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Improving the Students' Vocabulary Mastery Using Songs

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Abstract

Song is an alternative teaching media that benefits both students' achievement and students' attitude toward the learning activity. The research aims to analyze (1) can the use of songs improves the students' vocabulary mastery and (2) what are the students' attitudes toward the use of songs to improve their vocabulary mastery. This research uses the classroom action research method which is done in two cycles. Each cycle consisted of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The qualitative data were collected through interviews, observation, documentation, and diary; whereas the quantitative data were collected by conducting tests. There are two kinds of techniques of analyzing data used in this research: qualitative and quantitative data analysis. Qualitative data analysis consists of data reduction, display, and conclusion. Quantitative data analysis is used to compute the students' mean scores. The result shows that (1) the use of songs could improve the students' vocabulary mastery. The improvement of students' achievement is shown in the vocabulary mastery test which had developed a mean score. The mean score of the vocabulary mastery test increased from 52.06 in the pre-test, 66.84 in test 1, and 77.61 in the post-test. (2) The students' attitude toward the use of songs to improve their vocabulary mastery is a) all the students paid attention to the lesson without doing the improper activity; b) all the students get enthusiastically involved in the songs activities. Keywords: vocabulary mastery; songs; classroom action research

INTRODUCTION

This research is done in order to improve the students' achievement in vocabulary mastery and attitude in the teaching-learning process since in the pre-research is found out that they had a lack on it. In this case, the song was applied as teaching media to treat the students' problems in vocabulary mastery. People nowadays are common listening to songs because there are many genres of song enjoyed by every stratum of society. Hornby

and Crowther (1995, p. 5) define a song as a piece of music with words that are sung. Song is also a part of the culture in many places in the world. It is supported by Kartikasari (2010, p. 21), "song is a culture capsule containing within itself a significant piece of social information". While Kusrini (2012) says that Songs provide examples of authentic, memorable, and rhythmic language. A song consists of a voice that is produced by humans that contains a set of meaningful words.

According to Dakin (1985, p. 60), there are six aspects that should be considered when selecting songs to teach English: students' proficiency in English, age and sex of the learner, the language of the song, beats, and rhythm of the song, clear and relevant content song, length of the song. The teacher should choose a simple song that is appropriate to the student's comprehension and the topic will be learned. The simple song eases the students to sing and repeat it more which will help them to emphasize the meaning, form, grammar, pronunciation, and use of the vocabulary in the lyric. The teacher should consider the qualification of the song that will be presented in the class because it will influence the students' comprehension. It is better if the song can also improve the students' listening and reading comprehension.

Songs are an interesting teaching technique to teach the children new vocabulary and they have also introduced the meaning of the words and how to pronounce it. The students can enjoy the teaching-learning process through songs together and do some gestures to make them more valuable. Songs and music can be used to relax students and to provide an enjoyable classroom atmosphere (Griffee, 1992, p. 4). Besides, he states that songs are especially at introducing vocabulary because they provide meaningful context for the vocabulary. Similar to Hancock's opinion (1998: 6), songs can be used to focus on the form of the language, including grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Moreover, Murphey (in Sriningsih 2008, p. 14) also states that an additional thing we might do with music and song in teaching is teaching vocabulary.

"Songs are a stupendous language teaching and development tool! The tune helps things stick; the motivation to understand and produce words correctly is increased; vocabulary is extended painlessly (enjoyably, even!); rhyme, stress, and rhythm are explored...The list goes on. Many of us may have certain suppositions about the use of songs for language learning and development: that singing must be involved; that students may not take it seriously; that it will center on listening skills; that gap-filling will inevitably be done" (Silver, 1996, p. 1).

