

The Use of Slang In English Songs To Enhance Students' Vocabularies At MTs Nurul Bahri, Bone Bolango

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Abstrak

This study aims to analyze the use of slang in English songs as a means to improve students' vocabulary at MTs Nurul Bahri, Bone Bolango. The phenomenon of using slang in English songs is increasingly popular among teenagers, but its understanding and application in the context of foreign language learning has not been widely explored. This study used a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. Data were collected through analysis of song lyrics containing slang, as well as interviews with 24 students in VIII grades and teachers to find out the impact of slang use on vocabulary improvement. The results show that the use of slang in English songs can help students in expanding their vocabulary, improve their listening skills, and motivate them to be more interested in learning English. In addition, although slang is often not found in formal dictionaries, an understanding of the proper use of slang can add value to students' language skills in social and cultural contexts. This study suggests that the use of English songs containing slang can be integrated in English learning at school to improve students' language skills in a more contextual and interesting way.

Keywords: English songs, Language learning, Slang, Vocabulary

INTRODUCTION

As an international language, English has an important role for people who want to communicate with others. People can communicate and get a better understanding of the language when they talk to people in other countries in the world. Just like many people say, "Speak English, and the world will understand you". However, Language is the ability that humans have to communicate with each other by giving signs in the form of words and movements (Noermanzah, 2020). In this globalization era, people are demanded to be dealt with all the things related with global issues so that they will not be left behind. That is why that no wonder people learn English everywhere no matter they are young or old people. They learn English at school, college

or at English course in their spare time. Learning English are not learning about the skills of the language itself, but also learning all the aspects including the language such as idioms and even slang language. The people who are learning English should know and understand related with the language that is being learned.

In the realm of language education, expanding vocabulary is a crucial element of mastering a new language. For learners of English, exposure to diverse and contemporary language use can significantly enhance their vocabulary acquisition and comprehension. One effective method for introducing students to colloquial language is through the use of slang in English songs. This approach not only makes learning

engaging but also provides insights into the cultural and social contexts where these slang terms are used.

Slang is one part of the language that should be recognized by the English learners. Learning English slang is interesting because it is fun. Some slang words are considered inappropriate because they sometimes lead to sex, violence, crime and drugs. Slang is sometimes used as an indicator to judge someone's social status. English slang can also be different depending on the race of the group of people talking about it. Slang is often found in movies, short stories, and even in songs (Winda Lestari, Jazeri, and Mukhlis 2022). Moreover, it can make the speaker to be creative to express their mind and also make the communication more efficient. Nowadays, people who can speak slang may have a benefit that they can understand what people means in formal language and also their culture or even personality.

In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language, and several efforts have been made to improve students' English mastery, particularly in using creative media. One instructional media used by students is song. There are many kinds of songs, but the most popular ones come from the West. Western pop songs have penetrated and been popular in Indonesia since the 1980s. Therefore, students are more interested in using songs from western singers and composers as English input. Nowadays, song lyrics have become popular items among students, and there is a tendency to discuss them in friendships and group discussions. Slang is popular language in the lower-class

language used by social outcasts, criminals, or vagrants. Two students in the upper class of high school had an analysis of slang used in English pop songs, in which one student analyzed the types of slang and another student analyzed the function of the slang found in the songs. This research attempts to investigate the types and the meaning of slang found in American pop songs of 1990's generation, which are "That's What I Like" by Bruno Mars, "Hi Hey Hello" by Black eyed peas, and "Sugar" by Maroon 5 (Andriivna et al. 2020).

Based on the first observation to the students at MTS Nurul Bahri, in Inengo Village, Kabila Bone Sub-District. It was found that students in Grade 8 struggled to improve their English vocabulary especially in the listening section. This is because the students in this school have never participated in English course because of the distance from this village to the city is quite far, which is 14 kilometers and there is no motivation to learn English. The English course place located in the center of the Gorontalo city and the cost is expensive. In addition, there is no motivation from parents to support their children to learn English. English is very important to learn from an early age. Moreover, when you enter middle school, they should have a foundation in English. Without a foundation in English, it will be difficult to pass the subject. So, to overcome this problem, the researcher used songs to improve their vocabulary through the slang in the lyrics of the song. "Eminem Song" are one example where they can find out some slang words in his song.

Further, it is necessary to consider teaching materials for vocabulary enhancement media because vocabulary is essential for mastering language skills. The media used in this research is song lyrics with peculiar English uses called slang. The word “slang” itself has so many definitions. However, there seems to be general agreement that it is a nonstandard way of speaking English, or a form of English that is not accepted in formal situations. In general, using songs as teaching media creates an enjoyable atmosphere in the classroom and motivates students to participate actively in learning activities. This is very important since having an active student in a classroom is the main goal of teaching and learning process (Dewi Wijayanti, 2019). Slang is commonly used in casual conversations among young and middle-aged people to say words or sentences with meanings that only the speaker and the other person can understand where the conversation seems casual and informal.

METHOD

This study used descriptive qualitative research with the purpose to observe the vocabulary acquisition of students in grade 8 of junior high school in MTS Nurul Bahri. The subject of this research are 24 students in the class. Descriptive qualitative research is chosen as it enables a detailed examination of the phenomenon in its natural context, focusing on understanding the students' perceptions and experiences. A purposive sampling technique was used to select the students in this study.

