Using English Songs to Learn Vocabulary

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Abstract

In language learning, media plays an important role to learn vocabulary. The role of learning media is a way to ease in English learning, and one of the learning media is song. This research aimed to find out the students’ reasons in learning vocabulary through listening to English songs, and the students’ strategies in listening to English songs to learn vocabulary. To accomplish the objective of the study, the researcher used qualitative data. The research was conducted at a private Islamic University in Yogyakarta. This research involved four students from batch 2017 as the participants. In collecting the data, the researcher used in-depth interview in this study. The finding presented four categories of the students’ reasons to improve vocabulary through listening English songs namely; creating fun learning, creating easy memory, and creating easy understanding. In addition, the second finding presented three strategies in listening to English songs to learn vocabulary. The first is cognitive strategies including taking note, reading the songs’ lyrics, and finding the meaning of new vocabulary. The second is metacognitive strategies including sticking new vocabulary on the wall, and the last is memory strategies including remembering new vocabulary.

Keywords: vocabulary, learning media, English song
The Background of the Study

Vocabulary is an important aspect in language learning. Harmon, Wood, & Keser, (2009) as cited in Linse (2005) stated that learners’ vocabulary development is an important aspect of their language development. In English as a foreign language learning, vocabulary is items that play a vital role in all language skills (Nation, 2011). If the people do not know a lot of vocabulary, they will not be able to communicate with others. Especially in English, the students need a lot of vocabulary. It will ease to communicate with other people in the world. The students have to master the vocabulary well in order to make them understand. Vocabulary is an essential component learning in language learning. In relation to this, Wilkins (2002) stated that without grammar very little can be conveyed; without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed. The most important point is that the students should master vocabulary to learn a language successfully.

Media plays an important role in vocabulary learning. The media that is used is called learning media. The role of learning media is a way to ease in English learning. The students need visual stimulus to help them to process in learning language. Media can help the students to understand in learning. There are many learning media that can be used such as song, picture, and video (Listyaningish, 2017). One of the media is song. According to Shen (2009), song, a combination of music and lyrics, possesses many intrinsic merits, such as a kaleidoscope of culture, expressiveness, recitability and therapeutic functions, which render it an invaluable source for language teaching. The students can learn a language by the lyrics.
The use of English song as a strategy in vocabulary learning. Song has become an essential part in life, because people have listened to song. Especially, most of people have listened to song everyday, everywhere, and everytime. Trinick (2016) as cited in Bolton (2008) stated that music makes children’s learning, language development and classroom teachers to maximize learning possibilities. Through songs the students will enjoy in learning especially English learning. A lot of people have listened to English song. So, listening to English song can help the students in vocabulary learning.

Some of the students learn vocabulary through listening to English songs. Based on the theory, learning vocabulary through listening to English song is good. However, not all students use English song to learn vocabulary. Although, some students use it but it is not for learning purpose. English songs can help the students in learning vocabulary. Based on the explanation above, the researcher wanted to conduct a research about the use of English song to learn vocabulary. In this research, the researcher was interested in investigating the students’ reasons to learn vocabulary through listening English songs and strategies in listening to English songs to learn vocabulary.

Methodology

The researcher used qualitative data in this research. Creswell (2012) stated that “qualitative research is best suited to address a research problem in which you do not know the variables and need to explore” (p.16). Also, this research used descriptive qualitative. Merriam (1998) stated that “descriptive
Qualitative research is a comprehensive summarization, in everyday terms of specific events experienced by individuals or group of individuals” (p. 255). The result of this research was just an opinion and experiences of people.

This research took place at a private Islamic university in Yogyakarta. The participants of this research were the second-year students. The participants consist of four students from English Language Education Department (ELED) at a private Islamic University in Yogyakarta.

The researcher used interview as the data collection method. The researcher also used in-depth interview so that it was possible to obtain detail information. Accordingly, the researcher used in-depth interview to get the clear information. The language that used in this interview was Indonesian language.

After the researcher collected the data, the researcher analyzed the data. The data analysis were transcribing, member checking, and coding. Firstly, the researcher transcribed the data from the interview into script. Secondly, the researcher did member checking. The purpose was to ensure that the data was valid and in accordance to what participants said. The next step was coding. There were four steps of coding used namely, open coding, analytic coding, axial coding, and selective coding.

