

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Teaching English to young learners is a very important part of language education by forming the basis of students' abilities, especially in developing insights. For young learners, understanding and mastering a foreign language is the first step in language acquisition. It is a process in which young learners actively construct systems of meaning and understanding of reality through their experiences and interactions. Teaching English vocabulary to young learners is also a challenge as they are still in the cognitive developmental stage and have shorter attention spans compared to older learners. Therefore, in learning English in young learners, appropriate learning methods are needed.

In English language learning, there are several common methods used, namely methods that use an interactive and fun approach. Total Physical Response (TPR), where the teacher gives instructions in English that must be followed by physical movements, such as jumping or sitting. This method combines language and movement to help children understand and remember new vocabulary more easily. In addition, learning through songs is also very effective; songs not only help children learn new words, but the rhythm of the song also makes it easier for them to remember sentence patterns. Songs can also involve movement, making the learning process more fun. Another method often used is storytelling, where the teacher tells a simple story using visual props, such as storybooks or puppets. Through stories, children can enrich their vocabulary and understand the context of sentences in a fun atmosphere. Flashcards with pictures are also an effective tool

for introducing new vocabulary by utilizing games such as matching pictures or playing guessing games.

Songs are one of the methods that many teachers use to teach English vocabulary to children. According to Kumar (2020), songs are a tool that can be used in teaching useful languages to help teachers reduce academic pressure on students. The use of songs in English learning is also found in every chapter of the independent curriculum edition of the English book. Songs are considered an effective medium because they have several advantages. First, songs help embed new vocabulary through natural and enjoyable repetition. The melody and rhythm in songs also help children's memory to remember new words more easily. Secondly, songs provide a more relaxed and fun atmosphere in the classroom, which is important for children in the learning process. They can sing, move, and interact actively, thus not only increasing student engagement but also encouraging them to be more confident in using a new language.

The use of songs in vocabulary teaching also allows teachers to introduce different contexts in which words are used in sentences. For example, words in song lyrics are often used in meaningful sentences, so children not only learn words in isolation but also understand how they are used in a wider context. This strengthens their understanding of the vocabulary learned. Nonetheless, teachers' experiences in teaching English vocabulary to young learners through songs may vary depending on many factors. Sometimes teachers have to choose the appropriate tune so that children can more easily imitate. Especially if the teacher does not have a background in English education, the teacher will often experience difficulties in the pronunciation of vocabulary that must be adjusted to the song and the tone used.

In facing these challenges and difficulties, the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework proposed by Mishra and Koehler (2006) can be used as a relevant conceptual framework to understand and overcome these obstacles. TPACK emphasizes the importance of harmonious integration between three main elements in learning practices, namely content knowledge (knowledge of subject matter or concepts to be taught), pedagogical knowledge (knowledge of effective teaching methods and strategies), and technological knowledge (knowledge of how to utilize technology in the learning process). These three components interact and complement each other to create a dynamic and innovative learning environment. With the application of TPACK, teachers can create more creative and relevant strategies to improve students' English comprehension and skills through various media and methods that support an interactive and inclusive learning environment.

In many elementary schools across Indonesia, including at one Islamic Elementary School in Jambi, there is a serious issue concerning the availability of qualified English teachers. In this School, there is only one English teacher who is responsible for teaching sixteen classes—a workload far beyond what a single teacher can reasonably handle effectively. This limitation has prompted the school to seek alternative solutions to ensure that the learning process continues. One such solution was to recruit two additional teachers to help with English instruction.

Meanwhile, the teacher recruited does not have a formal educational background in English and comes from a different academic discipline. Nevertheless, this teacher was still assigned to teach English in order to fill the gap in teaching hours and reach all existing classes. This decision was made due to the

limited availability of qualified teaching staff and the urgent need to maintain the continuity of English instruction. This situation reflects a broader reality faced by many schools, especially in remote or under-resourced areas, where the difficulty in recruiting teachers with appropriate qualifications is a major barrier. The differing backgrounds of the two teachers also highlight the variation in instructional approaches used and how these differences may affect the quality of English education received by students. Therefore, this condition underscores the need for serious attention from policymakers and educational institutions to provide training, additional certification, and more equitable teacher placement strategies.

