

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SONGS IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Kurnia Budiyanthi¹, Tasya Nefiyandra¹, Dinda Alfiah Nahdah Simanjuntak¹, Ira
Riswana¹, Nurhamidah¹

Department of English Education, Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, UIN
Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau, Indonesia

kurnia.budiyanthi@uin@gmail.com tasyanefiyandra21@gmail.com
dindajuntak201@gmail.com rswnrara@gmail.com nurhamida6556@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the implementation of songs in teaching English to elementary school students at SD 136 Pekanbaru. This study employed a qualitative descriptive design. The instruments used were questionnaires, interviews, and documentation. The questionnaire was distributed to 28 students to identify their responses toward the use of songs in learning English, while the interview was conducted with the English teacher to obtain information about the implementation of songs in the classroom. The findings showed that songs received positive responses from students in learning English. Songs increased students' motivation, participation, vocabulary mastery, and pronunciation. The teacher also stated that songs created an enjoyable classroom atmosphere and encouraged students to participate actively during the lesson. However, several challenges remained, particularly limited classroom facilities such as speakers and LCD projectors. Overall, songs were considered an effective and enjoyable strategy for teaching English to young learners at SD 136 Pekanbaru.

Keywords: *songs, teaching English, young learners, elementary school students, students' responses*

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui implementasi lagu dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris pada siswa sekolah dasar di SD 136 Pekanbaru. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif. Instrumen yang digunakan meliputi angket, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Angket diberikan kepada 28 siswa untuk mengetahui respons mereka terhadap penggunaan lagu dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris, sedangkan wawancara dilakukan dengan guru bahasa Inggris untuk memperoleh informasi mengenai implementasi lagu di kelas. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa lagu memberikan respons positif dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris. Lagu meningkatkan motivasi, partisipasi, penguasaan kosakata, dan pelafalan siswa. Guru juga menyatakan bahwa lagu menciptakan suasana belajar yang menyenangkan serta mendorong siswa untuk berpartisipasi aktif selama pembelajaran. Namun, masih terdapat beberapa kendala, terutama keterbatasan fasilitas kelas seperti speaker dan LCD proyektor. Secara keseluruhan, lagu merupakan strategi yang efektif dan menyenangkan dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris bagi siswa sekolah dasar.

Kata Kunci: lagu, pengajaran bahasa Inggris, peserta didik usia muda, siswa sekolah dasar, respons siswa

A. Introduction

English is an international language that has an important role in communication and education around the world. Crystal (2003) explains that English is widely used globally, making it necessary to introduce the language from an early age, especially at the elementary school level. Teaching English to young learners requires suitable and interesting strategies because children usually enjoy fun, interactive, and meaningful learning activities. According to Harmer (2007), children learn more effectively when they participate in enjoyable learning experiences.

One of the strategies that can be used in teaching English is the use of songs. Songs provide rhythm, repetition, and meaningful context that can help students understand and remember vocabulary more easily. Murphey (1992) states that songs can support language acquisition and improve students' pronunciation. In addition, songs can create a pleasant and relaxed classroom atmosphere that may increase students' motivation and participation in learning activities.

Brewster et al. (2002) also explain that songs are suitable for young learners because they combine learning with entertainment. Recent studies have shown that songs can improve students' motivation, vocabulary mastery, and engagement in learning English, especially for young learners (Hamdani, 2024).

Young learners often have difficulty maintaining their focus during the learning process, especially when the teaching activities are less interactive and interesting. Therefore, teachers need to use creative strategies and media to make students more active and enthusiastic in learning English. Songs can help teachers create enjoyable learning activities because students usually enjoy singing activities more than conventional learning activities such as writing tasks. Songs also encourage students to participate more actively during the lesson and help them learn vocabulary through repetition and rhythm.

In addition to improving students' language skills, songs also contribute to the development of students' confidence and positive attitudes

toward learning English. Young learners often feel more comfortable participating in learning activities when they are presented in an enjoyable and meaningful way. Songs create opportunities for students to practice pronunciation, vocabulary, and listening skills in a relaxed classroom atmosphere while encouraging active participation (Brewster et al., 2002; Murphey, 1992). Through repetition and rhythm, students become more familiar with English expressions and are more willing to use the language during classroom activities (Murphey, 1992).

Although many studies have reported the benefits of songs in English language teaching, most of them mainly focused on improving vocabulary, pronunciation, or students' motivation (Hamdani, 2024; Murphey, 1992). Limited attention has been given to how songs are implemented by teachers in actual classroom practice and how elementary school students respond to their implementation. Therefore, this study attempts to provide a more comprehensive description of the implementation of songs in English classrooms by exploring both the

teacher's implementation and students' responses.

