

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background

English serves as a vital tool for global interaction, particularly in the fields of education, science, and technology. In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language at various educational levels, including university. At the university level, the primary aim of English instruction is to equip students with the ability to use the language effectively for both academic and everyday communication. Therefore, acquiring a strong command of vocabulary is considered an essential foundation for mastering English.

Vocabulary mastery is an essential component of English language proficiency because it enables students to understand and use words appropriately in various communicative contexts. However, mastering and retaining new vocabulary can be challenging for university students, particularly when vocabulary is learned through conventional activities.. Learners with limited vocabulary knowledge often experience difficulties in understanding texts, expressing ideas, and actively participating in classroom interactions. As a core component of language, vocabulary learning plays an important role in students language development however, many learners find it challenging to learn and retain new vocabulary (Rochma & Wicaksono, 2024). Vocabulary mastery plays a crucial role

in the success of English communication. Learners may experience difficulties in understanding and using the language effectively when their vocabulary knowledge is limited, even if they possess adequate grammatical knowledge. Therefore, vocabulary becomes a key component of language proficiency, as it directly influences learners' ability to comprehend meaning and use the language in real communicative contexts (Phisutthangkoon, 2016).

In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning in Indonesia, university students may have limited opportunities to use English outside the classroom, particularly in their daily academic and social interactions. As a result, classroom activities remain an important source of English language exposure for students. However, vocabulary learning among university students may still rely heavily on conventional activities, such as memorization, translation, and textbook-based exercises. These methods often present vocabulary in isolation and lack meaningful context, which may reduce students' motivation and their ability to retain vocabulary (Khakim & Anwar, 2020).

The research problem was initially identified through the researcher's academic experience when retaking a course during the second semester at UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu. During this experience, the researcher noticed that some students experienced difficulties in learning English

vocabulary, particularly in understanding unfamiliar words and retaining previously learned vocabulary. This experience led the researcher to consider vocabulary mastery as an important issue to be investigated and to explore the potential use of engaging and contextual learning media to support students' vocabulary learning.

Real-world data also confirms that using music as a teaching tool is highly effective for building vocabulary. Previous research has also shown that using songs as a teaching medium can support vocabulary development among EFL learners has demonstrated that students show substantial progress in their word following the introduction of song-based lessons. Beyond merely expanding vocabulary, incorporating music has been found to refine pronunciation and abilities, while simultaneously boosting student interest and participation in the classroom. These findings indicate that songs are not merely entertaining but also possess high pedagogical value as effective media for vocabulary learning. (Toyyibah, 2024).

A frequently endorsed strategy for teaching vocabulary involves the use of song in music. Songs are valued as authentic resources, as they showcase language within a natural, real-world context. Having a strong vocabulary is essential for effective communication, as it helps individuals convey ideas, express thoughts clearly, and understand what others say or write. (Rochma & Wicaksono, 2024).

Music and song are often used interchangeably in daily conversation; however, academically they have different meanings. Music refers to the broader concept of organized sounds that may include melody, rhythm, harmony, and instrumental composition. Music can exist without lyrics, such as instrumental music, orchestral compositions, or background soundtracks.

In contrast, a song specifically refers to a piece of music that includes lyrics. A song combines musical elements (melody and rhythm) with verbal elements (words or lyrics), which convey meaning and language. Therefore, songs are particularly relevant in language learning contexts because they provide both linguistic input (vocabulary, grammar, expressions) and musical support (melody and repetition).

In relation to this study, although the term “music” is sometimes used generally, the focus of the research is specifically on songs, not instrumental music. The selected materials—About You, I’m in Love with You, It’s Not Living (If It’s Not With You), and I Always Wanna Die (Sometimes)—are songs performed by The 1975 that contain English lyrics. These lyrics provide contextualized vocabulary input, making songs suitable as instructional media for improving students’ vocabulary mastery.

A wealth of recent research has affirmed the utility of music in enhancing vocabulary skills. As students listen to

English songs, they often focus intently on the specific words being sung and then seek out their definitions. This process of decoding meaning leads to vocabulary expansion, as learners actively acquire and integrate new terms into their existing knowledge base (Octia, 2019). In addition, repeated exposure to vocabulary through songs enhances students' vocabulary, as learners encounter the words repeatedly in enjoyable learning situations (Murtiningsih et al., 2023)

Although previous studies have shown that English songs can support vocabulary learning, differences remain in the educational contexts and learners involved in previous research. Several studies have focused on school-level learners, while relatively limited attention has been given to the use of English songs for vocabulary learning among university students in the Indonesian EFL context. In addition, previous studies have generally examined English songs as a broad learning medium rather than focusing on songs from a particular contemporary band. Therefore, there is a need for further research investigating the use of specific English songs among university students, particularly in the context of vocabulary mastery. The present study addresses this gap by examining the effect of four songs by The 1975 on the vocabulary mastery of second-semester students of the 2025 cohort at UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu.

Among various types of English songs, Western popular

songs are particularly suitable for university students because they reflect contemporary language use and modern culture. In this study, the researcher specifically selected songs by The 1975, a contemporary British band whose lyrics contain authentic, contextual, and frequently used English vocabulary. The language used in The 1975's songs represents everyday English expressions that are relevant to students' lives, making them appropriate for learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) at the university level.

