

**THE USE OF SONG LYRICS TO IMPROVE  
STUDENTS' VOCABULARY MASTERY AT KINDERGARTEN  
ONE OF TOWN FOR KIDS PRESCHOOLS**

**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

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## ***Abstract***

The purpose of this research is to improve students' vocabulary mastery of kindergarten one students of Town for Kids Preschool by using song lyrics. The method of this research is collaborative classroom action research. The researcher acted as the teacher and the class English teacher acted as the observer during the teaching and learning process. The research is conducted in three cycles. The instruments used to collect the data are observation checklist form, vocabulary checklist form and individual test checklist form. The result of the research shows improvement of the student' interest and understanding in learning the vocabulary of body part. The second cycle is related to the improvement of the student' respond and understanding in learning the vocabulary in the song before. The third cycle is related to the improvement of the student' vocabulary mastery. The result of this research showed that the students' vocabulary mastery is improving a lot and it brings remarkable effects to the students' speaking ability. The use of song lyrics in teaching vocabulary to the preschooler help the students to learn and memorize the vocabulary and sentence structure faster and easier.

***Keywords: Song Lyrics, Improve, Vocabulary Mastery***

## **INTRODUCTION**

As a kindergarten teacher in Town for Kids preschool, the researcher found out that children could learn English fast if the teaching media and teaching technique were appropriate for their age and their ability. Since English is taught as the main subject in Town for Kids, all lesson are fully delivered in English language. The system of the school does not allow any translation during the teaching and learning process. No part of the language will be translated into Indonesian to the students. English is taught as the target language. So, to help the students to understand the lessons, the researcher needs to use an appropriate media and technique at anytime. As they are still in a very young age, only around 4 to 5 years old, the use of audio visual teaching media and body gesture are the most suitable media to help them to understand the language.

The researcher found out that most students in her class face the difficulties to speak English during the school hours. The students still mix the language with their mother tongue while the system of the school doesnot allow the students to speak in another language except English. The researcher sees this problem as the result of having insufficient amount of vocabulary which leads to the failure of the students to speak in full sentences in English. Since vocabulary cannot be separated from other elements of English teaching and English learning, it influences the students' ability especially in their speaking abilities. Without a proportional amount of vocabulary, a student will get trouble to speak English and in following the lessons in the class.

In order to solve the problem above, the researcher would like to conduct a classroom action research focused on the vocabulary

teaching process by using song lyrics as the teaching media because it is considered to be an effective and suitable media to introduce the vocabulary to the kindergarten children. Since song contains rhythm and music, it has the power to influence the process of learning and thinking. As Jennifer Lynn (2012) said in her book entitled “Music, Mood and Memory”, music will trigger memories and emotions, emotions will trigger a person to think of a song or a memory, and a memory will be formed using music and emotions as a base. Further, she said that songs are long, and cannot happen instantaneously, but instead are spread out over (conceivably) several minutes. In order for the brain to process the song, it is immediately stored as a long-term memory, as short-term memories are fleeting. Due to the shared neural pathways that connect memory and music, it is a common occurrence to have a piece of music “stuck” in one’s head. The repetition of a piece of music – or of a piece of a piece of music – can remain inside the brain for days on end.

Most children enjoy singing songs, and they can often be a welcome change from the routine of learning a foreign language. For the teacher, using songs in the classroom can also be a nice break from following a set curriculum. Songs can be taught to any number of students and even those teachers with the most limited resources can use them effectively. As Murphey (1992) cited in Neil T. Millington (2011) said that songs can play an important role in the development of language in young children learning a second language. As songs can help young learners improve their listening skills and pronunciation, therefore potentially helping them to improve their speaking skills.

Songs can also be useful tools in the learning of vocabulary, sentence structures, and sentence patterns. Songs can provide the opportunity for vocabulary practice. They are usually based around a theme or topic that can provide the context for vocabulary learning. As Neil T. Millington (2011) said in his book “Using songs effectively to Teach English to Young Learners”, songs can bring variety to the everyday classroom routine and create a

relaxed and informal atmosphere that makes the classroom a nonthreatening. Furthermore, he explained that the variety created stimulates interest and attention, which can help maintain classroom motivation, thereby helping learners to reach higher levels of achievement.

