the child's development.

The songs used for children should be relevant, the songs chosen are appropriate for today's children. The most essential thing is children's song for children, not for adults. The songs should reflect the daily lives, experiences, and perspectives of children. The content should be relatable to their world to make it easier to understand and enjoy. The lyrics and language used in songs should be suitable for children's level of understanding and vocabulary. The use of words and phrases that match their point of language development makes songs easier to digest. Mrs. Vr statements that:

[I think the songs taught are suitable for children. They really like the song. They really can practice because they experience it every day. They can even count from 1 to 20 in English].

[Saya pikir lagu yang diajarkan adalah lagu yang cocok untuk anak-anak. Mereka benar-benar suka lagu itu. Mereka dapat mempraktikkannya karena mereka mengalaminya setiap hari. Bahkan mereka dapat menghitung dari nomor satu sampai dua puluh].

The character of the song found is that the song be able to affect the atmosphere of the classroom or the condition where the students feel enthusiasm, because the song can make the atmosphere more comfortable and less stressful. Using songs in the learning is one of the unique teaching techniques and so boring the students while Teaching English songs to students has a positive impact, in that they have a high interest and they find the class fun. With high interest and a fun class, it is very certain that students can easily master the vocabulary they have just learned. In addition to high interest, they also felt the class was different, the words were easy to remember, the use of movement made the class more excited to learn.

The above statements are Mrs.Vr of perception, coupled with Mrs. N of perception who said that yes, there is a difference in atmosphere when teaching English through songs or teaching English without songs. There is a significant difference learning that it is easier for students to accept the material given by the teacher.

Learning English through songs can be a fun and effective experience for students. Their response to this learning can be very positive. Students may be very happy and eager to learn because songs add an element of fun to the learning process. They can feel emotionally engaged with the music, making learning English more enjoyable. Mrs. Vr conveys related statement as follow:

[Very happy, at the beginning they were very amazed, it turns out that this song can be sung in English. So they were amazed and happy, and gained knowledge too].

[Senang sekali, di awal mereka sangat takjub, ternyata lagu ini bisa dinyanyikan dalam bahasa Inggris. Jadi mereka kagum dan senang, dan mendapatkan pengetahuan juga].

2. Enhance vocabulary for students

Through observations and interviews conducted by researchers, it was found that English children song can improve vocabulary skills. This is corroborated by Gushendra (2017), he suggests that spending songs can increase student's vocabulary mastery and give enthusiasm to the students learning. The theory that English songs is one of the media that is believed to enhance children's English learning ability especially in vocabulary development. Ms. N also perceived that.

[Yes of course, because songs are one of the best media for remembering vocabulary. It is easier to remember their vocabulary.

[Ya pasti, karena lagu adalah salah satu media paling baik untuk mengingat kosakata. Ini lebih mudah mengingat kosa kata mereka].

Songs play a crucial role in English language teaching, especially for children who enjoy engaging with English through play and sensory experiences. Incorporating songs and rhymes into language programs enhances their effectiveness. It is essential for teachers to prioritize the happiness and satisfaction of their students by selecting enjoyable songs and activities (Džanić & Pejić, 2016).

Engaging in English songs helps students integrate with the language, contributing significantly to improving their skills, particularly in vocabulary enrichment, listening, speaking, and pronunciation. Regularly singing English songs can directly enhance pronunciation skills as students repeatedly practice saying words from their repertoire, progressively refining their English pronunciation over time.

Vocabulary is crucial element in learning English. It helps children to communicate. By mastering a lot of vocabulary, students can understand English sentences. As Mrs. N said that

[It is important because with a large vocabulary, it is easier to understand sentences in English].

[Ini sangat penting karena dengan kosa kata yang banyak, lebih mudah memahami kalimat dalam bahasa Inggris].

Teaching English activities to improve English vocabulary English vocabulary through song media at SD W and SD S can provide a good stimulus for teacher as the teaching staff and students as the learners. Moreover, the translation of Indonesian children's songs into English is very effective in teaching English vocabulary. Students easily memorize and remember new English vocabulary. Song media is one of the alternatives in carrying out learning and teaching activities that are fun, cheerful and easy to understand. It cannot be denied that song media has a huge influence in developing vocabulary skills for students at SD W and SD S.

The use of songs in teaching vocabulary to students gives teachers satisfaction. Teachers are very happy and enjoy the teaching process in the classroom. Teachers can feel that students enjoy singing English songs. The songs taught are songs with very easy words, so students can quickly understand new words. Both interviewers stated that the students love singing and that it makes it easier for them to learn English through songs.

As commonly recognized, speech encompasses several critical components such as intonation, stress, rhythm, vowels, consonants, and distinctions between voiced and unvoiced

sounds. Consequently, students encounter various challenges when learning a second language, particularly when songs are used as a medium. The difficulties that arise when listening to English songs primarily revolve around aspects of speech, specifically pronunciation features such as the usage of vowels and consonants in song lyrics (Muhamad & Rahmat, 2020). In addition, there are challenges that Mrs. V and Mrs. N said, namely how to teach songs to children so that they can be well received. According to them, they have to be more creative and innovative in teaching English songs even though it is fun. Another challenge is related to the lack of supporting equipment, such as projectors, screens and sound equipment.

