

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1 Overview of the Research**

This research was conducted over the course of four days, from May 19 to May 22, 2025, at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah a government Islamic elementary school located in Jambi Province, Indonesia. The study aimed to gain a deeper understanding of how English teachers utilize songs as an instructional tool in teaching English vocabulary to young learners at the elementary level. Recognizing that songs can serve as an engaging and effective medium in language learning, the research was focused on uncovering real classroom practices, teacher perceptions, and the pedagogical decisions made when integrating songs into vocabulary lessons.

The data for this qualitative study were collected using semi-structured interviews, which allowed the researcher to explore participants' experiences in a flexible yet focused manner. Three English teachers at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah voluntarily participated in the study. Each teacher brought different levels of teaching experience and educational backgrounds, which contributed to a diverse range of perspectives and practices. The interviews were conducted individually and in a relaxed setting to encourage open and honest responses. Each session lasted approximately 10-15 minutes and was audio-recorded with participants' consent.

The interview questions were designed to explore several core aspects of vocabulary instruction using songs. These included: the teachers' educational background and teaching experience, the specific methods or strategies employed when introducing new vocabulary through songs, the types of songs selected and

the criteria for their selection, the frequency and context in which songs were used, the observed benefits of using songs, the challenges faced during implementation, and the strategies employed to overcome those challenges. In addition, the research also investigated the use of technological tools and materials—such as QR codes, speakers, or digital devices—that supported the integration of songs into the teaching process.

Through this process, the researcher aimed not only to document existing teaching practices but also to identify best practices and potential gaps in the use of songs for vocabulary instruction. The findings from the interviews provide valuable insights into how teachers in a rural Islamic elementary school context adapt their teaching strategies to meet students' needs while leveraging songs to enhance vocabulary acquisition in a meaningful and enjoyable way.

## **4.2 Description of the Participant**

The participants in this study consisted of three English teachers from Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. Each of them had different educational backgrounds, teaching experiences, and instructional styles, which contributed to a variety of perspectives on the use of songs in teaching English vocabulary. To maintain confidentiality, the participants are referred to as P1, P2, and P3.

### **a) Participant 1 (P1)**

P1 holds a bachelor's degree in Islamic Cultural History Education and has been teaching at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah since 2019. However, she only started teaching English in 2024. She is responsible for teaching lower-grade students (Grade 1 and 2), focusing mainly on providing basic English vocabulary. Although she does not have a formal educational background in English, she strives to create

a fun and engaging learning environment for young learners by incorporating simple songs, vocabulary repetition, and playful activities. She regularly uses songs embedded in the textbook through QR codes, utilizing them in almost every vocabulary session to reinforce learning.

#### **b) Participant 2 (P2)**

P2 graduated from the Primary Islamic Teacher Education program (PGMI) and began teaching at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in 2021. She started teaching English in 2024. Similar to P1, P2 does not have a degree in English education but shows a strong enthusiasm for language teaching. In her vocabulary instruction, she emphasizes collaborative and interactive methods such as pair work, group discussions, drawing, and vocabulary-related games. She uses both the textbook-provided songs and additional materials from platforms like YouTube, ensuring that the songs match the lesson themes, have clear pronunciation, and are appropriate for the students' level. Her teaching approach highlights the importance of student engagement and enjoyment in language learning.

#### **c) Participant 3 (P3)**

P3 is the only participant with a formal academic background in English education. He holds a degree in English Language Teaching and has earned relevant teaching certifications. He has been teaching English since 2012 and has more than a decade of experience. His long teaching experience has shaped a more structured and strategic instructional style. In teaching vocabulary, P3 combines real objects from students' surroundings with contextual teaching methods to help students better understand word meanings. Songs are used not only for entertainment but also as a structured part of the lesson—aligned with textbook themes and supporting

pronunciation and comprehension. P3 is also attentive to the diverse abilities of his students and frequently adapts his strategies based on their individual learning needs.

*Table 4. 1Background of the Participants*

<b>Teachers Code</b>	<b>Education Background</b>	<b>Classes Taught</b>
P1	Islamic Cultural History Education	Grades 1 and 2
P2	Primary Islamic Teacher Education program (PGMI)	Grade 3
P3	English education	Grades 4,5 and 6

Each participant offered valuable contributions to understanding how songs can be effectively integrated into English vocabulary instruction, shaped by their educational backgrounds, teaching experience, and the characteristics of the students they teach.