According to the book of Songs in Action by Griffee (1992, p. 5), there are many advantages to using song and music in the language classroom: (a) teaching vocabulary, songs are especially good at introducing vocabulary because they provide a meaningful context for the vocabulary; (b) classroom atmosphere, songs, and music can be used to relax students and provide an enjoyable classroom atmosphere. For many, learning a new language is inherently an insecure proposition. Language, our basis of communication, is taken away from us and we often feel lost and dependent. Songs, but more especially instrumental music, give us the external cover we need to feel more secure while at the same time providing the internal support to carry on with the task; (c) language input,

there seems to be a deep relationship between rhyme and speech. Sensitivity to rhythm is a basic and necessary first step in learning a language. In using songs and music in the classroom we are exposing students to the rhythms of language; (d) teaching or reviewing grammatical structures, songs provide a natural context for the most common structures such as verb tenses and prepositions; (e) teaching pronunciation, songs and music, with their tones, rhythm, and stress, can provide for some languages a suitable way to teach and practice the several skills we group together under the term pronunciation.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method used in this study is action research. Action research is the study of social matters in order to improve the quality of the situation. Action research is any systematic inquiry conducted by teachers, researchers, principals, school counselors, or other stakeholders in the teaching/learning environment, to gather information about the ways that their particular schools operate, how they teach, and how well their students learn (Mills, 2000, p. 6). Kemmis and Mc Taggert (1982) define that action research occurs through a dynamic and complementary process which consists of four fundamental steps in a spiraling process. Each process has four steps: plan, act, observe and reflect.

The research reported in this article was adopted to analyze the use of songs to improve the students' vocabulary mastery and the students' attitudes toward the use of songs to improve their vocabulary mastery.

This classroom action research was conducted in the fifth-grade students of SDIT Luqman Al-Hakim Mojosongo, Surakarta. VA class was selected as the subject of the classroom action research. There were 31 students involved in this research. In doing this research, I actively participated in the teaching and learning process. I acted both as a teacher and observer. It was carried out from February until March 2016.

The research was started by identifying the problem faced by students related to students' vocabulary mastery. After finishing the initial step in identifying the problem, the research was designed. It was designed in two cycles. The first cycle was conducted in two meetings for the learning process and one meeting for tests. The second cycle also consisted of two meetings for the learning process and one meeting for post-test. Each cycle went through some steps: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting.

Getting finished with the planning, the action was implemented. I implemented Song as teaching media in teaching to improve students' vocabulary mastery. During the implementation of the action, observation was conducted. It was aimed at investigating all the activities in the learning process, students' attitudes during the action, and students' vocabulary mastery. At the end of each cycle, I reflected on the implementation of the action and observation. There was also a test in each cycle to know the impact of the implementation of songs in students' vocabulary mastery. The data were analyzed to get the result of the action. It was used to determine for the next revising plan and the result of the research whether successful or not.

There were two types of data collected: qualitative data and quantitative data. Qualitative data was obtained through observing the teaching-learning process, interviewing, documenting, and taking a diary in each meeting. While quantitative data

was gained by giving tests. It was aimed to know the students' vocabulary mastery and identify the students' problems dealing with aspects in vocabulary. Qualitative data were analyzed using the theory of Mills (2000, p. 49). Hence, the quantitative data were analyzed using tests based on Brown's (2001, p. 384) theory.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Before conducting the research, initial analysis through observing the teaching-learning process was conducted, interviewing some students, documenting, and conducting pre-test. The result of the initial analysis showed that there were two major problems. The first problem with students' vocabulary mastery. Those problems were: (1) the students could not decode the message in the spoken or written text; (2) the students could not construct proper grammar; (3) the students could not use the vocabulary appropriate with its part speech; (4) The students could not spell simple vocabulary; (5) the students also had many error pronunciations. Those problems were caused by (1) students had a lack of vocabulary mastery; (2) students had not understood how to compound grammar; (3) students had not considered word-class since they had a lack of references in studying English; (4) students had a lack of practicing writing English; (5) the teacher had error pronunciations.

The second problem was dealing with students' attitudes toward the learning activity. Those problems were: (1) the students tended to do other activities such as joke around and have a chat with their friends; (2) the students had a passive attitude in the learning process. These problems were caused by: (1) the learning activity was monotonous; (2) The students were not involved in the teaching and learning activity.

Considering the problem above, a song was proposed to be used in the class to improve the students' vocabulary mastery. The result of the pre-test held in the class also indicated that the students needed treatment to improve their vocabulary mastery.