**Finding and Discussion**

**The students’ reasons to learn vocabulary through listening to English songs**

**Creating fun learning.** These findings showed that the students’ reasons to learn vocabulary through listening to English songs was creating fun learning.
This statement was relevant to Faliyanti (2017) stated that the students will not feel sleepy when they are listening songs in learning process. From those three participants, listening to English songs was fun, and the student did not feel too serious in vocabulary learning.

**Creating easy memory.** These findings showed that the students’ reasons to learn vocabulary through listening to English songs was creating easy memory. This in line with Lynch (2018) and Devi (2009) that songs are highly memorable. Also, Lynch (2018) and Devi (2009) stated that songs include word repetition that helps students make language memorable. Based on the finding above, memorizing vocabulary is easier by listening to English songs. Hence, using English songs can help the students remember word easily.

**Creating easy understanding.** These findings showed that the students’ reasons to learn vocabulary through listening to English songs was creating easy understanding. From that participant, it could be concluded that she did not just listen, but also she knew the message from the song. Thus, listening to English songs was as a reason to improve students’ vocabulary. Maya’s statement is in line with Phisutthangkoon (2016) that the music video provides the song’s story which helps the students understand the words in context.

**The students’ strategies in listening to English songs to learn vocabulary**

**Cognitive strategies.** There are several findings related to cognitive strategies. They include note taking, reading the song lyrics, and finding the meaning of the new vocabulary. The detail explanation is on follows:
**Note taking.** These findings showed that the strategy that the students did when listening to English songs to learn vocabulary was note taking. They explained that they take a note when they found a new vocabulary. This in line with Goh (2002; O’malley & Chamot, 1990; Vandergrift, 1997) who stated that the listening strategies is note taking (writing the key word). Therefore, taking a note was a listening strategy when they found a new vocabulary.

**Reading the song lyrics.** These findings showed that the strategy the students did when listening to English songs to learn vocabulary was note taking. Maya revealed that she read the song lyrics, and then she had to make sure that what she predicted from the lyric was correct. This in line with Goh (2002; O’malley & Chamot, 1990; Vandergrift, 1997) that the listening strategy is prediction of the contents of a text. This finding showed that the strategy that she did when listening to English songs to learn vocabulary was reading the song lyrics.

**Finding the meaning of the new vocabulary.** Sally explained that the strategy that she did was finding the meaning of the new vocabulary. According to Goh (2002; O’malley & Chamot, 1990; Vandergrift, 1997), the listening strategy is to translate the ideas from one language to another language. The finding showed that she translated the meaning of the new vocabulary.

**Metacognitive strategies.** There was only one finding related to Metacognitive strategies; it included sticking new vocabulary on the wall.

**Sticking new vocabulary on the wall.** This finding showed that she translated the meaning of the new vocabulary. Jean mentioned that when she
found new vocabulary, and then she put a new vocabulary on the wall. This statement was relevant to Goh (2002; O’malley & Chamot, 1990; Vandergrift, 1997) that metacognitive strategies are activities that regulate the language-learning process, and it is composed of selective attention (deciding which part of the text should be focused on).

**Memory strategies.** This finding showed one strategy related to memory strategy; it was remembering new vocabulary.

**Remembering new vocabulary.** These findings showed that remembering new vocabulary as the strategies that the students do when listening to English songs to improve their vocabulary. From those three participants, it could be concluded that they memorized when they found new vocabulary. This in line with Cook as cited in Oxford (1990) memory strategies is remembering the spelling of a new word in your mind.

**Conclusion**

This research had two main objectives. The first was to find out the students’ reasons to learn vocabulary through listening English songs. The second was to discover the students’ strategies in listening to English songs to learn vocabulary. The researcher conducted this research by using qualitative data. The researcher conducted this research at a Private Islamic University in Yogyakarta. In addition, the participant in this research were the second-year students.

The first objective was to find out the students’ reasons to learn vocabulary through listening English songs. The finding showed that four participants’ reasons were; creating fun learning, creating easy memory, and
creating easy understanding. Besides, the finding of the second research question was the students' strategies in listening to English songs to learn vocabulary. The findings presented that four participants used three strategies, namely, cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies, and memory strategies. Cognitive strategies as well as Metacognitive strategies were including note taking, reading the song lyrics, and finding the meaning of new vocabulary. Then, metacognitive strategies were including sticking new vocabulary on the wall, and the last is memory strategies including remembering new vocabulary.

**References**