After collecting the data and completing the transcription of the interviews, the researcher analyzed the data using thematic analysis, which involved identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data. This method enabled the researcher to systematically interpret the participants' responses and gain deeper insights into their experiences. The results of the analysis provided answers to the research questions stated below:

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?

### 4.3 Finding

The thematizing process in this study was conducted by systematically organizing and categorizing the participants' responses based on the frequency and relevance of the ideas expressed. This categorization was grounded in an in-depth analysis of the teachers' challenges and strategies in teaching English vocabulary using songs, particularly in response to the research questions. As a result of this phase, the researcher identified two major and ten supporting themes that emerged from the data analysis.

*Table 4. 2 Thematizing*

Challenges in Teaching Vocabulary Using Song	Themes
	Limited Background in English
	Students' Difficulty in Pronunciation and Comprehension
	Limited Student Focus and Participation
	Fast or Unclear Song Lyrics
	Technological Constraints
Strategies in Teaching Vocabulary Using Song	Personal Preparation Before Class
	Using Repetition and Assigning Homework
	Applying Reward Systems
	Careful Song Selection
	Utilizing Coursebook Songs

This research involved face-to-face interviews with three participants, all of whom are English teachers at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. The interviews were conducted over the course of four days, from May 19 to May 22, 2025. The main objective of these interviews was to explore the teachers' experiences in teaching English

vocabulary to young learners using songs, as well as to identify the challenges they face and the strategies they employ to overcome those challenges.

The data collected through the interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. From this process, ten themes were identified. These themes represent the key aspects of the participants' teaching experiences and directly address the research questions.

#### **4.3.1 Challenges in Teaching Vocabulary Using Songs**

The use of songs in teaching English vocabulary to elementary school students offers numerous benefits, such as increasing learning engagement and enhancing memory retention. However, findings from interviews with three teachers at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah reveal that this strategy also presents several challenges. These challenges are categorized into six sub-themes: Limited background in English, Students' difficulty in pronunciation and comprehension, Limited student focus and participation, Fast or unclear song lyrics, Technological constraints.

##### ***a) Limited Teaching Background***

Two of the participants in this study, P1 and P2, reported not having an academic background in English education, which significantly impacted their confidence and effectiveness when delivering English lessons. Both participants hold degrees from educational programs that are not specifically focused on English language teaching. P1 graduated from Islamic Cultural History Education, while P2 earned her degree from the Primary Islamic Teacher Education Program (PGMI). Despite their roles as English teachers at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, their limited formal education in English meant they were not well-equipped with the linguistic and pedagogical skills typically expected for teaching a foreign language.

This lack of foundation posed several challenges, particularly when they were assigned to teach vocabulary or grammar topics that exceeded basic or introductory levels. For instance, when faced with more complex song lyrics or vocabulary lists, both teachers admitted struggling to fully understand and pronounce the words correctly, let alone explain them to their students. Their teaching approach thus became heavily reliant on pre-teaching preparation, such as self-study the night before class and repeated rehearsal of the material to minimize the possibility of making mistakes in front of students.

As P1 stated:

("I do not come from an English education background, so teaching higher-level classes is quite challenging for me. However, I can still manage teaching at the lower-grade level.")

*"Saya bukan dari jurusan Bahasa Inggris, jadi kalau diminta mengajar di kelas-kelas tinggi itu agak susah, tapi kalau untuk kelas dasar ini saya masih aman."*

Similarly, P2 shared:

("Since I do not have an English teaching background, I need to study beforehand to teach properly and avoid making mistakes in front of the students.")

*"Basic saya bukan guru Bahasa Inggris, jadi saya harus belajar dulu agar bisa mengajar dengan baik dan tidak salah di depan anak-anak."*

P2 statement reflects a heightened sense of responsibility and self-awareness, recognizing that despite her enthusiasm, she needed to invest significant time preparing outside of school hours. This necessity to "learn before teaching" shows that the absence of formal training does not eliminate their commitment, but it undeniably adds a psychological and practical burden to their teaching responsibilities.