Besides, songs, in the form of particular choral singing, can reduce anxiety and help increase student interest and motivate them to learn the target language. Students often think of songs as entertainment rather than study and therefore find learning English through songs fun and enjoyable. Therefore, teaching that combines music with language arts instruction can be the most powerful stimulus for student engagement precisely because it speaks directly to their emotions while still allowing them to use their brains to analyze it. Besides, it makes learning easier because of the musical composition and not only plain words lacking music and rhythm. Through echoic memory, sounds are one of the most important parts of forming new recollections. Memories then bring forth the emotions that were felt at the time the event was being recorded in the brain. According to an article in Walden University, music helps to develop the brain's language skills. Singing can help young children improve their vocabulary and pronunciation. When music is taught in a classroom setting, it helps children exercise good listening skills.

Based on the above discussion, the researcher is interested to use the song lyrics because it helps the researcher to get closer to the children, to motivate children to participate - even shy one and create a lively atmosphere in the language classroom. Besides, it also add fun to learning and enlarge the vocabulary background of children. When the children sing the song, they will learn the meaning and pronunciation of the vocabularies appear in the song by looking at the picture or movement of the song.

Generally, the term “vocabulary” is defined as the knowledge of meanings of words. As Elfrieda.H. Hiebert and Michael.L.Kamil (2005:3) says that knowledge of words comes in at least two forms, receptive that which we can understand or recognize (listening or reading)

and productive, the vocabulary we use when we write or speak. Vocabulary plays a significant role in supporting the mastery of language skills such as listening, reading, speaking, and writing which are called by four skills of language. In order to communicate well in language, students should acquire an adequate number of words and should know how to use them accurately.

Teaching vocabulary is a complex task because it includes the meaning of the words and the pronunciation. Nation (1990:51) as cited in Cameron (2001: 85) listed basic media and techniques by which teachers can explain the meaning of new words, all of which can be used in the young learner classroom, such as : picture cards, real object, audio aids , gesture, photographs and pictures that students draw. The researcher of this research uses a simple song lyrics in the nursery song in the form of audio visual as the main teaching media to teach the noun words and the simple verbs related to the body part and its function. Besides, the researcher also use body gesture and picture card as the support of this reserach. As Larsen (2000:27) says that vocabulary is acquired more naturally if students use it in full sentences, rather than memorizing word lists.

There are some steps of teaching vocabulary. First, choose a list of words to focus on that's an integral part of the students' existing curriculum, include words that students find in their everyday lives, provide vocabulary words that appropriate with their age. Second, motivate students by creating rewards, games, puzzles and other fun activities, mix a variety of activities centered on vocabulary to reach a broader range of students. Third, model proper use of vocabulary words by using language creatively and with gusto and have fun with your own vocabulary and students will want to have fun with theirs. Fourth, create a word wall where students write new and interesting vocabulary words and then refers to the wall often during class so students become familiar with it and its purpose. Fifth, quiz and test the students on their vocabulary

words, disguise the purpose, learning vocabulary of the quiz, explain that quizzes and tests only help the teacher know how well the students have been taught.. Sixth, revisit old vocabulary words often, bring them up casually in class and on quizzes. Tell students that learning does not end after the test. It is important for them to recall vocabulary words.

Nation (1990:51) as cited in Cameron (2001: 85) listed basic media and techniques by which teachers can explain the meaning of new words, all of which can be used in the young learner classroom. The foreign language teacher can use the picture cards to help the students to understand the new vocabulary being taught to them. They will be able to get the word meaning by looking at the picture cards. By bringing the real objects, the foreign language teacher can explore the vocabulary deeper and wider by asking the students to identify and describe the object shown by the teacher. Besides, it become more attractive because it is in three dimensions. Children can touch and see the real size, color, shape and the function of the object shown to them. Third, there are many audio media for teaching vocabulary to the students, such as radio, music or song, tape, MP3 player. Those are good teaching media and it is suitable for the students who have a strong musical intelligence. They are sensitive to nonverbal sounds and are very much aware of tone, pitch, and timbre.

Musically intelligent students have the ability to produce and appreciate music. These learners think in sounds, rhythms, and patterns. They often respond to music by tapping their feet, tapping a pencil, or complimenting or criticizing what they hear. Many of these learners are also extremely sensitive to environmental sounds (e.g., crickets, running water, bells, horns). Using rhythm, chanting, and songs with these students can increase their attention and interest while motivating them to learn. Even, the students that love music, can learn and memorize the lesson faster because they can drive the students attention to the teacher and the lesson.

When the vocabulary being introduced to the students is not the noun but the verb, than using gesture can be one way to explain the meaning of the word. By performing the word, students will understand the meaning of the verb. When we ask students to respond physically, the activity is very much like what happened when one is learning one's mother tongue. When students have observed an action of touching, for example- and have wondered what the action is called in English, it is not difficult to teach them the word touch. For mastery of the word, we can then ask the class to perform it. Teachers can bring some photographs to introduce the new vocabulary to the students. Or ask the students to bring their own photographs. By using the photograph, students will learn the vocabulary in context because it is related to their life. Besides, they can see the real pictures and explore more words from it.