This study was conducted at SD 136 Pekanbaru because English teachers at this school have implemented songs as one of the learning strategies in teaching English. This condition provided an appropriate setting to investigate how songs were applied during classroom instruction and how students responded to this learning strategy. The findings of this study are expected to provide practical insights for elementary school English teachers in selecting enjoyable and effective teaching strategies for young learners

However, the implementation of songs in teaching English may still face several challenges. Teachers sometimes experience difficulties related to classroom facilities and supporting media, such as limited speakers and visual media. These limitations may affect the effectiveness of song implementation in the classroom. Therefore, teachers need to adjust the use of songs based on the classroom situation and students' learning needs.

Based on those explanations, this study aims to investigate the implementation of songs in teaching

English to elementary school students at SD 136 Pekanbaru. This study also aims to identify students' responses toward the use of songs in learning English.

B. Method

This study used qualitative descriptive research to investigate the implementation of songs in teaching English to elementary school students at SD 136 Pekanbaru, Indonesia. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research is used to explore and understand individuals' experiences and responses toward a particular phenomenon. Therefore, this study focused on identifying how songs were implemented in the classroom and students' responses toward the use of songs in learning English.

Respondents

The participants of this study were an English teacher and 28 elementary school students at SD 136 Pekanbaru. The students were selected because they had experienced learning English using songs in the classroom. The English teacher was selected because she had experience in teaching English using songs in the classroom.

Meanwhile, the students were selected using purposive sampling since they had directly participated in English lessons that incorporated songs as a teaching strategy. Their experiences were considered relevant to provide information regarding the implementation of songs and their responses toward this learning strategy.

Instruments

The data were collected through questionnaire, interview, and documentation. The questionnaire was distributed to 28 students to identify their responses toward the implementation of songs in learning English. The questionnaire consisted of ten statements related to students' motivation, participation, and understanding during the learning process. In addition, an interview was conducted with the English teacher to obtain information about the implementation of songs, the types of songs used, the benefits of songs, the challenges faced by the teacher, and students' responses during the learning process. The questionnaire consisted of ten close-ended statements covering students' motivation, participation, vocabulary learning, and pronunciation. The

interview was conducted in a semi-structured format, allowing the researcher to obtain more detailed information while maintaining consistency with the research objectives. Documentation, including classroom photographs and interview recordings, was collected to support and strengthen the research findings.

Procedures

The researcher first prepared the questionnaire and interview guide instruments, then distributed questionnaires to all 28 student participants. After collecting the questionnaire responses, the researcher conducted a semi-structured interview with the English teacher. Documentation such as interview recordings, questionnaire results, and photos was also collected as supporting evidence in this study. Before collecting the data, the researcher obtained permission from the school to conduct the research. The questionnaire was administered after students had participated in English learning activities using songs. After that, the researcher conducted a semi-structured interview with the English teacher to gain a deeper understanding of the implementation, benefits, and

challenges of using songs in the classroom.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using qualitative descriptive analysis. Questionnaire data were analyzed by calculating the students' responses for each statement and categorizing them into Yes, Neutral, and No responses. Meanwhile, interview data were analyzed descriptively based on the teacher's responses. Documentation was used to strengthen the findings of the study. The interview data were transcribed and organized into several themes based on the research objectives. The findings from the questionnaire, interview, and documentation were then compared and interpreted descriptively to provide a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of songs in teaching English and students' responses toward their use.

C. Findings and Discussions

Questionnaire Findings

The questionnaire was distributed to 28 students at SD 136 Pekanbaru. The data were analyzed by calculating the total responses from students for each statement. The responses were categorized into Yes,

Neutral, and No. The complete results of the questionnaire are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Questionnaire Results of Students' Responses toward the Use of Songs in Learning English

No.	Statement	Yes	Neutral	No
1	I like learning English using songs	11	14	3
2	Songs make learning English fun	12	15	1
3	Songs help me remember new words	23	5	0
4	I feel excited when learning with songs	20	7	0
5	I sang along during the lesson	16	10	2
6	I joined classroom activities when songs were used	10	17	1
7	I spoke or answered questions during the song activity	16	8	4
8	I understand the words in the song	11	15	1
9	Songs help me improve my pronunciation	18	9	1
10	I want the teacher to use songs more often	3	20	4

Students' Motivation

Based on the questionnaire results, students generally showed positive responses toward learning English using songs. For statement 1 ("I like learning English using songs"), 11 students answered "Yes", 14 students chose "Neutral", and 3 students answered "No". For statement 2 ("Songs make learning English fun"), 12 students chose

"Yes", 15 were "Neutral", and 1 answered "No". Meanwhile, for statement 4 ("I feel excited when learning with songs"), 20 students answered "Yes" and 7 students chose "Neutral", with no students responding "No". These findings indicate that songs can help increase students' motivation in learning English, particularly in creating excitement and enthusiasm during learning activities. This finding is also supported by Brewster et al. (2002), who state that songs can create enjoyable learning activities for young learners. These findings indicate that enjoyable learning activities can increase students' enthusiasm and create a more positive classroom atmosphere. As a result, students become more interested and motivated to participate in English learning through songs.