These experiences reveal how non-English-educated teachers often rely on self-initiative and resourcefulness to fulfill their duties. However, they also

highlight a structural issue: the mismatch between teacher qualifications and teaching assignments, especially in rural or under-resourced schools. This situation echoes the findings of Tirtanawati & Prastiwi (2024), who pointed out that pedagogical challenges are more prevalent among teachers without a specialization in English.

From a theoretical standpoint, this aligns with Shulman's (1986) concept of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK), which emphasizes that effective teaching requires both deep subject-matter knowledge and pedagogical understanding. When either is lacking—as seen in the cases of P1 and P2—the quality of instruction may be compromised unless the teacher compensates with intensive preparation. Their experience also reflects the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework (Mishra & Koehler, 2006), where teachers are expected to integrate knowledge of technology, pedagogy, and content. In this context, both P1 and P2 compensate for their limited content knowledge by leveraging digital tools (e.g., QR code-based songs) and dedicating extra preparation time, demonstrating a partial application of the TPACK model in practice.

#### ***b) Students' Difficulty in Pronunciation and Comprehension***

The participants observed that many students struggled with understanding and pronouncing English vocabulary, especially when it was presented in songs with fast tempo or unfamiliar intonation. This was particularly true for younger learners who had no exposure to English outside of the classroom.

P2 highlighted:

("English is not the language they use in daily life, so they struggle to pronounce the vocabulary and need time to review it again at home.")



*"Bahasa Inggris kan bukan bahasa mereka sehari-hari. Jadi mereka kesulitan mengucapkan kosa kata itu tadi, dan mereka butuh waktu untuk mengulang lagi di rumah."*

Similarly, P3 stated:

("When the lyrics are too fast, they need to be played two or three times for the students to understand them.")

*"Lirik yang terlalu cepat harus diputar dua atau tiga kali supaya mereka paham."*

This quote highlights the need for repetition and slowing down the audio as a strategy to enhance comprehension. According to P3, students often failed to grasp the meaning or even recognize individual words after the first listen, making it necessary to replay the song multiple times while guiding the students through the lyrics step by step.

These challenges are supported by research in second language acquisition, which suggests that listening comprehension is one of the most difficult skills for young learners (Oktavia et al., 2022). Learners require repeated and scaffolded exposure to new sounds and vocabulary, particularly when the input is delivered in an auditory format such as songs. In young learners, where learners are still developing phonemic awareness, teachers must provide additional support—such as pronunciation drills, vocabulary previews, and visual aids—to help bridge the comprehension gap.

### ***c) Limited Student Focus and Participation***

Teachers also noted that not all students were equally engaged during vocabulary lessons using songs. Maintaining students' attention in class—especially large ones—was a recurring difficulty.

As P3 explained:

"Out of 24 students, sometimes fewer than half are genuinely focused and engaged in learning. Therefore, we have to put in extra effort and be more assertive in the classroom."

*"Dari 24 siswa, yang benar-benar fokus dan belajar itu kadang nggak sampai separuhnya. Jadi kami harus kerja ekstra dan cerewet di kelas."*

This statement illustrates the burden placed on teachers to constantly redirect attention and maintain classroom discipline, especially during song-based activities that might be perceived by students as playtime rather than learning time. It also implies that the teacher must adopt a more performative teaching style, being “cerewet” (constantly instructing, reminding, or correcting) to ensure that students remain on task.

In line with this, teachers had to become more interactive, expressive, and vigilant, often repeating instructions, prompting student responses, and incorporating movement or gestures to re-engage inattentive students. In some cases, students who were shy or reluctant to participate in singing activities required additional encouragement, either through group singing, peer support, or individualized attention.

These observations are consistent with the findings of Daar (2020) and Oktavia et al. (2022), who reported that young learners’ concentration spans are often short, particularly in environments with limited structure or when learners are not intrinsically motivated. Additionally, young learners are prone to distraction from peer interactions or classroom stimuli, especially when lessons involve audio or movement-based activities like songs.