Kind of test	Pre-test	Maximum score
Meaning	12.32	20
Use	8.90	20
Spelling	4.71	10
Grammar	5.81	10
Pronunciation	20.32	40
Total	52.06	100
Passing grade	70	

Table 1. Pre-test mean score of vocabulary test

The first meeting in Cycle 1, the students seemed interested in the class activity created. They became more active students rather than in the teaching-learning process in the pre-research. It was shown when the song was played. In conclusion, a song could be the students help to be more active in the class activity and easy to remember the

vocabulary learned. It was seen from their enthusiasm when they had the audio was played and they sang very well. They also had communicative interaction with me, they expressed their idea freely. It all indicated that they were interested in learning vocabulary mastery through song, although some students had not confident enough to sing loudly yet.

Students were guided to read the lyrics. This activity was done to teach the students about the meaning of the word and how to spell the vocabulary correctly. When the students observed the lyric I asked them to mention the difficult word and then I guided them to find the meaning of the vocabulary. I also asked the students to mention again the ingredients mentioned in the lyric then spelled the vocabulary loudly. Some of them pronounced error pronunciation of the alphabet, for example, 'i' read by /i/ and 'a' read by /ai/. After observing the lyric of the song, I played the record of the song and asked the students to listen carefully. This activity aimed to give the students time to understand how to pronounce the vocabulary and also to imitate the pronunciation.

The effectiveness of the teaching process was gratified since the classroom situation was conducive as long as the learning activity. There was a better interaction between the students and me. The students were active to propose their questions and suggestion. The students also had better participation in the lesson activity during the class. They seemed more open to expressing their feeling when they were confused or did not understand the lesson. Students were guided to read the lyrics. This activity was done to teach the students about the meaning of the word and how to spell the vocabulary correctly. When the students observed the lyric I asked them to mention the difficult word and then I guided them to find the meaning of the vocabulary. I also asked the students to mention again the ingredients mentioned in the lyric then spelled the vocabulary loudly. Some of them pronounced error pronunciation of the alphabet, for example, 'i' read by /i/ and 'a' read by /ai/.

In the second meeting, the students worked in groups consisting of five students in all activities that day. The students in the group discussed the description of food in the picture. They were asked to describe the appearance of the food using adjective grammar, for example 'two red tomatoes'. I already explained to them how to construct adjective grammar correctly in the previous activity.

They worked in a group which made them more enthusiastic because they could share their ideas with the member. In the first activity, they had to discuss the difficult word in the lyric with their friends in the group. They also had the ingredients picture to ease them in guessing the unknown vocabulary. The students were interested in the song given in the lesson and they enjoyed the discussion in the group. The second activity was a singing competition for each group. Every group had to sing well without looking at the song lyric. The boys are excited to perform in their group but the girls were looked a little bit shy to sing the song loudly. They had voted from the other groups since they could not vote for their own group. They also had feedback related to their performance. The classroom atmosphere was very excited because all the students participated well and tried to give their best performance. In addition, there were some students who always made a noise with a joke in the middle of singing competition which was unrelated to the

lesson and they were treated by to respect their friends' performance. The girls who were still unconfident to sing loudly were guided to sing more confidently. The most often mistake made by the students was pronunciation. They tended to pronoun 'tomato' as /'tomatov/ rather than /-'mei.tov/ and 'steak' as /'sti:k/ rather than /steik/. Overall, they could be responsible to do their best for their group.

The test research conducted found out that Song can be used to improve the students' vocabulary mastery and what are the students' attitudes toward the use of song to improve students' vocabulary mastery. It is followed by 31 students. There is one student who was absent in the post-test, but he still has the test in the next week. They spend 60 minutes doing the test. The topic is about the food, especially barbeque and pizza.

The test was conducted on February, 18th 2016 at the end of Cycle 1 in order to measure the improvement that the students made. The improvement of the students' achievement could be seen in the mean score of the test. I also interviewed the students to confirm the action affected the students' behavior in learning vocabulary. The observation was done during the teaching and learning process and the data was added in the field notes. By observing the teaching and learning process in Cycle 1, I found that Song as teaching media could motivate the students in learning English, especially in improving students' vocabulary mastery. It could be seen by their activeness during the lesson when they shared their ideas in their group discussion. The class could be controlled despite sometimes being noisy during the class.