Many teachers like to use pictures the students themselves have made. Such pictures have certain advantages. They cost little or nothing because you only need a paper, pencil or crayons only. They are available even in places where no other pictures can be found. When there is no pictures available, you can straight forward ask your students to draw it themselves. They do not require space for storing and filling as pictures from other sources do. The students can take home the pictures they draw so the teacher does not need to prepare a place to keep it. Sometimes students who are poor language-learners can draw well. Exercises which require drawing will give such students a chance to win praise, and the praise may help those students to learn. When someone has drawn a pictures of a scene, he knows the meaning of the English words that the teacher will use while talking about parts of his scene. The meaning are in his mind before he is given the English word.

Songs are everywhere. Nowadays, it is difficult to find kindergartens that do not use songs in language teaching because using song lyrics is one of the effective way to teach vocabulary to children. Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences

cites music as the first intelligence to emerge in young learners (Gardner, 2006). Many young children appear to be naturally inclined to hum or to sing a tune so it is beneficial to build upon their musical interests and enhance their literacy development simultaneously. Children naturally learn and enjoy songs in their first language. Besides, songs use melody, strong rhythm and simple vocabulary that can arouse children's interest and attention. They set up a situation where children learn and remember the target language unconsciously. Singing song eases the children to learn the lyrics because it contains words and phrases that have a memorable rhythm and end in the same sound and with a musical effect.

Focusing on the lyrics of a song can appeal to a child's linguistic intelligence. Literacy is naturally developed through music. The use of songs give a lot of advantages in language teaching. As Antar Abdellah (2010:52,53) stated that "Songs and rhythms have always been a part of children's play and are part of the natural way children develop their first language". Song Lyrics can be helpful for learning English as a foreign language, as well, and they have the added benefit of introducing students to important aspects of the cultures of English-speaking countries.

## **METHOD**

In this research, the researcher used a classroom action research (CAR). The four broad phases in this research cycle are planning (for doing the research), implementing/ acting (application), observing (to see how the process of the treatment), reflecting ( study what the students have done and affect the students' vocabulary improvement)

### **Planning**

In this stage, the researcher designed a lesson plan and prepared the video song of "Eyes, eyes, eyes" which are going to be used and implemented in the class. The researcher also prepared the written song lyrics in a piece of manila card. Besides, the researcher prepared a camera, an observation form, a

vocabulary checklist form and a scoring table form as the assessment tools (see appendices). The observation form was filled by the collaborator teacher during the teaching learning process. The collaborator teacher also took video of the students while they were singing or demonstrating the movement in the song. The collaborator made a record of certain important event if it is needed.

### Acting

In this step, the researcher acted as a teacher to teach the lesson that has already been prepared. The researcher was helped by a collaborator English teacher to observe the classroom situation. The researcher presented the material in the lesson plan to the students in the classroom step by step as what has been explained in the frame of concept above. One lesson plan is for two meetings in a week which take 30 minutes/meeting.

