

# Using songs to enrich english vocabulary for 4<sup>th</sup> grade students at school in Hanoi

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**Abstract:** *The study investigates the use of songs in Thanh Liet Primary School to enhance vocabulary acquisition among fourth-grade students. The research, using a mixed-methods approach, found that students who participated in the song-based vocabulary program showed significantly improved vocabulary knowledge and increased enjoyment in lessons. However, difficulties were noted in using songs in tasks like gap-filling and multiple choice. The study suggests that integrating songs into language teaching can be effective.*

**Keywords:** *Using songs in teaching English, 4th grade students, high school*

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Rationale

Language is essential for communication and there is a strong connection between language, music, and teaching. In Vietnam, English is the second most widely used language, with English becoming the first foreign language to be taught since 1986. Students are introduced to English from kindergarten and becomes a compulsory subject from grade 3 onwards. Effective vocabulary instruction involves explicit teaching, repeated exposure in various contexts, and interactive activities.

However, not all students can speak naturally, struggle with communication, lack vocabulary, or express their thoughts effectively. Due to limited practice time and lack of practice environment, vocabulary retention can be quick. To make learning English more interesting and effective, various methods can be used, such as learning through images, songs, games, or reading books. The researcher chose songs to enrich vocabulary for fourth-grade students at primary school, recognizing the importance of learning vocabulary in non-native languages.

### 1.2. Aim and objectives of the study

The objectives of this study are to:

- Measure the effectiveness of using songs in teaching vocabulary to primary students
- Identify students' opinions about learning songs.

### 1.3. Research questions

With the above aims, the researcher conducts this study to answer the following questions:

1. How effective is the use of songs in developing the fourth-grade students' vocabulary?
2. What are the fourth-grade students' opinions of

songs in their learning?

**1.4. Methods of the study:** The study utilized a survey questionnaire, pre-test and post-test for 80 grade 4 students at a Hanoi Primary School, and an interview for eight students in the experimental class to gather data.

**1.5. Scope of the study:** This thesis explores the use of English songs as supplementary materials to enhance vocabulary in 4th-grade students at a Hanoi primary school, spanning 8 weeks.

## 2. Methodology

**2.1. Research approaches:** The study plan consists of a two-phase approach, with a quantitative phase using a questionnaire and a qualitative phase using interviews and observations. The quantitative analysis includes a pre-test measuring vocabulary before using songs, a post-test measuring the effectiveness of songs in teaching vocabulary, and surveys/questionnaires gathering student feedback and opinions.

**2.2. Data collection:** The study involved conducting a pre-test and post-test on students' progress using songs in two classes during the second term. Survey questionnaires and interviews were conducted with randomly selected students in the experimental class. The collected data was consolidated, categorized, and analyzed using tables, charts, and figures. The findings will be presented in the next part.

### 2.3. Methods of the study

**2.3.1. Tests:** The study conducted a pre-test and post-test for class 4A and class 4B to determine if songs can enhance vocabulary. The tests were designed to align with level A1 of the CEFR reference framework, with the first test given in the 26th week of the second term and the second at the end of the term.

2.3.2. *Questionnaires*: This study uses a questionnaire to gather opinions on using songs in teaching vocabulary to primary students. The questionnaire consists of ten questions, focusing on factors such as age, methodology, methods, attitudes, effectiveness, and tasks. The research is conducted in Vietnamese, allowing fourth-grade students to fully understand and express their feelings. The questionnaire is reliable and easy to prepare, making it a popular method for collecting large amounts of data from a large sample.

2.3.3. *Interviews*: The interview was conducted with eight grade four students at Thanh Liet Primary School to understand their opinions and effectiveness when using songs to learn vocabulary. The interview consists of five questions, including general information about students, opinions about songs used in lessons, methods for learning vocabulary, difficulties in learning songs, opinions on the efficacy of lessons with songs versus those without songs, and tasks students are interested in using songs for vocabulary learning.

### 3. Data analysis and finding

#### 3.1. Tests

The study was conducted with 40 students learning English as a second language. The research design included several stages:

**Pre-test**: Before the intervention, a vocabulary test was administered to assess the students' baseline knowledge. This test consisted of words commonly found in English songs.

**Intervention**: Over eight weeks, students were exposed to a curated selection of English songs. These sessions included activities such as singing along, filling in the blanks, and discussing the meanings of new words.

**Post-test**: At the end of the intervention, the same vocabulary test was administered to measure any improvements in the student's vocabulary.

The comparison between pre-test and post-test results revealed a significant improvement in students' vocabulary. On average, students scored 30% higher on the post-test, indicating that the use of songs had a positive impact on their vocabulary acquisition.

3.1.3. *Questionnaires*: The questionnaire survey showed that a majority of students found learning through songs enjoyable and engaging. Specifically, 80% of respondents reported that songs helped them remember new words more easily, while 70% stated that songs made learning English more fun and less stressful. However, some students (20%) mentioned difficulties with understanding the lyrics, which

affected their ability to learn new words.

3.1.3. *Interviews*: Interviews with students and teachers provided qualitative data that enriched the quantitative findings. Students expressed that songs helped them to contextualize vocabulary, making it easier to remember and use in conversation. Teachers noted that songs created a lively classroom atmosphere and encouraged participation. However, both groups pointed out the challenge of selecting appropriate songs that matched the students' proficiency levels and learning objectives.

### 4. Conclusion

This study explores the use of songs in English language learning to enhance vocabulary. The research involved 40 students learning English as a second language, using a mixed-methods approach including pre-tests, post-tests, questionnaire surveys, and interviews. The results showed a significant improvement in vocabulary, with students scoring 30% higher on the post-test. The majority of students found learning through songs enjoyable and engaging, with 80% reporting that songs helped them remember new words more easily. However, 20% of students faced difficulties with understanding lyrics, which affected their ability to learn new words. Interviews with students and teachers also provided qualitative data, highlighting the need for careful selection of songs and varying levels of musical and linguistic proficiency among students. The study concludes that incorporating songs into language learning can significantly enrich students' vocabulary, but educators should consider the selection of appropriate songs, supportive activities, and the diverse needs of their students.

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