



FROM MELODY TO MEMORY: HOW MUSIC LYRICS ENHANCE ENGLISH  
VOCABULARY

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**Abstract:** *Vocabulary is the most crucial thing when learning a new language, which is connected with all four skills – reading, listening, writing, and speaking. When the learners have mastered vocabulary, they will be able to produce many sentences in spoken and written form easily. There exist many effective ways to boost students' vocabulary, one of which is learning from song lyrics. Combining education with music has more than one advantage, such as contextual learning, easy memorization, pronunciation practice, and increased motivation. This paper aims to describe the benefits of song lyrics in the education process as engaging tools by providing reliable examples from previous research and journals.*

**Key words:** *song lyrics, vocabulary boost, listening, memory and melody*

## INTRODUCTION

English has become the most influential global language, serving as a bridge for international communication, education, business, and technology. For non-native speakers, acquiring English as a second language is not only a necessity for academic and professional growth but also a means of accessing worldwide opportunities. Among the core components of language learning, vocabulary plays a central role, as it directly supports the development of all four skills—reading, listening, writing, and speaking. Without sufficient vocabulary, learners struggle to express ideas, comprehend texts, and engage in meaningful interactions.

Building a rich vocabulary requires both effective strategies and engaging approaches. Vocabulary is the basic element of language which will make the language meaningful (F,Dewi and S,Adnyani. 2020). Traditional methods such as memorization and drills may help to some extent, but they often fail to capture students' interest in the long run. In contrast, music—particularly song lyrics—has emerged as a powerful educational tool. Songs not only expose learners to authentic language but also provide meaningful contexts that make vocabulary easier to understand and remember. Songs are not a new concept in the teaching and learning process (F, Dewi, and S. Adnyani, 2020). Moreover, the rhythm and repetition in music enhance retention, while pronunciation and listening skills are naturally practiced through singing.

Using song lyrics as a resource in vocabulary teaching has been recognized in recent research as an innovative and motivational method. Songs provide a dynamic and urgent learning experience by including rhythmic, repetition and use of context-related words (Morini and Blair, 2021). Combining learning with enjoyment, it creates a positive classroom atmosphere and fosters long-term language acquisition. Therefore, incorporating music into English language learning can significantly enrich vocabulary development and promote learner confidence in both written and spoken communication.



Vocabulary is widely recognized as one of the cornerstones of second language acquisition. Without sufficient vocabulary, learners are unable to fully develop their skills in reading, listening, speaking, and writing. Scholars such as Nation (2001) and Schmitt (2010) emphasize that vocabulary knowledge is the foundation of communicative competence, since grammar and pronunciation cannot be effectively applied without words to express meaning. In many cases, learners who possess a rich vocabulary are more confident in producing both spoken and written sentences, while those with limited vocabulary often feel restricted in communication.

Traditional methods for learning vocabulary such as memory and textbook exercises often do not wisely, but rather make language acquisition a challenging process (Zhao & Lai, 2023). These methods —such as rote memorization, translation, and word lists—have long been used in classrooms. While these approaches can help students learn isolated words, they often fail to provide context and long-term retention. As a result, learners may forget words quickly or struggle to use them correctly in real-life situations. This highlights the need for alternative methods that can make vocabulary learning more engaging, memorable, and practical.

One alternate method for improving English, particularly vocabulary, is through song (M.Ikbal, A.Thalib and R.Sofyan. 2023). The song is actually a poem that is recited in a particular tone, rhythm, beat, and melody to create harmony (M.Ikbal, A.Thalib and R.Sofyan. 2023). Songs are a natural source of authentic language, containing not only vocabulary but also idioms, collocations, and everyday expressions. Listening to and singing along with songs allows students to encounter new words in meaningful contexts, making them easier to understand and remember. Moreover, the rhythm, rhyme, and repetition in music enhance memorization, while pronunciation practice comes naturally through repetition of the lyrics.

Another significant advantage of using songs is their motivational effect. Unlike traditional drills, songs create a positive and enjoyable learning environment. Learners often feel less pressure when engaging with music, which reduces anxiety and increases their willingness to participate in classroom activities. Moreover, music reduces learning anxiety by creating a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere, fostering greater participation among students who may otherwise struggle with traditional listening tasks (Jing, 2025). This motivational factor is especially important in second language learning, where confidence and emotional engagement play a major role in success.

Research supports the benefits of this method. For example, studies by Murphey (1992) and Medina (1993) show that music aids in vocabulary acquisition by combining auditory, visual, and emotional learning. Learners exposed to song lyrics were found to retain new words longer and use them more effectively in communication. In addition, songs often reflect cultural aspects of language, giving learners not only vocabulary but also insights into the cultural background of English-speaking communities.

In conclusion, language is built on words, and having a large vocabulary helps people say what they want to say more clearly and exactly (D.Susanti 2024). Vocabulary learning cannot rely solely on traditional approaches. Song lyrics provide a powerful alternative that combines authentic language input, contextual learning, pronunciation practice, and



motivation. By integrating music into the language learning process, teachers can create engaging lessons that help students build a strong vocabulary base, which in turn supports their overall proficiency in English as a second language. Learning English vocabulary may aid students with various tasks, including telling stories, discussing concepts, writing letters, and more (D.Susanti 2024). This side of song lyrics can be researched further.

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