#### ***d) Fast or Unclear Song Lyrics***

A recurring problem mentioned by all participants was the speed and clarity of the song lyrics. Songs that were too fast or had unclear pronunciation made it difficult for both the teacher and students to follow along and grasp the vocabulary accurately.

As P1 pointed out:

("The main difficulty is the fast intonation of the song, which sometimes leads to inaccurate pronunciation and causes students to frequently mispronounce the words.")

*"Kesulitannya itu ada pada intonasi lagu yang cepat, kadang pengucapannya tidak sesuai dan itu membuat anak-anak sering salah dalam pelafalan."*

P3 also shared a similar concern:

("Because the lyrics are fast, I need to play the song two or three times before explaining it to the students.")

*"Liriknya cepat, jadi saya harus memutar lagu sampai dua atau tiga kali dulu sebelum menjelaskan ke siswa."*

This indicates that even teachers had to repeatedly listen to songs before fully understanding or teaching the lyrics. The additional time and effort required to process, slow down, and explain song content placed an extra burden on the instructional process. It also shows that not all songs are pedagogically appropriate, even if they are thematically aligned with the lesson.

This issue is well-documented in language education research. According to Barus (2020) and Adnyani (2020), selecting songs for language learning must consider not only the content but also the phonological clarity, speed, and suitability for the learners' proficiency level. Songs that are too complex or fast-paced can become counterproductive, leading to student frustration, loss of focus, or incorrect language input.

To address this, teachers like P3 often employed adaptive strategies, such as replaying the song multiple times, pausing to explain key vocabulary, and supporting auditory input with written lyrics or visual cues. These methods served as scaffolding techniques to help students decode and internalize the vocabulary presented in the song.

***e) Technological Constraints***

Limited technological resources at school, such as lack of infocus projectors or audio systems, were mentioned as barriers to delivering song-based vocabulary instruction effectively. Some teachers had to use personal devices or simple tools to overcome this limitation.

P2 described the situation as follows:

("Because of the limited technological facilities at the school, I usually bring my personal laptop so that the students can watch the video on the screen. Thankfully, it is still sufficient.")

Thankfully, it is still sufficient.")

*"Karena keterbatasan teknologi dari sekolah, saya biasa bawa laptop pribadi biar anak-anak bisa lihat videonya dari layar. Alhamdulillah masih cukup memadai."*

P3 added:

("Although the school provides a laptop and projector, I more often use the sound system as it is more practical.")

*"Laptop dan infocus itu memang ada dari sekolah, tapi saya lebih sering pakai sound system saja karena lebih praktis."*

His preference for a simpler setup reflects the need for practicality and efficiency in managing large classes or limited time, even when more advanced technology is technically available. Teachers had to assess which tools were most feasible and functional in their specific classroom environment.

Despite these constraints, all teachers continued to implement songs in their lessons by modifying their teaching strategies and optimizing the resources they had. This reflects a high degree of teaching resilience, where educators adapt their pedagogy to suit contextual limitations without abandoning their instructional goals.

From the standpoint of the TPACK framework (Mishra & Koehler, 2006), technological knowledge is one of the key domains that must be integrated with pedagogy and content. In this case, although the teachers may not have had advanced technological tools, they demonstrated practical technological knowledge

by knowing how to utilize what they had—personal laptops, Bluetooth speakers, or simple audio players—in meaningful ways that aligned with their pedagogical intentions.

#### **4.3.2 Strategies in Teaching Vocabulary Using Songs**

To address the challenges identified in teaching English vocabulary through songs, the participants employed a number of strategies aimed at maintaining instructional effectiveness and student engagement. These strategies were intended not only to improve vocabulary acquisition and pronunciation through the use of songs, but also to respond to motivational and environmental limitations commonly faced during the implementation of song-based learning activities.

##### ***a) Personal Preparation Before Class***

In response to their limited academic background in English education, both P1 and P2 adopted a proactive approach to lesson preparation. Recognizing that they were not formally trained in the subject, they emphasized the importance of conducting personal study prior to classroom instruction. This preparation typically involved reviewing vocabulary lists, listening to the songs they planned to use, and familiarizing themselves with pronunciation and meaning to ensure accurate delivery during lessons.

As P2 explained:

("Therefore, before teaching the students, I usually study the material the night before. I try to avoid any mispronunciation, as the students tend to immediately correct anything that sounds inaccurate.")

