



05-4506832



pustaka.upsi.edu.my



Perpustakaan Tuanku Bainun
Kampus Sultan Abdul Jalil Shah



PustakaTBainun



ptbupsi

**THE EFFECTIVENESS OF USING SONGS FOR TEACHING
VOCABULARY IN A YEAR ONE CLASSROOM IN
SEKOLAH KEBANGSAAN SUNGAI LAMPAM,
TELUK INTAN**

PETRINA A/P MICHAEL



05-4506832



pustaka.upsi.edu.my



Perpustakaan Tuanku Bainun
Kampus Sultan Abdul Jalil Shah



PustakaTBainun



ptbupsi

**A PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTERS IN EDUCATION
(TESL)**

**FAKULTI BAHASA DAN KOMUNIKASI UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKAN
SULTAN IDRIS
2010**



05-4506832



pustaka.upsi.edu.my



Perpustakaan Tuanku Bainun
Kampus Sultan Abdul Jalil Shah



PustakaTBainun



ptbupsi



DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work in this project paper is my own except for quotation and summaries, which have been identified and acknowledge.

2 JULAI 2010

PETRINA A/P MICHAEL

M20071000141



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I thank the almighty God for giving me the courage, strength and will power to complete this research.

I acknowledge with profound gratitude a great many people who have had constant *beliefs* in me before and during my studies and my research.

I should like to thank my family members. Without their beliefs that 'I can do it', I would not been able to complete this study.

My gratitude is expressed to Associate Professor Dr. Sali Zaliha for being my project supervisor. I thank her for her attempt and undertaking in helping me to 'write better'. I am also grateful for her constant and invaluable support and comments, her patient and the materials she provided me with during the course of my project writing.

My very special thanks go to Ramesh Victor and Jayajulian for their kind help in checking and editing my work.

I would like to thank my dearest and amazing Uncle Nathan. How can I thank him enough? Maybe by saying it in print- Thanks uncle.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge the students and teachers of Sekolah Kebangsaan Sungai Lampam for their cooperation and help in completing this research.

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini ingin mengkaji kesan-kesan menggunakan lagu dalam pengajaran tatabahasa di kelas Tahun 1 di Sekolah Kebangsaan Sungai Lampam, Teluk Intan. Ini adalah satu kajian perbandingan yang terdiri dari kumpulan yang dikawal dan kumpulan yang diberi rawatan. Kajian ini telah dijalankan selama lapan minggu mengikut jadual waktu harian pengkaji. Peserta kajian terdiri daripada 40 orang murid Tahun 1 yang telah dibahagikan kepada dua kumpulan: 20 orang murid dalam kumpulan kawalan dan 20 orang murid dalam kumpulan rawatan. Kumpulan yang dikawal telah diajar menggunakan kaedah lama manakala kumpulan yang diberi rawatan telah diajar menggunakan lagu yang dipilih di samping penggunaan kaedah lama. Kumpulan yang diberi rawatan lagu mencapai purata yang tinggi berbanding kumpulan yang dikawal dalam ujian akhir. Purata markah bagi kumpulan yang dirawat adalah rendah daripada kumpulan yang dikawal dalam ujian awal. Purata kumpulan ini telah meningkat dalam ujian akhir berbanding dengan kumpulan yang dikawal. Purata markah kumpulan yang dikawal telah meningkat dari 76.30 dalam ujian awal kepada 78.45 bagi ujian akhir, manakala purata markah kumpulan yang diberi rawatan telah meningkat dari 39.25 bagi ujian awal kepada 56.50 bagi akhir. Kumpulan yang dikawal telah mencapai lebih purata markah sebanyak 2.15 pada akhir minggu kelapan berbanding dengan kumpulan yang dirawat yang mencapai lebih purata sebanyak 17.25 dalam jangka masa yang sama. Keputusan ini telah menunjukkan bahawa lagu sebagai alat pembelajaran boleh menjadi satu kaedah pengajaran yang efektif dalam pengajaran tatabahasa bagi murid Tahun 1.