Data for this study were collected using the following methods:

- a. Interviews: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the students to gather their perceptions on how slang in English songs contributes to their vocabulary learning. The interviews focused on the types of slang words they encountered in the Eminem songs, their understanding of those words, and whether they found these words useful in their everyday language.
- b. Questionnaires: A set of open-ended questions was distributed to the students to capture their experiences and thoughts regarding the use of English songs in language learning. The questions were designed to gather data on their listening habits, preferred types of songs, and how often they learned new vocabulary from songs.
- c. Document Analysis: Lyrics of selected popular English songs were analyzed to identify the types of slang used and how these words may influence the students' vocabulary. The songs were selected based on their popularity and the frequency of slang usage, in this study was Eminem songs.

The data collected from interviews, questionnaires, and document analysis were analyzed using qualitative content analysis. The steps for data analysis included:

- a. Transcribing the Interviews: All interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyze to identify recurring themes or patterns regarding students' experiences with slang in English songs.

- b. Coding and Categorizing: The transcribed data were coded to categorize responses into themes such as “learning new words,” “understanding slang,” and “impact on vocabulary retention.” The responses from questionnaires were also coded in a similar manner.
- c. Song Lyrics Analysis: The lyrics of the selected songs were examined for instances of slang usage. The analysis focused on identifying specific slang words or phrases and categorizing them based on their meaning, relevance, and how easily they could be understood by the students.
- d. Interpretation: The final stage involved interpreting the data to understand the relationship between the use of slang in songs and its impact on students’ vocabulary enhancement. The findings were compared with existing literature on language acquisition through music.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This research investigates the use of slang in English songs as a method to enhance students' vocabulary at MTS Nurul Bahri. The study aims to explore the impact of incorporating slang from English songs on students' ability to understand and use new vocabulary in everyday conversations. The research focuses on how slang expressions from popular English songs can serve as an engaging tool for learning, considering that students today are highly exposed to music and its lyrics.

Based on the data collected from questionnaires, interviews, and vocabulary tests, the following key findings emerged:

a. Students' Ability to Identify Slang Words

In the pre-test, many students were unable to identify or correctly define the slang terms found in the lyrics of the songs. However, after the intervention, where students listened to songs with a focus on slang terms, their ability to recognize and understand these words improved significantly. This suggests that exposure to slang through songs enhances students' ability to detect and understand new vocabulary.

b. Exposure to Slang Through Music

In the next pre-test, some students reported that they listen to these songs regularly, with a significant number of students mentioning that they encounter slang words while doing so. This study shows that Eminem's songs contain many slang terms that are unfamiliar to the students, but are often used in contemporary and even everyday communication without them realizing it.

c. Improvement in Vocabulary Usage

Post-intervention tests indicated that students who were exposed to slang through songs demonstrated a better understanding and use of slang in informal contexts. They were able to incorporate slang terms into their spoken English, especially in casual conversations with peers. However, it was noted that students struggled to use slang appropriately in formal settings. This is because of the cultural differences between the song and the culture in their environment.

The findings suggest that the use of slang in English songs can be an effective and engaging method to enhance students' vocabulary, particularly when the songs are

incorporated into a structured learning environment. The positive results align with previous studies that emphasize the role of media and entertainment, like music, in language learning. However, the use of slang in music provides students with insight into the cultural contexts of language. Slang terms often carry specific connotations and are influenced by social factors like age, geography, and identity. By listening to songs, students not only expand their vocabulary but also gain a deeper understanding of cultural nuances, which can help them use language more naturally in real-life interactions. Performing a questions and answer activity with the students regarding the song they heard. The researcher mentioned some of the slang in the first English song they heard (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Question and Answer Session After The Listening Session

Based on the Figure 1 above, the integration of songs into language learning is an excellent way to engage students. It has been shown that students who enjoy what they are learning are more likely to retain new information. Teachers can create a relaxed, enjoyable environment that fosters vocabulary acquisition without the pressure typically associated with traditional learning methods by using music that students are already familiar with.

Then, the author asked them to mention some slang they had learned in song 2. Students who could mention the slang in the song were asked to come forward to the front of the class to present it. Picture 2 below shows this.



Figure 2. Students' Presentation After Listening Session

Finally, the students admitted that they enjoyed the process of learning vocabulary through songs. The fun and rhythmic nature of the songs helped them remember the slang words better and motivated them to increase their English vocabulary. In addition, the contextual use of slang in music allows students to understand the meaning of the words more clearly, as they can relate the words to the situation depicted in the song.

Teachers play an important role in facilitating slang learning by explaining the meaning and proper use of slang terms. Many students stated that without teacher guidance, they would misunderstand slang or use it inappropriately. In this case, the researcher suggests teachers to encourage students to discuss the meaning and implications of slang in the songs they listen to, thus developing a deeper understanding.

Despite the positive impact, there are challenges in using slang from songs in educational settings. This finding is in line with that slang words do not known the meaning of slang words may cause problems

in social life (Boylu & Karda^o, 2020). Not all slang is universally understood or accepted, and some slang terms may be inappropriate or offensive in certain contexts. Additionally, there is a risk that students may misuse slang, particularly in formal situations where such expressions may not be suitable. Therefore, it is essential for teachers to carefully curate the songs and guide students on when and how to use the slang appropriately.

CONCLUSSION

In conclusion, the study confirms that the use of slang in English songs can effectively enhance students' vocabulary, particularly in informal language. Songs serve as an engaging, culturally rich resource for language learning, motivating students to expand their vocabulary in a fun and memorable way. However, careful guidance from teachers is crucial to ensure that students understand the appropriate use of slang and to prevent misuse in inappropriate contexts. This method, when used alongside other educational tools, can significantly contribute to the development of students' language skills.

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