*"Jadi sebelum mengajarkan anak, saya malamnya harus belajar dulu. Jangan sampai salah ucap, karena anak-anak bisa langsung protes kalau ada yang tidak sesuai."*

This statement reflects not only the teacher's diligence in preparing for class but also an awareness of the critical role of accuracy in language instruction. P2

was particularly concerned about students' reactions if pronunciation errors occurred, indicating that even young learners are sensitive to correctness, and that such mistakes could undermine her credibility in the classroom.

Similarly, P1 also mentioned that she spent time reviewing the material the day before teaching, particularly focusing on pronunciation and meaning. These teachers' efforts demonstrate a strong sense of professional integrity and accountability, despite the challenges posed by their limited linguistic competence.

The strategies they adopted can be seen as a form of self-directed professional development, where learning occurs informally through personal initiative rather than through formal training or workshops. This aligns with the principles of reflective teaching practice, in which educators continuously assess and improve their instructional methods to meet students' needs. Although not explicitly trained in English pedagogy, both teachers show a commitment to delivering lessons that are as accurate and engaging as possible.

#### ***b) Using Repetition and Assigning Homework***

To help students better remember vocabulary, P1 adopted the strategy of repetition and assigning vocabulary memorization as homework. This method aimed to reinforce learning beyond the classroom setting.

P1 described:

("At the end of each lesson, I assign vocabulary memorization tasks to the students, which they are required to present the following week. Before the lesson begins, they take turns coming to the front to recite the vocabulary.")

*"Setiap selesai belajar, anak-anak saya beri tugas hafalan kosa kata untuk disetor minggu depannya. Jadi sebelum pembelajaran dimulai, mereka maju satu per satu untuk setoran vocab."*

This routine required students to memorize a list of vocabulary words introduced in class and then present them orally during the following week's lesson.

This approach served multiple purposes: it reinforced learning through repeated exposure, held students accountable for their independent study, and allowed the teacher to assess individual progress in vocabulary acquisition.

Moreover, this method provided a form of formative assessment, enabling the teacher to identify which students had mastered the vocabulary and which ones needed additional support. By having students “setor vocab” (recite vocabulary one by one), P1 also encouraged active participation and confidence in speaking, which are essential components in early language development.

### ***c) Applying Reward Systems***

To further motivate students, P2 used a reward system that included both verbal praise and small gifts. This approach was found to be effective in increasing student enthusiasm and participation.

P2 mentioned:

("I always give appreciation for any task or song performance by the students. Occasionally, I provide rewards such as stationery or small cash incentives to encourage their enthusiasm in learning English.")

*"Saya selalu mengapresiasi apapun bentuk tugas atau lagu yang mereka tampilkan. Kadang saya kasih reward seperti alat tulis atau uang kecil biar mereka lebih semangat belajar Bahasa Inggris."*

This illustrates a dual-reinforcement approach, where verbal encouragement—such as praise, acknowledgment, and affirmation—is used alongside small material incentives, such as stationery items or small coins. By doing so, P2 tapped into both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors that influence student behavior and effort in the classroom.

Moreover, for young learners, immediate and concrete feedback—like receiving a reward—can be more meaningful and motivating than long-term academic goals. The excitement of potentially receiving recognition or a small prize

can drive students to stay focused, try their best, and actively take part in classroom activities. It also adds an element of fun and anticipation, which is especially effective in primary education settings.

The reward system also serves an important social-emotional function. It allows students to feel seen, appreciated, and successful, especially those who may struggle academically but make an effort to participate. This sense of achievement contributes to the development of positive self-concept, which is a crucial aspect of language learning at a young age.

#### ***d) Careful Song Selection***

To minimize confusion, teachers were selective in choosing songs that were thematically relevant, simple, and easy to pronounce. Some participants used only the songs provided in the coursebook, while others supplemented with YouTube resources when needed.

P2 explained:

("I ensure that the song is theme-appropriate, the lyrics are easy to understand, and the pronunciation is clear. If it is not provided in the textbook, I search for it on YouTube.")