ABSTRACT

This research attempted to investigate the effects of songs in teaching vocabulary in a Year One class in Sekolah Kebangsaan Sungai Lampam, Teluk Intan. This study was a comparative group study consisting of a control group and a treatment group. The study was conducted for a period of eight weeks and at regular class time by the researcher. The subjects for this research were forty Year One students divided into two groups: twenty in the control group and twenty in the treatment group. The control group was taught using the traditional methods, while the treatment group was taught using selected songs in addition to the traditional method. The treatment group achieved higher averages than the control group on the post-test. The average scores of the treatment group were lower than those of the control group on the pre-test. The control group improved its overall average score from 76.30 for the pre-test to 78.45 for the post-test, while the treatment group's overall average score improved from a pre-test average of 39.25 to 56.50 on the post-test. The control group had a 2.15 gain in its average score at the end of the eight-week period, compared to the treatment group's gain of 17.25 during same period. Thus, the results indicated that songs, as an instructional supplement, could be an effective instructional method to teach vocabulary to Year 1 learners.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
ABSTRAK	vi
ABSTRACT	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF FIGURES	xi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xii

CHAPTER ONE –RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.0 Introduction	1
1.1 Background of the Research	3
1.2 Statement of Problem	5
1.3 Purpose of the Research	7
1.3.1 Research Objectives	9
1.3.2 Research Questions	9
1.3.3 Research Hypothesis	10
1.4 Significance of the Research	10
1.5 Limitations of the Research	12
1.6 Assumptions of the Research	12
1.7 Summary	13

CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction	14
------------------	----



2.1 Definitions of Terms	16
2.2 Importance of Vocabulary	19
2.3 Songs in Language Learning	21
2.4 Music in language Learning	24
2.5 Music and Songs in Education Throughout History	30
2.6 Music, the Brain and Learning	32
2.7 Theoretical Support for the use of Music in L2 Classroom	35
2.7.1 Krashen's Second Language Hypothesis	35
2.7.2 Gardener's Theory of Multiple Intelligence	37
2.8 Research Support for Using Music in the Language Classroom	39
2.9 Summary	40

CHAPTER THREE – RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction	41
3.1 Research Design	42
3.2 Population and Sample	44
3.3 Research Instrument	45
3.4 Research Procedure	46
3.5 Procedure for Data Collection	47
3.6 Procedure for Data Analyses	49
3.7 Summary	50

CHAPTER FOUR – RESEARCH RESULTS

4.0 Introduction	51
4.1 Profile of Respondent	52
4.2 Research Findings	53
4.3 Finding of the Pre-Test	55
4.4 Finding of the Post-Test	57
4.5 The Overall Findings of the Pre-Test and Post-Test	60
4.6 Score Differences in the Pre-Test and Post-Test of Control Group	66



4.7 The Findings of the Research	71
4.7.1 Research Question 1	71
4.7.2 Research Question 2	72
4.7.3 Research Question 3	74
4.8 Summary	76

CHAPTER FIVE- CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.0 Introduction	77
5.1 Summary of the Research	78
5.2 Discussions of the Findings	79
5.3 Conclusions of the Findings	80
5.4 Implications of the Findings	82
5.5 Recommendations for Future Research	83

BIBLIOGRAPHY	85
APPENDIX	91

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
4.1 Grade and Score in Malaysian School	53
4.2 Vocabulary Items for Eight Weeks	54
4.3 Pre-Test Score of Control and Treatment Group	55
4.4 Pre-Test Score Range for the Treatment and Control Groups	56
4.5 Post-Test Score of Control and Treatment Group	58
4.6 Post-Test Score Range for the Treatment and Control Groups	59
4.7 Overall Scores of the Pre-Test and the Post-Test of the Treatment and the Control Group	60
4.8 Post-Test and Pre-Test Score Range for the Treatment and Control Groups	62
4.9: Score Differences in the Pre-Test and Post-Test of Control Group	66
4.10 Score Differences in the Pre-Test and Post-Test of Treatment Group	68
4.11 Mean, Median, Mod, Standard Deviation, Max and Min of Treatment Group	

4.12	Mean, Median, Mod, Standard Deviation, Max and Min of Control Group	72
4.13	Survey on respondents' answers to Questionnaire 3	73
4.14	Survey on Respondents' Answer to Questionnaire 2	75

