


Understanding Students' Difficulties and Motivation in Learning Vocabulary Through an English Song titled Lovin Myself - Ava Max

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to understand the difficulties, obstacles, and motivations of students in learning English vocabulary through the song "Lovin' Myself" by Ava Max. This study used a descriptive qualitative method, with data collection through an open questionnaire filled out by students who had experience learning vocabulary using the song. The data was then analyzed to identify learning experiences, challenges faced by students, and the impact of the song on their motivation and vocabulary comprehension. The results showed that this song served as an effective learning medium to increase students' interest and motivation because it created a more relaxed, light, and enjoyable learning environment and was often integrated into daily activities. Students found that it was easier to remember vocabulary through the rhythm, repeated lyrics, and sentence context in the song. In addition, several respondents began to improve their independent learning strategies, such as guessing the meaning of words from context before consulting a dictionary. However, this study also identified several challenges that students still frequently encounter, including fast song tempo, unclear pronunciation, and the presence of idiomatic vocabulary that is difficult to understand without additional explanation. This evidence shows that songs have great potential as vocabulary learning tools, but still need to be combined with supporting strategies.

Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk memahami kesulitan, hambatan, dan motivasi siswa dalam belajar kosakata bahasa Inggris melalui lagu "Lovin' Myself" karya Ava Max. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif, dengan pengumpulan data melalui kuesioner terbuka yang diisi oleh siswa yang memiliki pengalaman belajar kosakata menggunakan lagu tersebut. Data kemudian dianalisis untuk mengidentifikasi pengalaman belajar, tantangan yang dihadapi siswa, serta dampak lagu tersebut terhadap motivasi dan pemahaman kosakata mereka. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa lagu ini berfungsi sebagai media pembelajaran yang efektif untuk meningkatkan minat dan motivasi siswa karena menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang lebih santai, ringan, dan menyenangkan, serta sering diintegrasikan ke dalam aktivitas sehari-hari. Siswa menemukan bahwa lebih mudah mengingat kosakata melalui ritme, lirik yang diulang, dan konteks kalimat dalam lagu. Selain itu, beberapa responden mulai meningkatkan strategi belajar mandiri mereka, seperti menebak arti kata dari konteks sebelum berkonsultasi dengan kamus. Namun, penelitian ini juga mengidentifikasi beberapa tantangan yang masih sering dihadapi siswa, termasuk tempo lagu yang cepat, pengucapan yang tidak jelas, dan adanya kosakata idiomatik yang sulit dipahami tanpa penjelasan tambahan. Bukti ini menunjukkan bahwa lagu memiliki potensi besar sebagai alat pembelajaran kosakata, tetapi masih perlu dikombinasikan dengan strategi pendukung.



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INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary mastery is one of the most important parts of learning English because it is the main foundation for deepening and applying the language optimally. (Sitepu et al., 2023). However, in the learning process, students also experience difficulties in understanding English vocabulary because of the challenges in remembering, memorizing, and reusing the new words they have learned. These difficulties arise mainly due to limited memory or recall, resulting in the vocabulary they have learned being easily forgotten if not studied repeatedly. In addition, students also experience difficulties and challenges in combining word forms with their meanings due to the lack of vocabulary usage in everyday life. The difference between the spelling and pronunciation of English words adds to the obstacles for students, making them hesitate to use these words. The lack of efficient learning methods makes the memorization process less than optimal. Students' low motivation to learn vocabulary also weakens their ability to retain these words in their memory for a long time. (Anjarani & Sy, 2022)

One alternative learning medium that is quite interesting among students for developing vocabulary mastery is English songs with meaningful and contextual lyrics. Songs can help students acquire new vocabulary, and also remember the vocabulary from the songs. (Ramadhanti & Farida, 2025). Songs also help motivate students in learning vocabulary because we can choose songs that we like, while affective motivation helps create a more enjoyable learning atmosphere and reduces boredom, improves concentration, and motivates students to be more enthusiastic and energetic in the learning process. (Astuti et al., 2023). Using songs as a learning medium is also considered “fun”; students are more motivated and enthusiastic, which is important for them to be consistent. Vocabulary practice, a combination of vocabulary + listening + pronunciation, makes the learning process more holistic, not just memorization. (Hasaniyah & Suryanto, 2025)