Students' Participation

The questionnaire results also showed that students participated actively during the learning process. For statement 5 ("I sang along during the lesson"), 16 students answered "Yes", 10 were "Neutral", and 2 answered "No". For statement 7 ("I spoke or answered questions during the song activity"), 16 students answered "Yes", 8 were "Neutral", and

4 answered "No". However, for statement 6 ("I joined classroom activities when songs were used"), the majority of students chose "Neutral" (17 students), with 10 answering "Yes" and 1 answering "No". These findings show that songs encouraged students to participate in classroom activities and become more active during learning activities. This finding is in line with Harmer (2007), who explains that enjoyable learning activities can encourage students to participate actively in the classroom. Although several students selected "Neutral," the overall findings suggest that songs encouraged students to become more actively involved in classroom activities. Songs created an interactive learning environment that reduced students' hesitation to participate in English lessons..

Students' Understanding

Most students gave positive responses toward the use of songs in understanding and remembering vocabulary. For statement 3 ("Songs help me remember new words"), 23 students answered "Yes" and 5 students chose "Neutral", with no students answering "No". This was the highest positive response in the entire questionnaire. For statement 9

("Songs help me improve my pronunciation"), 18 students answered "Yes", 9 were "Neutral", and 1 answered "No". However, for statement 8 ("I understand the words in the song"), only 11 students answered "Yes", while 15 chose "Neutral" and 1 answered "No", indicating that many students found it challenging to understand all words in the songs. These findings indicate that songs may help students remember vocabulary more easily, although some students still had difficulties understanding all the words in the songs. This finding supports Murphey's (1992) theory that songs can support language acquisition and help students learn vocabulary through repetition and rhythm. The findings also suggest that songs are particularly effective for vocabulary learning because repeated exposure to song lyrics helps students remember new words more easily. However, teachers should select songs that are appropriate for students' English proficiency levels so that the lyrics can be understood more effectively.

Interview Findings

The Implementation of Songs

The teacher explained that the use of songs in the classroom was adjusted to the lesson material and students' learning level. Before using songs, the teacher usually prepared the lesson plan and introduced the song topic to the students. The teacher stated that her approach in selecting and using songs was always based on the RPP (lesson plan) or syllabus. The teacher also wrote the song lyrics on the board to help students follow and understand the song more easily. According to the teacher, songs were usually played after the explanation of the lesson material. This finding is in line with Millington (2011), who explains that songs can be implemented through several stages to support students' understanding during the learning process. These findings indicate that careful preparation and systematic implementation are important factors in maximizing the effectiveness of songs as a teaching strategy. Proper planning enables teachers to integrate songs with the lesson objectives and students' learning needs

Types of Songs Used

According to the teacher, the songs used in teaching were selected based on the students' age and level. Simple and familiar songs related to topics such as numbers and transportation were commonly used because they were easier for elementary students to understand and remember. The teacher emphasized choosing songs that were appropriate for the students' age. This finding supports Brewster et al. (2002), who explain that teaching young learners should involve enjoyable and ageappropriate learning activities. Selecting songs that match students' age and language proficiency helps students understand the learning materials more easily. Appropriate song selection also increases students' confidence and participation during classroom activities.

Benefits of Songs

The teacher explained that songs gave several positive effects on students' English learning. Songs helped students increase their vocabulary and improve their pronunciation. The teacher noted that through songs, students encountered new vocabulary and added it to their

existing knowledge. The teacher also explained that songs made students more interested and enthusiastic during the lesson, especially lower-grade students who often found it difficult to stay focused in class. This finding is consistent with Murphey (1992), who states that songs can improve vocabulary and pronunciation through repetition and rhythm. These findings suggest that songs not only support students' language development but also increase their learning motivation. An enjoyable classroom atmosphere encourages students to become more engaged and confident in learning English.