LISTS OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
4.1 Pre-Test And Post-Test Score Of the Treatment Group	64
4.2 Pre-Test And Post-Test Score Of the Control Group	65
4.3 Scatter Diagram of Pre-Test And Post-Test Score Of The Treatment Group	70

LISTS OF ABBREVIATIONS

C	Control Group
T	Treatment Group
L2	Second Language
EFL	English as a Foreign Language



CHAPTER ONE

RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.0 Introduction



“without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed”

Thornbury (2002:13)

Vocabulary learning is seen as an integral area of language teaching by linguistic researchers. “Words are the basic building blocks of language, the units of meaning from which larger structures such as sentences, paragraphs and whole texts are formed” (Read, 2000:1). The most important thing in learning language especially English is learning vocabulary. Without vocabulary we cannot speak, write and understand what we are reading and listening. Mastering vocabulary is a basic matter in learning a language. Thornbury (2002:13) has also stated:



“If you spend most of your time studying grammar, your English will not improve very much. You will see most improvement if you learn more word and expressions. You can say very little with grammar, but you can say almost anything with words!”

Vocabulary learning is central to language acquisition, whether first, second or foreign. Today’s language teachers and researchers have realized the important role of vocabulary in different pedagogical tasks. There is no doubt that virtually all second language learners and their teachers are well aware of the fact that learning a second language (L2) involves the learning of large numbers of words (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001), but how to accomplish this task is often of considerable concern to them (Ott, Blake & Butler, 1976:37). How vocabulary is acquired and what the most efficient means are to promote effective acquisition have been worthwhile lines in the field of second language acquisition (De La Fuente, 2002:82). In sum, they all place emphasis on the fact that mastery of vocabulary is an essential component of second language acquisition.

Irrespective of the significance of the lexical knowledge and vocabulary acquisition, the techniques and strategies recommended in this field are somewhat challenging. Although researchers and language teachers are becoming more and more convinced that vocabulary knowledge constitutes an essential part of competence in a second or foreign language, no comprehensive theories have been proposed up to now that try to explain foreign language growth in terms of lexical development (Bogaards, 2001:321).

According to Newton (2001:30), coming across with unfamiliar vocabulary is among the obvious and expected challenges faced by language learners using the target language in communication outside the classroom, whether for work; travel, or recreation, when using the media, or in academic contexts.

Mastering vocabulary is not easy because vocabulary is one major problem for learners. Mastering vocabulary is the basic unit of language form. Without sufficient vocabulary, one cannot communicate or express ideas effectively. Having a limited vocabulary is also a barrier that prevents students from learning a language. If the students do not know how to expand their vocabulary, they gradually lose interest in learning.

1.1 Background of the Research

Recently, using songs has become a popular technique exercised by many educators in the classrooms and recommended by methodologists. Many sources list the advantages of the use of songs and music in second language classrooms. Orlova (1997) identifies some additional benefits of songs in language learning. First, songs can encourage learners to use English. In a non-English environment, the main problem for teachers is how to stimulate learners to speak English in classroom. Hence, songs may be the starting point for that. Second, listening to songs helps students to recognize words and meanings more easily. Finally, songs can stimulate a

positive emotional attitude to language learning.

Teachers have never doubted the value of learning vocabulary. They know how communication stops when learners lack the necessary words. Vocabulary acquisition is increasingly viewed as crucial to language acquisition. However, there is much disagreement as to the effectiveness of different approaches for presenting vocabulary items. Moreover, learning vocabulary is often perceived as a tedious and laborious process.

There are numerous techniques concerned with teaching vocabulary. However, a few things have to be remembered irrespective of the way new lexical items are presented. If teachers want students to remember new vocabulary, it needs to be learnt in context, practised, and then revised to prevent students from forgetting. Teachers must make sure students have understood the new words, which will be remembered better if introduced in a “memorable way” (Hubbard et. al. 1983:50). Bearing all this in mind, teachers have to remember to employ a variety of techniques for teaching vocabulary.