*"Saya pastikan lagunya sesuai tema, liriknya mudah dipahami dan pelafalannya jelas. Kalau tidak ada di buku, saya cari dari YouTube."*

P3 added:

("I select songs that are appropriate, simple, and clearly articulated to facilitate students' understanding.")

*"Saya pilih lagu yang cocok, sederhana, dan jelas untuk memudahkan anak-anak memahaminya."*

This indicates that for P3, accessibility and clarity were more important than variety or popularity. He deliberately avoided songs that were catchy but linguistically complex, choosing instead those that reinforced basic vocabulary in a way that was developmentally appropriate for young learners.



This approach aligns with recommendations from Fitria (2021) and Adnyani (2020), who emphasized that song selection in language classrooms should be based on linguistic appropriateness and pedagogical objectives, rather than mere entertainment value. Songs should serve as a structured input source that supports vocabulary recognition, pronunciation practice, and context-based learning.

Moreover, this process demonstrates the role of the teacher as an instructional designer—someone who curates and adapts content based on students' needs, lesson goals, and available resources. Teachers not only delivered the content but also made intentional pedagogical decisions about which songs to include or exclude, showing professional agency and responsibility.

#### ***e) Utilizing Coursebook Songs***

To ensure consistency in lesson delivery and to avoid potential issues with unsuitable or overly complex materials, all three participants expressed a strong preference for using songs that were already included in the official English coursebooks. These songs were seen as reliable, curriculum-aligned, and easier to integrate within the structure of existing lesson plans. Teachers viewed them as a safer and more practical option, especially in the context of limited time and resources.

P3 stated:

("I prefer to use the songs provided in the textbook, as they come with explanations, correct spelling, example conversations, and vocabulary meanings.")

*"Saya fokus dengan lagu-lagu dari buku saja, karena di sana sudah ada penjelasan, penulisan, bahkan conversation dan meaning-nya juga."*

This highlights several key advantages of coursebook songs:

- a) They come with supporting explanations and written lyrics, which help students associate sounds with spelling and meaning.

- b) The songs are often embedded within structured thematic units, allowing teachers to seamlessly connect them with target vocabulary and grammar points.
- c) Coursebook content is usually designed with learners' age, level, and curriculum goals in mind, making it more pedagogically appropriate than many external resources.

For teachers with limited background in English (like P1 and P2), coursebook songs also provide a form of pedagogical support, reducing the burden of material selection and minimizing the risk of introducing linguistically inappropriate content. Additionally, the familiarity of the coursebook format helps students navigate and anticipate lesson structure, fostering a sense of routine and security in the classroom.

#### **4.4 Discussion**

This section discusses the research findings regarding the challenges and strategies faced by English teachers when teaching vocabulary to young learners using songs. The discussion is structured around the two major and their corresponding ten themes derived from the thematic analysis, and it is supported by relevant theories and previous studies as presented in Chapter II.

##### **4.4.1 Challenges in Teaching Vocabulary Using Songs**

###### ***a) Limited Background in English***

One of the most significant challenges identified in this study is the teacher's limited background in English language education. This condition becomes a major barrier, particularly when teachers are expected to instruct students in pronunciation, vocabulary meaning, and the use of songs as a pedagogical tool. Teachers who do not possess a formal English education background often struggle

to apply appropriate instructional strategies, especially in aspects that require deep understanding of phonetics and language structure. This finding aligns with the argument of Tirtanawati & Pratiwi (2024), who noted that the absence of pedagogical and content knowledge in English frequently hampers teaching performance, especially among non-English-education graduates.

In line with the TPACK framework proposed by Mishra & Koehler (2006), the integration between content knowledge (CK), pedagogical knowledge (PK), and technological knowledge (TK) is crucial to effective teaching. When teachers lack one of these components—especially CK in English—the quality of instruction can be compromised. In this study, teachers made personal efforts to compensate for their limitations by practicing song materials in advance and trying to understand the lyrics beforehand. However, this self-reliant effort still does not replace the comprehensive knowledge gained through formal education, resulting in a gap between pedagogical intention and instructional delivery.

