

# Student Perceptions of Using Spotify's English Songs as a Medium for Learning Vocabulary in Higher Education University

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## Abstract

This study aims to investigate students' perceptions of using English songs as a medium for vocabulary learning through a digital music platform. The research employed a descriptive quantitative design using a survey method. The participants were 30 second-semester students from the English Department at a state university in Semarang, selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using a questionnaire consisting of 20 Likert-scale items and analyzed using descriptive statistics in the form of percentages. The findings indicate that students generally have positive perceptions toward the use of songs for vocabulary learning. Most students consider songs to be useful, enjoyable, and effective in helping them understand and acquire new vocabulary. In addition, songs were found to increase students' motivation and engagement, which contribute to vocabulary improvement. These results suggest that songs can provide meaningful language input and create a more engaging learning experience. Therefore, integrating songs into language learning activities is recommended to support students' vocabulary development.

**Keywords:** Spotify; English Songs; Vocabulary Learning; Students' Perceptions; EFL

## INTRODUCTION

Learning vocabulary is an important part of language learning that affects students' ability to comprehend reading, communicate clearly and speak fluently. Based on Alsharif (2022), learning vocabulary can be challenging, particularly when learning in an EFL context. Because English and Bahasa Indonesia (the Indonesian language) differ in vocabulary, pronunciation, and structure, Indonesian students usually have trouble in learning English (Katemba, 2019). With the difficulty of learning English, students find it hard to express their ideas. As stated by (Harselina et al., 2024), students may find it difficult to form sentences, phrases, and intelligible speech if they do not have a large enough vocabulary, which can impair their ability to read, write, and communicate in English. Therefore, Rajayi & Maleki (2023) pointed out that mastering vocabulary is essential for effective communication in both spoken and written forms. Traditional vocabulary teaching methods, which are still commonly used in some educational contexts, often require students to memorize word lists and rely on direct translation (Rajayi & Maleki, 2023). However, according to Azharinas (2025), today's students, especially those who have grown up with digital media and are accustomed to interactive, multimedia content, frequently find traditional methods like memorization and textbook-based instruction boring. Therefore, one proven method for improving vocabulary is to use English songs, as songs have a unique appeal and can create a fun learning environment (Dari et al., 2024).

Vocabulary learning using music, especially songs in English can be an alternative to traditional methods, by capitalizing on students' enthusiasm for music. It is now common practice to use songs as a teaching and learning tool in language education. English songs, in particular, have

become a powerful pedagogical tool in English Language Teaching (ELT), providing learners with both cognitive and affective benefits (Rohmah & Indah, 2021). As stated by Bokiev et al. (2018), the elements of melody, rhythm, and repetition in songs not only aid in language memorization but also provide concrete language input, such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and conversational patterns. According to Medina (2022), songs themselves can bring emotions to life and express a person's feelings when the words cannot be uttered. Wong et al. (2024) found that the use of songs in English language teaching offers several benefits. These include enhancing students' listening and speaking skills, increasing their motivation and engagement, helping them learn proper pronunciation, and making vocabulary easier to retain. Additionally, the use of songs is considered suitable for learners of all age groups.

With the increasing use of digital platforms in daily life, music streaming services such as Spotify have become potential tools for supporting language learning. Spotify is one of the digital music platforms that can be downloaded through the Playstore for free. According to Shafwati et al. (2023), Spotify is a complete digital platform that provides access to a broad diversity of songs and podcasts, making it useful for aiding vocabulary, listening, and speaking learning activities. As a mobile application, Spotify supports the idea of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL), giving students access to real language input at any time and from any location. This flexibility may increase exposure to English vocabulary beyond the classroom and encourage more autonomous learning habits. Previous studies have highlighted the potential of songs as an effective tool for vocabulary learning. A study by Zamin et al. (2020) found that songs effectively improved students' vocabulary learning, particularly verbs, due to their engaging and motivating nature. Similarly, Septiara & Hamzah (2023) reported that students perceived Spotify as a helpful platform for enhancing vocabulary mastery, as it allows flexible access to English songs anytime and anywhere. Moreover, songs also provide effective advantages by increasing motivation, lowering anxiety, and creating a more supportive learning atmosphere. Lailiyah & Cahyono (2022) found that the use of music in ELT classes improved students' participation and enjoyment, particularly among those with lower confidence. Songs can make the learning environment more active and enjoyable, allowing students to engage with the language more comfortably. This supports the idea that positive emotions can enhance second language learning, especially in listening and speaking skills. However, most of these studies focused on measuring vocabulary improvement or were conducted at the secondary school level, leaving limited attention to university students' perceptions of using Spotify specifically for vocabulary learning.