The students' mean score in test 1 is 66.84. It improves since, in the pre-test, their mean score is 52.06. The lowest score is 44 and the highest score is 72. There are thirteen students who do not pass the passing grade but the students' achievement in vocabulary mastery has improved. Based on the summary in Cycle 1, it can be concluded that there is an improvement in students' vocabulary mastery. It is indicated with the result of students' test 1. However, there are some unsolved problems yet in this cycle. The next cycle is needed to solve the rest obstacles.

Table 2. Mean score of vocabulary test in the pre-test and test 1

Kind of test	Pre-test	Test 1
Meaning	12.32	13.25
Use	8.90	12.52
Spelling	4.71	7.03
Grammar	5.81	7.55
Pronunciation	20.32	26.45
Total	52.06	66.84

There are also improvements in the students' attitude toward the use of songs to improve student's vocabulary mastery shown in the teaching and learning process. They

do not do improper activities again during the lesson as they did in the pre-research. Every student wants to involve in the learning activity since they question and give suggestions actively. Although there is still a little bit of noise made by the students, it can be handled. It is described in Table 3.

Table 3. Improvement of students' attitude toward the use of Songs in the End of Cycle 1

Pre-Research	Cycle 1
 The students tended to do other activities such as joke around and have a chat with their friends. The students had a passive attitude in the learning process. 	 The students paid attention to the lesson but some students still played a joke in the class. Most students are actively involved in the class activity. They were active in the question-answer session.

Based on the result of the reflection, some revisions were made to the lesson plan for the next Cycle 1n in order to cover up the weaknesses that appear in the previous stage. For this purpose, some adjustments were needed such as; 1) Changing the song containing new vocabulary for the students; 2) Clear pronunciation in the song; 3) Playing the song piece by piece; 4) Singing the song rapidly.

The observation technique used in the Cycle 2 is the same as Cycle 1 such as test, interview, and observation. Cycle 2 was done in March. 10th 2016 as the end of the classroom research, the improvement of the students' achievement can be seen from the mean score of the test. The interview is conducted in order to know how far the action affected the students toward the lesson. Then, the observation is done during the teaching-learning process and the data are written in the form of field notes.

The students' improvement in learning vocabulary mastery using song was proven by students' participation in the classroom activity, especially when they faced difficult vocabulary. They would directly ask the meaning of the word. The students did not tend to play jokes again in the class since I warned them to not allow them to be noisy for something unrelated to the lesson.

Overall, the first meeting ran well since the students could be controlled. Some students who like to have a joke decreased it so the class is not too noisy. The students had more practice in using simple instruction words and spelling the food and drink vocabulary for treating their weaknesses in the previous meeting. They also demanded to describe how to make banana split using ingredients mentioned in the song. In addition, students' participation in the class increased. Their enthusiasm in the learning process indicated that they enjoyed it. They were confident and brave to ask questions or answer a question verbally. It was so different from their behavior in the pre-research.

In the second meeting, the students were challenged to explore their knowledge related to the benefits of the drinks in the song. In the process of exploring the knowledge, there were some students who asked vocabulary related to their idea. In addition, it was conducive during the second meeting class. The students were also more confident to sing loudly, especially the girls because they got a chance to sing in each row.

The Post-test was conducted purposely to identify the students' achievement during the research and their improvement in learning vocabulary mastery. It was followed by thirty-one students. There were no students who were absent in Post-test. They had sixty minutes to answer the questions. Fortunately, the number of mistakes was reduced from the previous test. Another error found was the students put a wrong answer in the filling the blank part however the intensity of the error was less than before.

Table 4. Improvement of students' attitude toward the use of Songs at the End of Cycle 2
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Pre-	-Research	Cycle 1	Cycle 2
act jok ha	e students anded to do other civities such as around and we a chat with eir friends.	1. The students paid attention to the lesson but some students still had a joke in the class.	1. All the students paid attention to the lesson without doing an improper activity.
pas the	e students had a ssive attitude in e learning ocess.	2. Most students were actively involved in the class activity. They were active in the questionanswer session.	2. All the students were enthusiastically involved in the Songs activities.

After analyzing the research result from the sources data; pre-research observation, fields note, research diary, photograph, the teacher and students' interview, the score pretest and post-test, I got findings that answered from the research question stated in Chapter I. The research findings were as follows: The improvement of the students' vocabulary mastery and the students' attitudes toward the use of song to improve students' vocabulary mastery and the students' attitudes toward the use of songs to improve students' vocabulary mastery and the students' attitudes toward the use of songs to improve students' vocabulary mastery.