***b) Students' Difficulty in Pronunciation and Comprehension***

Another prominent challenge observed was the students' limited ability to understand and pronounce vocabulary found in songs. Many of the words featured in English songs are unfamiliar to young learners, especially in rural school settings where exposure to English is minimal. As children encounter new vocabulary through songs, their unfamiliarity with English phonemes, intonation, and word stress often causes confusion. This leads to mispronunciations and an incomplete understanding of the song's meaning. Daar (2020) noted that students who are unfamiliar with English sounds often struggle to match what they hear with their

existing linguistic knowledge, which significantly slows down vocabulary acquisition.

Furthermore, Nguyen (2020) emphasized that vocabulary learning is not limited to memorizing the meaning of words but also involves mastering correct pronunciation and usage. In this case, the challenge is twofold: comprehension of the vocabulary's meaning and the ability to articulate it correctly. This indicates that relying solely on songs as a medium of instruction without additional scaffolding may not be sufficient to help students fully grasp the target vocabulary. Teachers are thus required to implement supplementary pronunciation drills or explanation sessions to reinforce learning, which can be time-consuming and may disrupt lesson flow.

### ***c) Limited Student Focus and Participation***

The attention span and active participation of young learners pose another significant challenge in vocabulary instruction through songs. Children at the elementary level, particularly those in rural areas, often display varied emotional responses and cognitive development levels that affect their classroom behavior. As observed in the study, students frequently lose focus during the lesson, especially when the song is too long, lacks visual reinforcement, or is not immediately engaging. Oktavia et al. (2022) argue that the emotional inconsistency of children directly influences their ability to maintain concentration, making it difficult for teachers to deliver the full content of the lesson effectively.

Moreover, not all students participate equally during singing or vocabulary practice. In some cases, only a small portion of the class actively engages with the material, while others remain passive or become distracted. This uneven

participation limits the effectiveness of the learning process and may widen the learning gap among students. As a result, teachers must continually adapt their approach, finding ways to re-engage students—through visual aids, movement, or call-and-response strategies—to maintain class dynamics. Without consistent focus and participation, the vocabulary learning goals embedded in the song activities are less likely to be achieved.

***d) Fast or Unclear Song Lyrics***

The pace and clarity of song lyrics also emerged as a challenge in teaching English vocabulary. Many English songs, especially those not specifically designed for educational purposes, contain fast-paced lyrics or unclear pronunciation, which can overwhelm young learners. Songs that are too rapid or feature complex sentence structures may hinder students' ability to catch individual words, understand meaning, or imitate pronunciation. Baills et al. (2021) emphasized that songs with unnatural pacing and pronunciation significantly reduce the effectiveness of auditory learning, particularly for non-native young learners who are still developing their phonological awareness.

In the observed cases, this issue forced teachers to replay the same song multiple times, sometimes up to four repetitions, before students could begin to identify the vocabulary being taught. While repetition can aid learning, excessive replaying without variation may lead to boredom and reduced engagement. Furthermore, teachers are often required to pause the song frequently to explain difficult words or phrases, interrupting the natural flow of the lesson. Thus, song selection and adaptation become crucial to ensure that students receive comprehensible input in a manageable and enjoyable format.

#### ***e) Technological Constraints***

The lack of technological resources in rural schools presents another major barrier to implementing songs as a medium for vocabulary teaching. In many cases, schools do not possess adequate audio-visual equipment such as speakers, laptops, or projectors, making it difficult for teachers to conduct multimedia-based lessons effectively. This challenge is consistent with Tirtanawati & Pratiwi's (2024) findings, which showed that rural educational institutions often struggle with infrastructural limitations that hinder the application of technology in language learning.

Without the necessary tools, teachers often resort to bringing their own equipment from home, such as portable speakers or smartphones, to facilitate song playback in class. This practice, while commendable, places an additional burden on teachers and reflects the lack of institutional support for innovative teaching methods. Moreover, inconsistent electricity supply or weak internet access further limits the possibility of using online resources like YouTube or educational apps. The absence of proper technological support restricts the variety and quality of materials that can be used, reducing the potential impact of songs as an engaging and effective tool for vocabulary instruction.