According to Abdul Rashid Mohamed in *Pendidik* (2008:45), in Malaysia it is common knowledge that students would normally be interested in learning anything if the process of learning is enjoyable. Thus, it would be logical to assume that students’ enjoyment of their English lessons might be a contributing factor in their process to acquire the language and finally to be competent in the language. He says that judging from teachers’ grouses and the examination results one would be inclined to believe

that most of Malaysian students did not find their English lessons enjoyable. He adds by saying that the solution to this problem would be to make the English lessons more enjoyable. Since music can be considered as universally appealing, the idea is that music, in the form of songs should be integrated into English lessons to make the lessons more enjoyable

It is noticed how enthusiastic students are about practicing language by means of songs. It is believed songs are not only fun but help students learn without a conscious analysis or understanding of the learning process while they acquire communicative competence as second language users.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Teaching the English language to non-native speakers has always been challenging, particularly when the environment is unsupportive. An unsupportive environment is one which does not have any means of assisting learners to improve their command of the English language. Students in the rural areas in Malaysia can be said to study English in an unsupportive environment. They are not exposed to the English language outside the classroom, let alone outside the school. There is also a shortage of reading materials in English. Learning is not easy when reinforcement is weak. Hence pupils in rural primary schools are hardly aware of the importance of English and its relevance in their daily life.

English Language is the second official language in Malaysia. However, in the rural areas, it is considered a foreign language because it is taught as a school subject and is hardly used outside the classroom or the school, and it is learned for its general educational or literary value (Quirk, 1972), and there is no environmental support for learning it (Lewis & Massad, 1975). The definition of foreign language is further supported by a definition by Walker (in Camillie, 2005), that is, it is “normally learned by a young person in school or not at all” (pp. 23-24).

The teaching and learning of vocabulary is a rather neglected area within language teaching. One reason why vocabulary was neglected in teacher-preparation programs during the period 1940-1970 was that it had been emphasized too much in language classrooms during the years before that time. Scholars and educators are more interested in grammatical competence, contrastive analysis, reading and writing. As for the vocabulary teaching, there are times when words are taught in isolation and in this case, it is often become meaningless for the learners as they face difficulties when using the language. In order to communicate well, students should acquire an adequate number of words and should know how to use them accurately.

In addition, increased testing and examination places a demand on teaching time, and these discourage the incorporation of songs in teaching language skills to second language learners (Goodkin, 1994). This situation suggests that schools should utilize the most effective and efficient teaching methods and approaches possible. Therefore, it is important that teachers and educators provide second language learners a more enjoyable and pleasant learning environment that helps them acquire more

comprehensible input. According to Krashen (1985), all educational techniques, procedures and methods that facilitate language learning should be utilized and improved. Songs can be a way for providing comprehensible input and creating a pleasant, non-threatening and long-term learning environment.

This research investigates a case study on the use of songs for teaching vocabulary and compares them with some traditional techniques in teaching vocabulary items in a Year 1 classroom, in order to determine whether they are more successful in teaching vocabulary than other methods.

1.3 Purpose of the Research

Songs play a significant role in motivating students to learn English. They can support the development of learners' abilities in reading, writing, listening and speaking, as well as provide opportunities for learning pronunciation, rhythm, grammar and vocabulary (Lo & Li, 1998). In addition, songs often offer a change from routine classroom activities.

Music and songs are a crucial part of who we are as human beings (Schoepp, 2001). Songs have become an integral part of our experience. Songs help in all areas of language learning such as vocabulary development, proper use of accents, grammar skills development, and cultural fluency (Gugliemino, 1986). According to

Gugliemoni (1986), using songs in coordination with language lesson can prove to be effective in learning. Therefore, the use of songs to teach vocabulary can be a valuable asset in the classroom.

Music is a ground-breaking instructional method on the cutting edge of teaching methodology (Blair, 1991). This approach helps students learn the content and enjoy the classroom experience simultaneously.

Malaysian students usually feel bored in vocabulary lessons because they have not changed their learning habits, such as writing words in papers, trying to learn by heart or learning passively through the teacher's explanation. To help students find language lesson especially vocabulary lessons more interesting, and to achieve more from songs this research attempts to investigate the effects of songs in teaching vocabulary in a Year 1 class.