How many difficulties and challenges students encounter and observe their level of motivation in learning vocabulary through an English song titled “Lovin Myself” by Ava Max. The results of this study are expected to contribute to the development of more effective and interesting learning strategies for English learners, especially at the university level. Vocabulary learning through songs can be considered quite effective for students because songs can create a more interesting and relaxed learning atmosphere and can improve vocabulary. (Lijiao & Amirdabbaghian, 2024). However, even though songs have considerable potential as a learning medium, students still encounter various difficulties or challenges, such as fast tempo, use of audio, and unclear pronunciation because they have not yet mastered the vocabulary. (Fadli et al., 2023). On the other hand, learning motivation is a very important trigger that determines the success of students in utilizing songs as a learning medium so that learning feels easier and more enjoyable. (Nurdin et al., 2023). Therefore, this study aims to understand and identify

Without sufficient vocabulary development, students will struggle with their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. However, the fact is that many students, especially those studying English, still face challenges in learning vocabulary, such as difficulty remembering the meaning of words, complicated pronunciation, and a lack of opportunities to use vocabulary in real contexts in class. According to (Sitepu et al., 2023). Difficulty in expanding vocabulary is a challenge experienced by students when learning, understanding, and remembering new vocabulary in English. According to (Anjarani & Sy, 2022). Some of the difficulties encountered were:

1. Difficulty with pronunciation
2. Difficulty with unfamiliar words
3. Difficulty remembering vocabulary

One alternative learning medium that is quite attractive among students for developing vocabulary mastery is English songs through lyrics. The use of music is quite effective because it can help increase motivation, concentration, and emotional involvement, according to (Ramadhanti & Farida, 2025). Songs also help motivate students in learning vocabulary because we can choose songs that we like, while affective motivation helps create a more enjoyable learning atmosphere and reduces boredom, improves concentration, and motivates students to be more enthusiastic and energetic in the learning process, according to (Astuti et al., 2023).

However, there are still many students who are not interested in reading, have a limited vocabulary, and are not interested in the teaching methods used. Therefore, effective vocabulary learning strategies are needed so that students can increase the number of words they know, especially in the noun and verb categories. (Junaid et al., 2023). It can be concluded that nouns play a very important role in the formation of overall and optimal sentence structure. Nouns function as the head, carrying the main meaning, while other elements such as determiners, adjectives, and prepositional phrases only serve as modifiers. Thus, nouns and noun phrases are fundamental components that influence the meaning, structure, and processing of the Indonesian language. (Sitinjak et al., 2023)

The results of the study prove that nouns are the most dominant type of vocabulary recorded and studied by students because nouns play a role as the main carriers of meaning in a text. By creating their own glossaries, students find it easier to understand, remember, and use nouns in the context of sentences, which has a positive impact on improving their English reading and writing skills. (Doi, 2025). Because learning through songs is considered “fun,” students are more motivated and enthusiastic. This motivation arises from the need to find learning media that is more interesting, effective, and in line with students' interests. According to (Hasaniyah & Suryanto, 2025)

Learning vocabulary through songs can be said to be quite effective for students because songs can create a more interesting and relaxed learning atmosphere and improve vocabulary. Listening to English songs helps them remember vocabulary, improve pronunciation, and increase motivation to learn. According to (Lijiao & Amirdabbaghian, 2024). However, even though songs have considerable potential as a learning medium, students still encounter various difficulties and challenges, such as songs that are too fast, lack of focus, idiomatic vocabulary, and unclear pronunciation. According to (Fadli et al., 2023)

Finding motivation in learning is a very important factor that will determine the success of students in utilizing songs as a learning medium so that learning feels easier to understand and enjoyable. According to (Nurdin et al., 2023). Music was chosen as a medium because it greatly supports the learning process, making it easier, more enjoyable, and relevant to everyday life. It also enriches vocabulary, trains pronunciation, and improves listening skills. (Ural, n.d.)