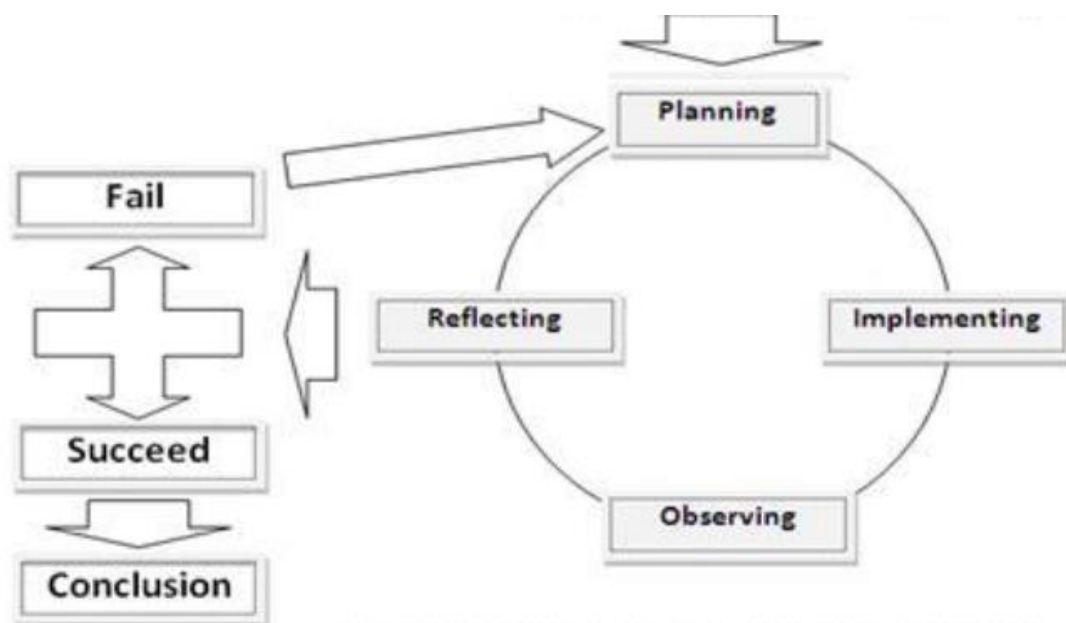
### Observing

The researcher will gather data through regular observation with the collaborator teacher about all activities in teaching and learning activities happened in the class. The

results of observation were written in observation form. Besides, children's ability in mastering the vocabulary appear in the song was recorded in the vocabulary checklist form. After the lesson plan has all been implemented to the class, the researcher did an evaluation by checking the observation form and vocabulary checklist form.

### Reflecting

The researcher analyzed the result of the observation gathered to reflect to the next cycle. On this stage, the researcher paid attention to the result between the planning and the action stage. As explained in before, the next cycle or stage was conducted when the expected behaviour has failed to be achieved which mean the students' achievement are poor, meaning 50% - 80% of the students, the researcher re do the teaching by using the new lesson plan. But if the students' achievement are good, meaning 70% of the total of students in the class, there will be no new lesson plan. The result of the reflection would be used to determine what should be done in the next cycle.



Adapted from Kemmis & McTaggart (1992)

**Model 1. Action Research Cycle**

## RESEARCH FINDING

The research was done from August 5th until August 19th, 2014. The subject of this action research is a single classroom containing 18 students of Kindergarten One of Town for Kids Preschool Pontianak in the school year 2014/2015. The technique of data collecting in this research are the observation and measurement techniques. The tools of data collecting are observation form, vocabulary checklist form and scoring table form.

The researcher analyzes all data gathered

from the observation form, vocabulary checklist form and scoring table form by using certain indicators. There are eight vocabularies of the body part and the function of the body part that the students should master. The researcher fills the vocabulary checklist form from the recording taken while the students do a group performance and the score that the students got from the worksheet given. Besides, the researcher also use observation form with some indicators as shown in the observation form below.





**Table 1. Observation Form**

No	Indicators	Total of students		
		1st Cycle	2nd Cycle	3rd Cycle
1.	Showing interest to the song	7	17	17
2.	Singing the song	6	15	17
3.	Responding by correct gesture	5	13	17
4.	Sing the song with the clear pronunciation	-	-	16
5.	Speak in full English sentences	-	-	14

To record the total score from all students, the researcher will summarize the score in the scoring table form. The average percentage of the students' vocabulary mastery capability from the individual test and the observation

data from every meeting during the teaching and learning process that gather in the vocabulary checklist form also categorized into poor at the first cycle with the qualification shown at the table below.

**Table 2. First Cycle Scoring Table Form**





Number of correct answer	Classification	Symbol	Number of students
7-8	Excellent		-
5-6	Good		4
3-4	Fair		8
0-2	Poor		6



The result of the worksheet given at the second cycle showed that the students' vocabulary mastery capability improved a lot. It can be

seen from the total of the correct answer from each students. It was categorized into good with the qualification as follow:

**Table 3. Second Cycle Scoring Table Form**

Number of correct answer	Classification	Symbol	Number of students
7-8	Excellent		2
5-6	Good		9
3-4	Fair		4
0-2	Poor		3

### Discussion

In the first cycle, the situation of the class was so silent because the students were so calm and most of them just sat down and seldom sang the song and move their body along the music. There are only some students that participated in singing the song. Some also pointed to the wrong body part while they were singing this song. At the beginning of the lesson, there were only some students that answered teachers' questions correctly when the teacher asked them about some of the name of body part. Besides, most students could not mention the function of certain body part. They only listened to the song and seldom sang. The result of the observation above derived to a conclusion that the students' vocabulary mastery in this cycle was not really good yet. Besides, the average percentage of the students' vocabulary mastery capability from the individual test and the observation data from every meeting during the teaching and learning process that gather in the vocabulary checklist form also categorized into poor

In this second cycle the students looked more excited in following the activity and the classroom's atmosphere became more lively than the situation in the first cycle. Besides, most of the students participated in this activity and show their enthusiasm in singing and performing the movement of the song. In

addition, the students made a great improvement in their vocabulary mastery this time because most of them could point to the correct part of the body and sang the song with more clear pronunciation. Besides, most students could do the matching activity correctly. The result of the observation above derived to a conclusion that the students' vocabulary mastery in the second cycle was improving. Besides, the result of the worksheet given showed that the students' vocabulary mastery capability improved a lot. It categorized into good.