Challenges in Implementing Songs

The teacher stated that limited facilities became one of the main challenges in implementing songs in the classroom. The school did not provide complete facilities such as infocus and speakers in every class, so teachers sometimes needed to borrow the equipment before using songs in teaching activities. The teacher mentioned having to borrow the infocus and speakers before conducting songbased lessons. In addition, the teacher explained that visual media could help students

become more focused and interested during the lesson. These findings show that supporting facilities are important in helping teachers implement songs effectively in the classroom. Despite these limitations, the teacher continued to use songs by adapting the available classroom facilities. This indicates that teacher creativity and flexibility play an important role in maintaining effective English learning despite limited resources.

Students' Responses (from Interview)

The teacher explained that students generally showed positive responses toward the use of songs in learning English. According to the teacher, students became more enthusiastic, focused, and enjoyed the learning activities when songs were used. Students were noted to prefer singing over writing activities, and they often asked the teacher to replay the songs because they enjoyed learning through singing activities. However, some students with special needs were more passive during classroom activities. This finding also supports Brewster et al. (2002), who explain that enjoyable learning activities can encourage young learners to

participate actively in the classroom. Overall, the interview findings indicate that songs created a positive learning experience for most students. Although some students required additional support during classroom activities, songs remained an effective strategy for encouraging participation and maintaining students' interest in learning English.

D. Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, the implementation of songs in teaching English at SD 136 Pekanbaru had a positive impact on students' English learning. Songs increased students' motivation, participation, vocabulary mastery, and pronunciation while creating a more enjoyable classroom atmosphere. The findings from both the questionnaire and interview revealed that students generally responded positively to the use of songs and actively participated in learning activities. These findings indicate that songs can serve as an effective teaching strategy for teaching English to young learners.

The study also found that the successful implementation of songs depended on the teacher's preparation, including selecting age-

appropriate songs and integrating them with the lesson objectives. However, limited classroom facilities, such as speakers and LCD projectors, remained one of the main challenges in implementing song-based learning.

Therefore, English teachers are encouraged to integrate appropriate songs into their classroom activities to create more engaging and meaningful learning experiences. Schools are also expected to provide adequate facilities, such as speakers and LCD projectors, to support the effective implementation of song-based learning. Furthermore, future researchers are encouraged to conduct similar studies in different educational settings or with larger numbers of participants to obtain broader and more comprehensive findings regarding the use of songs in English language teaching.

REFERENCES

- Brewster, J., Ellis, G., & Girard, D. (2002). *The Primary English Teacher's Guide*. Pearson Education.
- Cameron, L. (2001). *Teaching Languages to Young Learners*. Cambridge University Press.

- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches (4th ed.)*. SAGE Publications.
- Crystal, D. (2003). *English as a Global Language (2nd ed.)*. Cambridge University Press.
- Engh, D. (2013). *Why Use Music in English Language Learning? A Survey of the Literature*. *English Language Teaching*, 6(2), 113–127.
- Fonseca-Mora, M. C., Toscano-Fuentes, C., & Wermke, K. (2011). *Melodies that Help: The Relation Between Language Aptitude and Musical Intelligence*. *Anglistik International Journal*.
- Griffie, D. T. (1992). *Songs in Action*. Prentice Hall.
- Hamdani, H. (2024). Teaching English Young Learners Through Song. *SIPENDAS Journal*. <https://jurnal.stkipkusumanegara.ac.id/index.php/sipendas/article/view/2169>
- Harmer, J. (2007). *How to Teach English*. Pearson Longman.
- Lems, K. (2001). Using Music in the Adult ESL Classroom. *ERIC Digest*.
- Lo, R., & Li, H. C. F. (1998). *Songs Enhance Learner Involvement*. *English Teaching Forum*, 36(3), 8–11.
- Medina, S. L. (1993). *The Effect of Music on Second Language Vocabulary Acquisition*. National Network for Early Language Learning.
- Millington, N. T. (2011). *Using songs effectively to teach English to young learners*. *Language Education in Asia*, 2(1), 134-141.
- Murphey, T. (1992). *Music and Song*. Oxford University Press.
- Paquette, K. R., & Rieg, S. A. (2008). Using Music to Support the Literacy Development of Young English Language Learners. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 36(3), 227–232.
- Saricoban, A., & Metin, E. (2000). Songs, Verse and Games for Teaching Grammar. *The Internet TESL Journal*, 6(10).
- Shen, C. (2009). *Using English Songs: An Enjoyable and Effective Approach to ELT*. *English Language Teaching*, 2(1), 88–94.
- Suwandesi, N. M. A., Ratminingsih, N. M., & Dewi, K. S. (2022). Implementing English Kids' Song Media to

Improve Students'
Vocabulary
Achievement. Jurnal
Pendidikan Bahasa
Inggris Undiksha, 10(2).
[https://doi.org/10.23887/
jpbi.v10i2.54028](https://doi.org/10.23887/jpbi.v10i2.54028)