3. Assists children to memorize vocabulary easily

Based on observations and interviews, the researcher discovered that translating Indonesian songs into English is an effective method for enhancing students' vocabulary. English songs help children memorize vocabulary effortlessly. When learning English through songs, students engage in activities that aid in memorization by reciting words or memorizing song lyrics. This not only boosts their enthusiasm but also encourages group activities, fostering collective interest in learning through songs. (M. W. Putri et al., 2022). The students are very happy and it is very easy for them to sing the song “*sayang semua*” in English, because they already know the song in Indonesian. The tune, rhythm and tempo are the same, so this makes it more fun for them to learn English. The song “*sayang semua*” is a song that has repeated words, making it easier for students to memorize and understand the vocabulary they are learning. What's more, the song has simple words, even they can use or communicate in their daily lives, whether they are at school, or at home.

English songs enhance students' thoroughness in listening, comprehending vocabulary within lyrics, and understanding song meanings. The vocabulary acquired through songs tends to stick longer because songs can be replayed multiple times, in different settings and situations. Repetition of songs helps students improve their pronunciation naturally, thereby enhancing their overall language skills automatically. Mrs. V also gave her perception that

[There are words that are repeated, so this makes their pronunciation better]
[Adanya kata-kata yang di ulang-ulang, sehingga ini membuat mereka mengucapkannya semakin baik].

It is very evident that the presence of lyrics or repeated words makes children memorize their vocabulary even more. In the song *sayang semuanya* in English *love everybody* has words that are repeated. Here are the lyrics of the song

One and one I love my mother
Two and two I love my father too
Three and three I love brother sister
One two and three I love everybody

The purpose of repetition is to simplify and help children to memorize the lyrics easily. The song above presents repeated words such as *one and one, two and two, three and three*. In addition, there are repeated words such as the word I, and the word love. Thus the selection of songs must be done appropriately because the consideration is not just learning English through songs, but also considering the efficiency and speed of learning to memorize words.

Furthermore, songs utilized in the learning process should be frequently repeated to aid students in easily memorizing them and understanding the new vocabulary they acquire from the songs. This repetition not only facilitates the acquisition of new vocabulary but also helps students learn how to pronounce these words correctly. By repeating songs, students can retain vocabulary in their memories for longer periods. This allows them to practice using the vocabulary they learn from songs in everyday conversations with others.

In the observation class where the teacher taught the translated song, it was apparent that this method was more effective in improving the children's vocabulary. Even before starting to teach the song in the second meeting, some of the children started singing the song *sayang semua* in English. They sang a song with joy and enthusiasm. This means that without being told to sing first, they had already started singing in English. Songs that have words make it very easy for children to pronounce the lyrics, even their pronunciation is correct. In interview also, Mrs. V delivers her statement as follows

[They are very enthusiastic, besides being enthusiastic they are also happy, sometimes singing is a change. Usually they sing in Indonesian, oh now they sing English, and they also remember the words]

[Mereka sangat antusias, selain antusias mereka juga senang. Kadang menyanyi adalah sebuah perubahan. Mereka biasanya dulu bernyanyi dalam bahasa Inggris, oh sekarang mereka bernyanyi dalam bahasa Inggris, dan mereka juga mudah mengingat kata-katanya]

Whereas, Mrs. N also states that:

This is very good for introducing Indonesian to English, and yes, of course because it is easier for children to remember and memorize their vocabulary.

From the two statements above, it can be concluded that translating Indonesian children's songs into English facilitates easier memorization of vocabulary for children. The repetition of these translated songs helps reinforce vocabulary retention, making it easier for children to remember. Translating children's songs from Indonesian to English provides a holistic language learning experience. It combines the joy of music, cultural exposure, and contextual understanding, making the process enjoyable and effective for expanding vocabulary.

Translating Indonesian children's songs into English can be a valuable tool for improving vocabulary in a fun and engaging way. Songs provide a context for learning new words and phrases. By translating the lyrics, children can understand the meaning of the words in both languages, helping them make connections and expand their vocabulary within a meaningful context. Songs often express emotions and tell stories. Translating the lyrics helps children understand how feelings and narratives are conveyed through language, enhancing their emotional intelligence and language comprehension.

CONCLUSION

The characteristic of the song in English learning. The song must be children song, happy song, easy words, not too long, and make student more active in the class. Children like singing, so

with using song, they can learn English fun and enjoyable. Using songs in the learning process, students unconsciously realize that they are learning English which increases their vocabulary. After all, the song is the children's favorite and through the lyrics and rhythm students will get a fun learning and motivate them more enthusiasm to learn.

English songs can indeed be utilized to enhance students' vocabulary and improve their speaking skills. Beyond vocabulary enrichment, the use of English songs also fosters the development of various other talents among students, including writing, reading, listening, pronunciation, and understanding meanings. Thus, integrating English songs into learning activities offers a holistic approach to language development.

English song can assist children to memorize vocabulary easily. The translation of Indonesian children's songs into English is very effective in teaching English vocabulary. Students easily memorize and remember new English vocabulary because they already understand in Indonesian, so they easily remember and pronounce it in English. Song “sayang semuanya” contain lyrics or words that are repeated, so this makes it easy for children to memorize and remember them.

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