Although previous studies have shown that songs and digital platforms can support vocabulary learning, most of them focused on measuring vocabulary improvement or were conducted at the secondary school level. There is still limited research exploring university students' perceptions of using Spotify specifically as a medium for vocabulary learning in the Indonesian EFL context. Therefore, this study aims to explore English Department students' perceptions of using English songs on Spotify for vocabulary learning. The research question addressed in this study is: What are students' perceptions of using English songs on Spotify for vocabulary learning?

## **METHOD**

This study employed a descriptive quantitative design using a survey method to investigate students' perceptions of using English songs on Spotify as a medium for learning vocabulary. (Price & Lovell, 2018) explain that descriptive quantitative studies are used to measure phenomena as they naturally occur without researcher intervention. Therefore, this method was

chosen because it is suitable for describing students' perceptions of vocabulary learning through English-language songs on Spotify. The participants were 30 second semester students of the English Department at a state university in Semarang, selected through purposive sampling. They were chosen because they have adequate experience in learning English and are familiar with digital platforms such as Spotify, which makes them suitable respondents for this study.

The data were collected using a questionnaire distributed through Google Forms. The questionnaire consisted of Likert-scale statements with five response options: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. The items were designed to measure several aspects of students' perceptions, including the usefulness of English songs for vocabulary learning, motivation and enjoyment, and perceived vocabulary improvement. The questionnaire was adopted and adapted from (Nureani & Warni, 2023). The items were designed to measure several aspects of students' perceptions, including perceived usefulness, motivation, engagement, and vocabulary learning.

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The data obtained from the questionnaire were first tabulated in Microsoft Excel to facilitate the analysis. Tabulating data refers to the process of organizing the responses into tables based on each questionnaire item and indicator. The researcher then calculated the percentage of each response category using the following formula:  $P \text{ (percentage)} = f \text{ (frequency of responses)} / N \text{ (total responses)} \times 100\%$

In this study, *f* refers to the number of responses in each category, while *N* represents the total number of responses for each indicator, which is calculated by multiplying the number of respondents by the number of items in each indicator. Furthermore, the responses were grouped into three categories: negative (strongly disagree and disagree), neutral, and positive (agree and strongly agree). This grouping was used to simplify the interpretation of students' perceptions. The results were then presented in percentage form to identify general trends and to determine how students perceive the use of English songs on Spotify as a medium for learning vocabulary.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

This result section presents the data that was collected from the questionnaire. The results are analyzed using descriptive statistics and displayed in the table below.

**Table 1.** Percentage Table of Questionnaire Data

| No | Statements/Items  | Stongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|----|---|------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| 1. | Listening to English songs on Spotify helps me learn new English vocabulary.      | 0%               | 3%       | 7%      | 57%   | 33%            |
| 2. | The lyrics feature on Spotify helps me learn vocabulary.                          | 0%               | 0%       | 7%      | 33%   | 60%            |
| 3. | English songs on Spotify make it easier for me to become familiar with new words. | 0%               | 0%       | 0%      | 43%   | 57%            |
| 4. | My vocabulary improves after listening to English songs on Spotify.               | 0%               | 3%       | 7%      | 50%   | 40%            |