Based on previous research, many studies have shown the effectiveness of using songs as a tool in teaching English vocabulary to children. Research such as that conducted by Kumar (2020), revealed that songs can reduce academic pressure and create a fun learning environment, as well as improve vocabulary recall through repetition and active student engagement. However, there are still gaps in the literature related to the experiences and challenges faced by teachers using this method, especially those who do not have a formal educational background in English language teaching. Most previous studies have focused on the learning outcomes of using songs as a medium, but few have explored how teachers with limited English competency handle the process of selecting appropriate songs and maintaining students' attention.

In addition, Barus (2020) conducted a study that analyzed the steps taken by teachers in teaching English through the use of songs, as well as the underlying objectives behind these instructional choices. The study provides valuable insights into the pedagogical approaches employed by English teachers, particularly in

integrating songs as a medium to facilitate language learning. By focusing on how teachers structure their lessons and the purposes they aim to achieve—such as improving vocabulary retention, increasing student motivation, or creating a more engaging learning atmosphere—Barus highlights the benefits of using music in the classroom. However, the scope of the study is limited to English learning in fifth-grade classrooms, which narrows its applicability to broader elementary school contexts. Moreover, the research does not explore how teachers, particularly those with limited proficiency or formal training in English, adapt their teaching strategies to overcome the challenges of teaching a subject they are not fully prepared for. This creates a gap in understanding the coping mechanisms and instructional modifications employed by such teachers, especially in under-resourced or rural educational settings.

Therefore, this research has aims to fill this gap by exploring teachers' specific experiences, including the challenges they encountered and the strategies they employed in using songs to teach English vocabulary to young learners, despite having no formal qualifications in English language teaching. The research examines the challenges faced by the teachers and the methods they used to maintain an effective learning process, thereby providing new insights into the role of teacher competence in the successful implementation of songs as a medium for vocabulary instruction.

1.2 Research Questions

1. What challenges do teachers face when teaching English vocabulary to young learners using songs?
2. How do teachers overcome these challenges when teaching vocabulary with songs?

1.3 Purpose of Research

1. This research aims to identify the challenges faced by teachers in teaching English vocabulary to young learners using songs.
2. This research aims to describe effective strategies employed by teachers to overcome these challenges by using songs.

1.4 Limitation of Research

This research only focuses on the challenges faced by teachers who teach English at one Islamic Elementary School in Jambi and their strategies in using songs as a method in English learning. The research specifically addresses the challenges and strategies related to teaching English vocabulary, excluding other aspects such as grammar or additional language skills.

1.5 Significance of Research

This research is expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions to the field of English language teaching, particularly in the context of vocabulary instruction for young learners through the use of songs.

1. Theoretical Contribution.

Theoretically, the findings of this research enrich the existing body of literature on media-based teaching methods, especially the use of songs in teaching English vocabulary to young learners. This research serves as a foundation for future studies

aiming to explore creative approaches in language learning and broadens the understanding of engaging and enjoyable strategies for teaching young learners.

2. Practical Contribution

Practically, this research offers valuable insights for English teachers, particularly at the elementary level, regarding the effectiveness of using songs to enhance vocabulary acquisition and student motivation. Additionally, the results of this research can serve as a reference for curriculum developers and education practitioners in designing more innovative and interactive teaching strategies, thereby supporting the integration of creative methods in English language classrooms for young learners.

1.6 Key Term

1. **Teacher's Challenges:** Difficulties teachers face when teaching vocabulary through songs, such as language limitations and classroom distractions, this definition is supported by (Tirtanawati, 2024).
2. **Teacher's Strategies:** Techniques used by teachers to solve teaching problems, like repetition, rewards, and song selection as stated in (Fitria, 2021).
3. **Teaching English Vocabulary:** The process of helping students learn and use English words according to (Asipi, 2023).
4. **Young Learners:** Students in grades 1 to 6 at MIN 4, corresponding to the primary education level, are typically aged between five and twelve years.
5. **Songs in Language Teaching:** Using music and lyrics to make vocabulary learning easier and more engaging as explained by (Hadi, 2019).