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach that aims to identify the difficulties, challenges, and motivations of students in learning English vocabulary through songs. A qualitative approach was chosen to enable researchers to explore in depth the data related to students' experiences, perceptions, and strategies in using songs as a learning medium, according to (Fitri et al., 2023). Open-ended questionnaires are used so that respondents can freely express their personal experiences or views, for example, about what songs they often listen to and play, what parts help them learn new vocabulary, and how they feel when learning using songs as a medium. (Kusuma & Wahyuni, 2025).

METHOD

This study uses qualitative methods with the aim of comprehensively investigating the difficulties and motivations experienced by students in learning English vocabulary through the use of songs. Songs were chosen as a medium because they greatly support the learning process, making it easier, more enjoyable, and relevant to everyday life, as well as effective. (Ural, n.d.). A qualitative approach was also chosen because it allowed the study to gain an in-depth understanding of students' experiences, views, and tactics in using songs as learning aids. Qualitative methods are considered relevant in understanding students' learning experiences through songs because they produce data that is easy to

interpret and significant. (Fitri et al., 2023). The research subjects involved students.

The main method used in this study was an open questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. The open questionnaire was used to find out the personal views and experiences of the respondents (students) and also to obtain a general picture of students' habits in using songs as a medium for learning and improving vocabulary. (Kusuma & Wahyuni, 2025), such as how often they listen to English songs, what types of music they like. The questionnaire contained written questions to obtain information from respondents (students) about what they experienced, knew, and felt.

The data obtained through the questionnaire was then analyzed using descriptive qualitative methods. The reason for choosing the song "Lovin Myself" by Ava Max as a learning medium was because the lyrics of the song use simple, clear, and easy-to-understand words among students, especially those who are learning vocabulary or improving their vocabulary. This song also uses vocabulary that is easy and often encountered in everyday life. Thus, it is hoped that it can help students who are learning vocabulary and improving their vocabulary, especially students in the English Education Study Program.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Results

The research data was obtained through an open questionnaire using Google Forms, which was filled out by students who had experience learning English vocabulary through the song "Lovin Myself" by Ava Max.

Based on an analysis of the respondents' answers, several main themes emerged regarding their learning experiences, namely:

- (1) difficulties still faced by students during the learning process through songs..
- (2) increased motivation to learn
- (3) the benefits of songs for vocabulary comprehension

Difficulties Experienced by Students

However, students still face several obstacles. The most commonly mentioned difficulty is the tempo of the songs, which makes the lyrics seem to pass by too quickly before they can be understood. Not only that, but the singers' pronunciation, which follows the rhythm of the music, makes some words sound unclear. Some idiomatic vocabulary is also considered difficult to understand without the help of a dictionary. Students also admit that not all meanings can be understood just by listening. They still need other supporting resources such as lyric translations or explanations from lecturers/teachers. This shows that songs are effective as learning triggers, but still need to be integrated with supporting strategies in order to maximize vocabulary comprehension.

Motivation to Learn

Many students expressed that songs have a positive impact on their motivation to learn English. One reason is that listening to songs makes the learning process easier to understand, more enjoyable, and less burdensome. Learning through songs also helps students feel closer to English because songs are part of their daily activities. Therefore, English is no longer considered a "distant" subject, but something familiar and relevant. Several respondents indicated that the use of songs helps reduce boredom or fatigue when learning vocabulary. They feel more interested in searching for or discovering the meanings of new vocabulary seen in lyrics compared to when learning through texts in books. This shows that music has a fairly effective role in supporting learning readiness, especially for foreign language learners.

Understanding Vocabulary Through Lyric Context

Not only does it affect motivation, but students also consider songs to be very helpful in understanding the meaning of vocabulary through the context of sentences. They find it easier to remember certain vocabulary because it is linked to the rhythm, feelings, and circumstances in the song. Long-term memory is facilitated through the repetition of song lyrics that are often heard. Most students

also said that they have become accustomed to guessing the meaning of vocabulary from context before opening an English dictionary. This shows progress in independent learning strategies. It can be concluded that songs not only serve as a medium of entertainment, but also as a valid means of language information.