In the third cycle, most students was able to sing the song with the correct pronunciation and demonstrate the movement correctly. The students looked so excited in singing and performing the song. Besides, the students was able to mention the function of each body part with the correct pronunciation and correct sentences. The result of the observation above derived to a conclusion that the students' vocabulary mastery was improving and was categorized good.

At the end of the research the researcher concluded that the use of song lyrics is very effective in teaching vocabulary to the preschooler. It is proved by the final result of this research that the students' vocabulary mastery and the speaking skill are getting better after the researcher applied this treatment and it was shown by the result of the

each cycle. The students learnt more vocabularies from the song that the researcher used, especially the vocabularies related to the name of the body part and its function. As the result, the children's speaking skills are improving, too. By mastering more vocabulary, the children have a better speaking skill. Besides, most students in this class interested with this song. They enjoyed this activity very much.

The students made a good progress when the researcher used the song as the teaching media to teach the students about the part of body and its function. Although the teaching was done thrice a week, they made a significant progress in every cycle, from the first week until the third week. The result in the first cycle showed that the students' achievement was poor, but it was getting better after the second and third meeting. The song that the researcher used can attract the students' attention and gave positive impacts to the teaching learning activity during that three weeks. The students learnt to sing the song in with the correct pronunciation and learnt the meaning of words that appear in the song. Besides, at the end of the teaching activity the students could recognize the name of each body part and its function.

The researcher found out some strength of using song lyrics in teaching vocabulary to the preschooler as follows: (1).The researcher can get closer to the children;(2).It motivates children to participate - even shy one and create a lively atmosphere in the language classroom;(3).It adds fun to learning and enlarge the vocabulary background of children;(4).When the children sing the song, they will also learn the meaning and pronunciation of the vocabularies appear in the song by looking at the picture or movement of the song;(5).It helps stimulating the children's brain to learn the words faster and easier.

There are few weaknesses of using song lyrics as the teaching media as follows: (1). For the children that do not like to sing, they do not want to sing the song seriously;(2).This research can not be done by a single person only. As it is a classroom action

research ( CAR ), the data that the researcher got are not from the worksheet only, but also from the daily observation during the teaching and learning process. Without any assistance from the collaborator teacher, it is hard to gather the data of the students' achievement. There must be somebody that help the researcher to record the students' performance in the observation form and camera while the researcher doing the research in the class.

Finally, the researcher concluded that the use of song lyrics in teaching vocabulary to the kindergarten students to improve the students' vocabulary mastery is proven to be one of the effective way for teaching vocabulary to the young learner. The students learnt more new vocabularies which is useful for their daily conversation and knowledge.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

### **Conclusion**

The use of song lyrics in teaching vocabulary to the kindergarten one students is considered to be one of the effective way. It can be seen from the final result of the treatment. The result of the treatment given to the students in the first cycle was poor but it improved when the researcher used the same treatment to the students in the second and third cycle. The students made many improvements in some aspect of learning vocabulary, such as their vocabulary mastery, pronunciation and fluency, reading and speaking skills, too. The students' vocabulary mastery is improving and it brings a great impact to their speaking skill. By having more vocabularies, the children become more confident to speak in a full English sentence now. They do not mix the language with their mother tongue when they tried to answer the researcher's questions about the function of body part.

### **Suggestion**

Finally, at the end of this research, the researcher would like to suggest other readers or researchers to conduct a classroom action research whenever they find a problem with the students they teach to solve the problem. The researcher believe by conducting a

classroom action research, the researcher can overcome the learning difficulties faced by the students. If the problem is about the language mixing, then the researcher can try to improve their vocabulary and speaking skills by using song lyrics. Song lyrics can be one of the effective media because while the students are learning about the vocabulary in the song, they will also learn about the pronunciation and sentence structure. So their speaking skill is also improving.

When the students have sufficient numbers of vocabulary, it will help them to construct the sentences without mixing them with their mother tongue. The researcher recommends other English teachers to apply the song lyrics in teaching the preschoolers because it can attract the students' attention and create a lively classroom atmosphere. Besides, song can help the students to learn and memorize new vocabulary easier and faster.

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