The reason why I chose songs from this band is because, from a contemporary perspective, The 1975's songs have become popular among young audiences, especially through digital platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube. The ease of access and popularity of these songs among university students increases student engagement and motivation, which are crucial factors in vocabulary acquisition. Therefore, the selection of these songs is not only linguistically appropriate but also socially relevant to the context of student learning.

The selection of songs by The 1975 was also based on linguistic considerations. The lyrics of The 1975's songs contain various types of vocabulary, including verbs (e.g., feel, need, want, stay), adjectives (e.g., lonely, happy, broken), nouns (e.g., love, life, mind), as well as common expressions related to emotions, relationships, and everyday experiences. This vocabulary is frequently used in real communication and is

relevant to the learning objectives for university students. Using song lyrics to teach vocabulary enables learners to grasp words within a meaningful framework, moving beyond the limitations of simple rote memorization.

In this study, four songs by The 1975 were selected from two albums, namely *Being Funny in a Foreign Language* and *A Brief Inquiry into Online Relationships*. The songs used were *About You* and *I'm in Love with You* from the album *Being Funny in a Foreign Language*, as well as *It's Not Living (If It's Not With You)* and *I Always Wanna Die (Sometimes)* from the album *A Brief Inquiry into Online Relationships*. These songs were chosen because they provide rich vocabulary input, clear pronunciation, and emotional themes that support vocabulary learning in meaningful contexts.

The selection of the four songs by The 1975—*About You*, *It's Not Living (If It's Not With You)*, *I'm In Love With You*, and *I Always Wanna Die (Sometimes)*—is pedagogically justified as they provide authentic, contextual, and meaningful exposure to English vocabulary. The use of songs as a learning medium supports vocabulary development by presenting language in natural contexts and engaging students through enjoyable learning experiences. Therefore, the use of songs in this study is considered appropriate for enhancing students' vocabulary mastery at the university level.

Furthermore, the selected songs contain contextualized

vocabulary items, including nouns, verbs, adjectives, and abstract lexical items that are appropriate for students. After excluding repetitions and function words, the four songs provide approximately 85 items. These vocabulary items serve as the basis for constructing the vocabulary test, focusing on word meaning, synonym recognition, antonym recognition, and contextual usage.

From a theoretical perspective, the use of songs aligns with the concept of repeated exposure in vocabulary learning. According to (Murtiningsih et al., 2023), repeated exposure to vocabulary in enjoyable learning environments strengthens students' memory and enhances vocabulary retention. When learners repeatedly encounter vocabulary in meaningful and emotionally engaging contexts, such as song lyrics, they are more likely to internalize and remember the words.

Therefore, this study was conducted to investigate the effect of songs by The 1975 on the vocabulary mastery of Second-semester students of the 2025 at UIN FATMAWATI SUKARNO BENGKULU. Employing a quantitative quasi-experimental design, this study aims to provide empirical evidence on whether song-based instruction using contemporary Western songs can significantly improve students' vocabulary mastery and serve as an effective alternative to conventional vocabulary teaching methods.

B. Identification of the Problem

The problems identified in this study are as follows:

1. Students have difficulties in mastering English vocabulary, particularly in understanding and retaining new vocabulary.
2. Students have difficulties understanding vocabulary in context, especially when encountering unfamiliar words in English learning materials.
3. Students tend to forget previously learned vocabulary, indicating that their vocabulary retention is still limited.
4. The use of conventional vocabulary learning methods may reduce students' interest and engagement in learning English vocabulary.
5. Students need more engaging, contextual, and meaningful learning media to support their vocabulary mastery.

C. Limitation of the Research

Based on the problems mentioned above, this research is limited to analyzing the influence of using songs by The 1975 on the vocabulary mastery of Second-semester students of the 2025 at UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu. This study focuses on measuring students' vocabulary mastery through a pre-test and post-test design. The research applies a quasi-experimental method to examine the effect of using songs by The 1975 on students' vocabulary improvement.

D. Research Questions

Based on the research background, the research question of this study is:

“Is there any influence of The 1975 songs on students vocabulary mastery of Second semester students of the 2025 at UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu?”

E. Objective of the Research

Based on the research question above, the objective of this study is:

To find out the influence of songs by The 1975 on the vocabulary mastery of Second semester students of the 2025 at UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu.

F. Benefit of the Research

This research is expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions.

1. Theoretical Benefits

This study is expected to contribute to the development of English language teaching, especially in vocabulary learning. It is also expected to support existing theories related to vocabulary mastery and the use of authentic materials, particularly Krashen's Input Hypothesis and Affective Filter Hypothesis.

2. Practical Benefits

a. For Lecturers

This study can serve as a reference for lecturers in applying more engaging teaching media, such as songs by The 1975, to improve students' vocabulary mastery and learning motivation.

b. For Second Semester Students

This study is expected to help students improve their vocabulary mastery through enjoyable and contextual learning activities. Learning through songs can increase interest, reduce anxiety, and improve vocabulary retention.

c. For Future Researchers

This study can be used as a reference for future researchers who want to investigate the use of songs or authentic materials in improving English vocabulary mastery.

G. Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstandings between readers and researchers. The following key terms are defined as follows:

1. Vocabulary Mastery

Vocabulary mastery refers to students' ability to understand and use English words appropriately, including meaning, synonym, antonym, and context. In this research,

vocabulary mastery is measured through students' scores obtained from vocabulary tests (pre test and post test).

2. Songs by The 1975

Songs by The 1975 are used as learning media in this study because they contain authentic English vocabulary, contextual expressions, and are relevant to university students.