|     |  |    |    |     |     |     |
|-----|--|----|----|-----|-----|-----|
| 5.  | I often use Spotify to listen to English Songs.  | 0% | 0% | 13% | 47% | 40% |
| 6.  | I prefer listening to English songs over any local songs on Spotify.                       | 0% | 7% | 10% | 60% | 23% |
| 7.  | I can remember the new words by listening to English songs on repeat.                      | 0% | 3% | 10% | 43% | 43% |
| 8.  | I collect new words from the English songs I listen to on Spotify.                         | 0% | 7% | 17% | 40% | 37% |
| 9.  | I'm seeking for the words that I don't know in English songs.                              | 3% | 3% | 13% | 43% | 37% |
| 10. | I learn a lot of new English vocabulary while listening to English songs on Spotify.       | 0% | 3% | 23% | 37% | 37% |
| 11. | Spotify is a comfortable way to learn vocabulary than through textbooks.                   | 0% | 7% | 13% | 47% | 33% |
| 12. | Listening to English songs on Spotify can improve my understanding the meaning of words.   | 0% | 7% | 7%  | 47% | 40% |
| 13. | Learning vocabulary through English songs on Spotify is interesting for me.                | 0% | 0% | 7%  | 43% | 50% |
| 14. | Using English songs on Spotify makes vocabulary learning more enjoyable.                   | 0% | 0% | 3%  | 57% | 40% |
| 15. | I feel comfortable learning vocabulary through English songs on Spotify.                   | 0% | 0% | 10% | 60% | 30% |
| 16. | Listening to English songs on Spotify motivates me to learn new vocabulary.                | 0% | 3% | 7%  | 57% | 33% |
| 17. | English songs on Spotify encourage me to pay more attention to unfamiliar words.           | 0% | 3% | 3%  | 67% | 27% |
| 18. | After listening to English songs on Spotify, I want to learn more English vocabulary.      | 3% | 3% | 17% | 40% | 37% |
| 19. | Using Spotify for listening to English songs increases my interest in learning vocabulary. | 0% | 0% | 13% | 57% | 30% |
| 20. | English songs on Spotify inspire me to improve my English vocabulary.                      | 0% | 7% | 3%  | 47% | 43% |

**Table 2. Students Perception Using Spotify**

| No | Indicators  | Number in Questionnaire | SDA + DA | N   | A + SA |
|----|---|-------------------------|----------|-----|--------|
| 1. | Perceived usefulness of Spotify                                 | 1, 2, 3, 5              | 1%       | 5%  | 94%    |
| 2. | Usefulness of English songs on Spotify for enriching vocabulary | 4, 7, 8, 9, 10          | 5%       | 14% | 81%    |
| 3. | Students' attitudes toward learning vocabulary through songs    | 6, 13, 14               | 2%       | 7%  | 91%    |

|    |  |                    |    |     |     |
|----|--|--------------------|----|-----|-----|
| 4. | Vocabulary learning perception using Spotify English songs | 11, 12, 15         | 4% | 10% | 86% |
| 5. | Motivation   | 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 | 4% | 9%  | 87% |

There are five indicators used in this questionnaire: (1) perceived usefulness of Spotify, (2) usefulness of English songs on Spotify for enriching vocabulary, (3) students' attitudes toward learning vocabulary through songs, (4) vocabulary learning perception using Spotify English songs, and (5) motivation.

### **Perceived Usefulness of Spotify**

The first indicator shows that 94% of the responses fall into the agree and strongly agree, while only 1% are categorized as disagree and 5% as neutral. The result indicates that the majority of students perceive Spotify as a useful tool for learning English vocabulary. It reflects that the features provided by Spotify, such as song variety and lyrics, help students engage more easily with English vocabulary in a meaningful context.

### **Usefulness of English Songs on Spotify for Enriching Vocabulary**

The second indicator reveals that 81% of the students agree that English songs on Spotify help enrich their vocabulary, while 14% of responses are neutral and only 5% disagree. This indicates that most students believe that listening to English songs can expose them to new vocabulary.

### **Students' Attitudes Toward Learning Vocabulary through Songs**

This indicator shows that 91% of students show positive attitudes toward learning vocabulary through songs, with only 2% giving negative responses and 7% remaining neutral. The high level of positive responses indicates that learning through songs creates a more enjoyable learning environment, which may encourage students to participate more actively in vocabulary learning.

### **Vocabulary Learning Perception Using Spotify English Songs**

The results for the fourth indicators show that 86% of students choose agree and strongly agree categories, indicating that learning vocabulary through English songs can improve their understanding. Meanwhile, 10% of the responses are neutral and 4% are choosing options that disagree and strongly disagree. The results also imply that English songs can facilitate vocabulary learning by offering contextual meaning.