The first point was about the students' vocabulary mastery improvement through Songs. Those were: (1) Meaning: the students are able to decode the message of English expression and they had increased their vocabulary knowledge; (2) Use: the students are able to use the vocabulary properly in a sentence; (3) Spelling: the students are able to spell the words properly; (4) grammar: the students are able to construct proper grammar using adjective word sequentially; (5) pronunciation: the students are able to pronounce the vocabulary properly. Summary of research findings on students' vocabulary mastery can be seen in Table 5.

Table 5. Summary of Research Findings on Students' Vocabulary Mastery

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Pre-Research	During the Research

Problem Indicators of Vocabulary		Cycle 1	Cycle 2
1. The students could not decode the message in the spoken or written text.	 The students got difficulty on understandin g the simple oral or written instruction given by the teacher and written in the handbook. The students tend to ask the Indonesian meaning of English expression given by the teacher. 	They could recognize simple instruction. They were still confused with the meaning of some vocabularies.	They understoo d the simple instruction and how to use them. They understoo d the major vocabulary taught.
2. The students could not construct proper grammar.	They tended to mention 'horse brown' rather than 'brown horse'.	They kept compounding imprope r phrases	They constructe d better grammar.
3. The students could not use the vocabulary in an expression properly.	• The taste of cheese, they answered "it is salt, Ms. Riva"	They had limited knowledge about the kinds of words.	They had knowledge about how to use adjectives and nouns.
4. The students could not spell simple vocabulary.	They tended to look at the whiteboard rapidly and write the word letter by letter when they copy the word.	They had an adequate experience of recognizing the words.	They could spell and write the words correctly.
5. They also had many error	The students tended to say the word	They sometimes pronounce the word appropriately with the	They were common to pronounce

pronunciations	exactly the	written such as in	the
·	same with it is written such as Indonesian style.	Indonesian style.	vocabulary correctly similar to the singer of the song.

The focus of the research involves five indicators of vocabulary: meaning, use, spelling, grammar, pronunciation. The findings show that those aspects have a higher final achievement after the research. Referring to the result of pre-test and post-test, the students' mean score is improved by 44.50%. The complete mean score was presented in Table 6.

U S NP P M **Total** Aspects **Improvement Pre-test** 12.32 8.90 4.71 5.81 20.52 52.06 Test 1 13.25 12.52 7.42 7.55 26.45 66.84 28.39% **Post-test** 14.71 14.65 7.16 9.16 31.94 77.61 16.11%

Table 6 The Complete Mean Score of the Research

M = meaning U = use S = spelling NP = grammar P = pronunciation

The second point is about students' attitude toward the use of songs to improve the students' vocabulary mastery. The students' attitude improves significantly by the treatment given in the research process. In the Pre-research, the students keep joking around and having a chat with their friends, they seemed do not interest in the learning activity. The students are also passive since they are not involved in the learning process. On the other hand, the students' attitude becomes more favorable when they are involved in the learning process. The students' have a role in the lesson, so they will be responsible for their work and focus on what they do. In the song activity, the students' have various fun work related to the lesson. The use of songs affects the students' attitude and the improvements were (1) all the students pay attention to the lesson without doing improper activities; (2) all the students get enthusiastically involved in the song activities.

The finding in the teaching-learning process shows that there is improvement in the students' attitude before and after using songs as the teaching media. The teaching-learning process using song is more alive. All the students were involved in the learning process. Most of the activities are students centered the researcher is just the facilitator. Songs facilitate the students to improve their vocabulary mastery. All the students get their chance to practice pronouncing their English by singing. Songs give them many portions in improving their vocabulary in speaking skills. Every meeting they get new vocabulary. Every student involves themselves in the song activities so that, there are no longer joking around and do an improper activity that is not related to the lesson. The students also have high participation in the activity since the lesson is students centered.

In the last cycle, post-interviews were conducted to the students that showed 100% of students can follow the learning activity using song, and 80.65% of the students are motivated to learn English more. 96.77% of the students agree that their vocabulary improves by the song. They also state that the classroom atmosphere becomes more interesting.