Oliver Wendell Holmes suggests taking a musical bath once a week. He says that “music is to the soul what water is to the body,” (Zatorre, 2000). With regards to education, listening to music in class reduces anxiety and increases motivation for learning (Medina, 2000). The purpose of this research is to conduct an educational experiment to determine the effectiveness of using songs in teaching vocabulary. The research objectives, questions and hypotheses are prearranged in the following sections.

1.3.1 Research Objectives

This research intends to meet the following objectives:

- (a) Examine whether using songs is preferred in vocabulary teaching and learning compared to traditional method.
- (b) Determine whether using songs can solve attitude and motivation problems of the students toward learning a language specifically in vocabulary area.
- (c) Examine whether using songs can be an effective means of learning vocabulary.

1.3.2 Research Questions

To meet the research objectives these following question were formulated:

- (a) Can teaching vocabulary using songs be considered as an effective means of learning language?
- (b) Which method (using songs or traditional method) is preferred in vocabulary learning?
- (c) How and to what extent can using songs for vocabulary learning solve attitude and motivation problems of the students toward learning a language specifically in vocabulary area?

1.3.3 Research Hypotheses

Most children enjoy listening to songs and this is one reason why they have become an important part of teaching English to young learners. Apart from these affective reasons for using songs, though, a number of cognitive and linguistic benefits have also been identified in support of their use (Schoepp, 2001). Based on these ideas and other investigations, the researcher conducted an experiment and two hypotheses are constructed to answer the research questions. They are:

- (a) Students in the treatment group who are exposed to the teaching methodology that utilizes the song treatment will score higher on an English vocabulary test than the students in the control group.
- (b) Using songs can retain student's attention and understanding longer and create more motivation toward learning a language as compared to using the traditional method.

1.4 Significance of the Research

The results of this study would be helpful to Malaysian educators. Vocabulary learning requires a very complex task. It has not been given enough attention and emphasis to make the subject area the main focus in language learning. This research hopefully will assist teachers to seek ways in reducing the problem of learning English lexis among Year 1 students and propose other alternative in teaching by using song.

Teachers are separated from most of their students by a chasm of age, experience, education and power. According to Dethier (2004), the common language of music can bridge the chasm and lead to improve communication in both directions of educational and psychological levels. This can take place because music can help prepare students for oral expressions of cultural understanding, vocabulary, and academic language learning.

The results of this research will provide information on whether songs can be used effectively to teach vocabulary to students with low proficiency level of the target language. The study can also provide practical information on how a teacher, using songs can enhance academic achievement in students with low proficiency level of the target language.

The use of appropriate songs in the instructional process can ease the learners' fear and turn learning process a sweet and enchanting experience. Therefore teachers may view the value of using songs as an instructional tool to help students maintain a positive perception on language learning.

This study would also provide significant insight in explaining that songs should be an integral part of a lesson, providing the possibility of intensive practise while at the same time immensely enjoyable for both students and teachers. If learning and singing could be integrated, English will become an important part of a student's daily reality.



1.5 Limitations of the Research

When the research is conducted, there are some anticipated problems. The problems are:

- a) The experimental group, which will be selected randomly, may include those students who are not comfortable with songs. This might affect their vocabulary learning using songs.
- b) The amount of time available for conducting the experiment, eight weeks, may be too short a time to obtain results that can be generalized for all the students.
- c) The research is limited to two groups of Year 1 students in one primary school.
- d) The lessons are limited to selected vocabulary items.



1.6 Assumptions of the Research

The assumptions that were made for this research are the following:

- (a) All the students will attend class, and they will be present for the duration of the study.
- (b) The instruments are sensitive enough to measure differences in performance between two groups.
- (c) Differences in performances are due to the use of songs.





1.7 Summary

Songs encourage, entertain, teach and promote fluency. If not for any of these reasons, they should be used just because they help students see beauty in a foreign language and not just problems that sometimes seem overwhelming.

The present research is an attempt to investigate the effects of using songs for vocabulary learning. The objectives of the research are to examine the use of songs for vocabulary learning and compare them with some traditional techniques in teaching vocabulary, in order to determine whether they are more successful in teaching vocabulary than other methods.