### **Motivation**

The last indicator indicates that 87% of students agree that English songs on Spotify motivate them to learn vocabulary, while 9% are neutral and 4% are negative. The fun and engaging nature of music may help reduce students' boredom during vocabulary learning activities, especially when compared to traditional learning methods such as memorizing word lists, translating vocabulary, and completing textbook-based exercises. As a result, learning becomes more interesting and enjoyable for students who prefer interactive learning experiences.

### **Discussion**

The findings of this study reveal that students generally have positive perceptions toward the use of English songs on Spotify as a medium for learning vocabulary. This is reflected in the high percentage of agreement across all indicators, including perceived usefulness, vocabulary enrichment, student's attitudes, vocabulary learning perception, and motivation. These results

indicate that songs are not only seen as an enjoyable medium but also as an effective tool for vocabulary learning.

The high level of agreement in the perceived usefulness indicator suggests that students recognize the value of Spotify as a learning resource. This supports the idea that integrating digital platforms into language learning can provide flexible and accessible exposure to authentic language. As stated by Tsvetkova (2025) using digital platforms for language learning benefits students from different backgrounds by improving accessibility, flexibility, involvement, and personalisation. In this context, English songs serve as meaningful input that allows learners to encounter vocabulary in real-life usage. This finding is consistent with those conducted by Farhansyah et al. (2023), Mantika (2021), and Waruwu et al. (2025) which highlight that songs can facilitate vocabulary acquisition by providing context and repetition.

In addition, findings related to vocabulary enrichment indicate that students believe English-language songs on Spotify help them learn and remember new words. Songs often present vocabulary in meaningful and emotional contexts, which can enhance memory retention. As supported by Rohmah & Indah (2021), songs help students retain words by appealing to their emotions and providing repetition in a natural context. This aligns with the view that repeated exposure to language input, particularly through engaging media such as music, can support vocabulary development.

In terms of students' attitudes, the results show that most students enjoy learning vocabulary through English songs on Spotify. This positive attitude plays an important role in creating a relaxed and enjoyable learning environment. Songs encourage students to interact with the language more naturally, which supports the idea that a positive emotional atmosphere can facilitate language learning. This is further supported by Yufrizal (2021), drawing on Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis, which suggests that language acquisition is more effective when learners feel motivated and emotionally comfortable. In this context, the pleasant melodies and emotional appeal of songs can help lower students' anxiety, creating a supportive environment that encourages greater participation in the learning process.

More importantly, the results reveal a strong connection between motivation, engagement, and vocabulary improvement. The high percentage in the motivation indicator suggests that English songs on Spotify can increase students' interest in learning vocabulary. As stated by Sitepu et al. (2023), when students feel motivated, they tend to be more actively engaged in the learning process, such as listening repeatedly, paying attention to lyrics, and exploring unfamiliar words. Furthermore, Mantika (2021) explains that this increased engagement provides learners with more frequent exposure to vocabulary, which ultimately leads to better vocabulary mastery. In other words, songs not only directly support vocabulary learning but also indirectly enhance it by increasing motivation and engagement.

Overall, the findings suggest that English songs on Spotify can be considered a useful and engaging medium for vocabulary learning. By increasing students' motivation and engagement, English songs provide meaningful opportunities for learners to interact with language and expand their vocabulary in a more enjoyable way.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, this study found that students have positive perceptions toward the use of English songs on Spotify as a medium for learning vocabulary. Most students consider songs to be

useful, enjoyable, and effective in helping them learn and understand new English vocabulary. The findings also indicate that English songs can increase students' motivation and engagement, which in turn support their vocabulary improvement. These results suggest that incorporating songs into English learning can create a more meaningful and enjoyable learning experience, as songs provide authentic language input and encourage active participation. Therefore, English songs on Spotify can be considered a valuable supplementary tool for vocabulary learning, particularly for students who prefer more engaging learning methods. Future studies are recommended to involve a larger number of participants and explore different contexts to gain deeper insights into the effectiveness of this approach.

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