### **4.4.2 Strategies in Teaching Vocabulary Using Songs**

#### ***a) Personal Preparation Before Class***

To compensate for their lack of formal education in English teaching, the teachers in this study demonstrated a strong commitment to preparing before class. This included studying the song's lyrics, learning the pronunciation, and ensuring they understood the meaning of the vocabulary being taught. This aligns with

Shulman's (1986) concept of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK), which emphasizes the importance of a teacher's ability to transform content knowledge into teachable formats, particularly when teaching unfamiliar material. Since the songs are in English, which is not the teachers' area of expertise, their preparation reflects an effort to bridge gaps in both content and pedagogy.

This strategy is also relevant within the TPACK framework proposed by Mishra and Koehler (2006), where technological tools (like audio songs or YouTube videos) are combined with pedagogical knowledge (how to teach using songs) and content knowledge (English vocabulary). The integration of these domains is crucial for delivering meaningful instruction, especially in resource-limited contexts such as rural elementary schools. By preparing in advance, teachers can anticipate student difficulties and modify the song activity to meet the learners' needs, such as pausing the audio for explanation or simplifying certain vocabulary.

#### ***b) Using Repetition and Assigning Homework***

Repetition is a powerful strategy for reinforcing vocabulary learning among young learners. In this study, teachers used repetition not only during class—by playing the same song multiple times—but also through homework assignments where students were asked to review the vocabulary or sing the song at home. According to Isnaini and Aminatun (2021), repeated exposure to vocabulary items through engaging media like songs enhances long-term memory and helps children internalize both the meaning and pronunciation of new words.

This strategy is also consistent with the idea that songs are naturally repetitive in structure, making them ideal tools for vocabulary acquisition in early education Adnyani, (2020). By encouraging students to engage with the same

lyric's multiple times, both in class and at home, teachers help build automaticity in vocabulary use. Furthermore, this practice aligns with the Vocabulary Learning Strategy (VLS) framework, which emphasizes active and repeated engagement with target words to promote retention.

### ***c) Applying Reward Systems***

To increase student motivation and participation, teachers often implemented simple reward systems. These systems included giving praise, small prizes, or recognition to students who participated actively or performed well in vocabulary-related song activities. This aligns with Kumar et al. (2022), who stated that extrinsic motivation, such as rewards, can enhance learner engagement, especially in tasks that require repetition or memorization, like learning vocabulary through songs.

The use of rewards also helps address classroom management challenges, such as students' limited focus and inconsistent participation, which are common among young learners Oktavia et al., (2022). By providing a tangible or emotional incentive, teachers can encourage more students to stay on task and contribute during lessons. In the context of rural schools, where learning resources are often limited, a simple reward system can make the learning experience more exciting and meaningful for students.

### ***d) Careful Song Selection***

Teachers also employed a thoughtful approach in selecting songs that matched the students' language level and age. They avoided songs with fast-paced lyrics or complex vocabulary and instead chose songs with clear pronunciation, slow rhythm, and familiar themes. This supports Adnyani's (2020) view that song



selection must be aligned with learners' cognitive development and language proficiency to ensure effective vocabulary instruction. Songs that are too difficult may hinder learning and reduce student confidence.

By selecting age-appropriate and curriculum-aligned songs, teachers help students build vocabulary through enjoyable and manageable input. Some teachers even adapted lyrics or replaced textbook songs with more accessible alternatives from platforms like YouTube. This shows a flexible, learner-cantered approach that prioritizes comprehension and engagement. The selection process also reflects the pedagogical reasoning required to balance curriculum demands with students' actual learning needs, particularly in mixed-ability classrooms.

***e) Utilizing Coursebook Songs***

Many teachers preferred using songs already included in the English coursebook because these songs were developed to align with the vocabulary themes and competencies outlined in the curriculum. According to Fitria (2021), coursebook songs provide structured, goal-oriented input, making them a reliable resource for teachers, especially those with limited English teaching backgrounds. These songs also come with built-in scaffolding, such as accompanying pictures or exercises, which helps learners connect lyrics to meaning more easily.

Using coursebook songs ensures consistency between instructional goals and classroom practice. It also helps reduce preparation time while maintaining the quality of the learning experience. Furthermore, songs in textbooks often emphasize high-frequency vocabulary, which is essential for early-stage learners. In this way, teachers can maximize learning outcomes while ensuring that students remain within the cognitive and linguistic demands of the curriculum.