Table 1. Qualitative Data Analysis of Open-Ended Google Form Questionnaire Results

Participant Code	Important Data Quotes	Theme Code
P1	"The song Lovin' Myself serves as an effective and enjoyable learning medium."	AFF
P1	"The lyrics are simple, repetitive, and easy to remember, which helps with vocabulary acquisition."	COG
P3	"Since I just heard this song, I need time to figure out what it means."	META
P3	"Because the song repeats itself, the vocabulary is easier to remember."	COG
P4	"The melody and rhythm of songs are very helpful in understanding vocabulary."	COG
P4	Learning with songs feels comfortable and exciting.	AFF
P5	"I have to listen to a song three times before I understand its meaning."	META
P5	"Songs help you learn the correct pronunciation."	COG
P8	"Repeating lyrics, especially in the chorus, makes it easier to remember vocabulary."	META
P8	"Some words need to be looked up because their meaning is not immediately clear."	META
P9	"Lyrics that are repeated often and have a clear context make the vocabulary easy to remember."	COG
P9	Singing along helps with pronunciation and increases your vocabulary.	COG
P11	"The tempo of the song is too fast, making it difficult to understand the lyrics."	COG
P11	"Repeating the lyrics helps me understand the vocabulary."	COG
P12	"The lyrics that are repeated often are the most helpful for understanding vocabulary."	AFF
P12	"Learning through songs feels more relaxed and less boring."	AFF
P14	"Repeating the chorus and simple lyrics helps you understand the meaning of the vocabulary in context."	COG
P14	"Repeating the chorus and simple lyrics helps to understand the meaning of vocabulary in context."	COG

Explanation:

COG = Cognitive Strategy

META = Metacognitive Strategy

AFF = Affective Strategy

CH = Challenge

Discussion

This study shows that the song “Lovin Myself” serves as a learning medium that not only provides language information but also contributes to the affective aspect of learning media. The increase in motivation felt by students is in line with the opinion that positive feelings can strengthen engagement in learning. When students feel calm and enjoy the learning process, they will be more open to new language information.

From a linguistic perspective, songs provide a rich context, so vocabulary should be learned not in isolation, but as part of discourse. Students' experience in interpreting meaning based on context shows that there is a constructive process in the formation of meaning. This is important in vocabulary learning, because understanding gained through context tends to be more lasting and memorable.

However, research on the difficulties or obstacles in understanding vocabulary due to tempo, pronunciation, and idioms emphasizes that songs are not a completely challenge-free medium. Natural language information truly provides authenticity, but at the same time can cause confusion for learners. Therefore, the use of songs as a learning medium should be balanced with supporting activities, such as discussing the meaning of lyrics, pronunciation exercises, or the use of dictionaries.

Overall, the results of this study show that the song “Lovin Myself” has considerable potential as a medium for learning English vocabulary, particularly because of its contribution to learning motivation and memory reinforcement. However, its effectiveness still depends on how students interpret the lyrics and the learning strategies they use. With the right approach, songs can be a means of not only entertaining, but also enriching learners' language skills.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of data analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that the use of the song “Lovin Myself” by Ava Max has a positive effect on the English vocabulary learning process among students. The song serves not only as a source of linguistic information, but also as an affective trigger that can strengthen learning motivation, create a sense of comfort, and create a learning atmosphere that is quite enjoyable and relevant to students' daily experiences. Through the context of the lyrics, students can more easily remember and understand the meaning of vocabulary, and begin to improve independent learning strategies such as guessing the meaning of words based on context before referring to a dictionary.

However, this study also shows that vocabulary learning through songs still has several obstacles, including fast song tempo, unclear pronunciation, and the presence of idiomatic vocabulary that is difficult to understand without additional explanation. These conditions confirm that songs cannot yet fully stand as a single learning medium, but need to be integrated with supporting strategies such as discussing the meaning of lyrics, pronunciation exercises, and guidance on dictionary use.

Overall, the song “Lovin Myself” has significant potential as a medium for learning English vocabulary, especially in increasing motivation and strengthening memory retention. However, its effectiveness still depends on the learning assistance provided and the strategies used by students in interpreting the lyrics. With proper pedagogical management, the song can serve as a learning medium that is not only entertaining, but also educational and constructive for developing students' vocabulary skills.

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