While in the students' interview, one of the students said "iya Miss. Nek pake lagu i seneng soale aku bisa nyanyi jagi aku ngga ngantuk" [I like learning activity using song because I could sing so I did not sleepy anymore]. Songs made the classroom atmosphere more fun and enjoyable. This was the improvement of the students' attitude from the pre-research until the end of the research:

Table 7. Improvement of students' attitude toward the use of Songs in the End of Cycle 2

Pre-Research	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	
1. The students tended to do other activities such as joke around and have a chat with their friends.	1. The students paid attention to the lesson but some students still played a joke in the class.	1. All the students paid attention to the lesson without doing an improper activity.	
2. The students had a passive attitude in the learning process.	2. Most students were actively involved in the class activity. They were active in the questionanswer session.	2. All the students were enthusiastically involved in the Sings activities.	

According to the reflection of Cycle 1 and Cycle 2, I had come to the final expectation. The result shows that it is important to present the students about the use of Song and its benefit as teaching media in learning vocabulary mastery so that students' motivation in learning vocabulary mastery increases. It is also possible for the students to involve and follow the lesson better when Song is applied as teaching media for vocabulary mastery. In addition, the students still need more practice in using vocabulary to come to a better result. Additional exercise has to conduct to make them have better use of vocabulary. Exercise about vocabulary aspects such as the meaning, use, and form is needed in order to support their ability in using vocabulary.

Table 8 shows the students' vocabulary mastery mean score in the pre-test, test 1 and post-test. There was an improvement in the students' mean score in vocabulary mastery.

Table 8. The Students' Vocabulary Mastery Score during the Research

Pre-test	Test I	Test II
52.06	66.84	77.61

The activity of collecting data was stopped after Cycle 2 was completed. That was because an effective way to implement Songs as teaching media for students' learning vocabulary mastery and the students' vocabulary mastery has improved was found.

Griffee (1995, p. 5) writes that songs can be used in teaching conversation, vocabulary, grammatical structures, and pronunciation. It was proven that singing a song is an active activity that includes many aspects of English that could be improved. The students' sense of recognizing vocabulary increased since they memorize the lyrics and pronounce them repeatedly. Cross (1991, p. 64) said that once the song of rhyme has been learned, it is in their minds for the rest of their lives, with all the rhythms, grammatical niceties, and vocabulary.

Steele and Mills (2011, p. 361) mentioned three things that could be done through song activity in the class: (1) reviews, rehearse, and remind students about the word in various contexts over time; (2) discuss word meanings to actively involve students; and (3) spend time teaching, discussing, and learning about each word.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The final discussion in the previous chapter can be drawn into two conclusions. Firstly, the use of song as teaching media to teach vocabulary is capable to improve students' vocabulary mastery. It is taken into account that the students had positive progress in learning vocabulary as mentioned in the research findings. The improvement in understanding the meaning, use, and form has been achieved by the students. Students' comprehension of words' meaning is shown from their activity on observing the vocabularies in the songs' lyrics.

Supporting the statement, the students had a higher mean score in the final post-test which was 77.61. This score was above the school passing grade which was settled at 70. The mean score had gradually improved since the post-test was 66.84 and the pre-test 52.06.

The second conclusion is that the students' attitudes toward the use of songs improve the students' vocabulary mastery. It will be explained as follows:

Before implementing songs, some students tend to do an improper activities such as joking around and having a chat with their friends. It is because they lost their interest in learning English. After implementing songs, the students seem interested in the learning activity. It can be seen from the result of the observation that the number of students who did improper activity decrease.

Before implementing songs, some students did not involve actively in the class activities. They become passive students since only listen to the teacher's explanation. However, after implementing the songs all the students can participate actively in the activities because they have responsibilities that should be done.

Furthermore, the additional information in the implementation of Songs as teaching media in the learning vocabulary mastery process improves the situation during the class activity. The students are interested in the lesson which was done by implementing the song. The students' attention was fully transferred to the lesson. The

classroom interaction was set informally. The students' interest in singing was supported so that finally they could enjoy the learning.

Finally, Songs can effectively be applied in learning vocabulary. Having a range of advantages that allows Songs to facilitate the learning process, and it can improve students' vocabulary mastery.

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