

ENHANCING VOCABULARY MASTERY AND RETENTION AMONG GRADE EIGHT STUDENTS IN A RURAL SETTING THROUGH SPOTIFY INTEGRATION: A CLASSROOM ACTION RESEARCH STUDY

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian tindakan kelas ini meneliti penggunaan sportify sebagai platform digital untuk meningkatkan penguasaan dan retensi kosakata di antara siswa Kelas Delapan di daerah pedesaan. Dilaksanakan di SMP Yapenthom 1 Maumere selama tahun ajaran 2024-2025, penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan metode campuran, menggabungkan pengumpulan data kualitatif dan kuantitatif melalui observasi, kuesioner, wawancara, dan tes kosakata. Interaksi dilaksanakan dalam dua siklus menggunakan model penelitian tindakan Kemmis dan McTaggart. Temuan penelitian mengungkapkan peningkatan signifikan dalam retensi dan pemahaman kosakata siswa, dengan skor rata-rata 90,65 dalam keterampilan membaca dan 94,45 dalam keterampilan mendengarkan setelah siklus kedua. Siswa menunjukkan peningkatan keterlibatan dan secara positif menganggap sportify sebagai alat pembelajaran. Penelitian ini menyoroti potensi integrasi teknologi untuk mengatasi tantangan pendidikan dalam konteks pedesaan dan memberikan implikasi praktis untuk membina lingkungan belajar bahasa yang efektif dan interaktif.

Kata Kunci: Integrasi Sportify, Penguasaan Kosakata, Pendidikan Pedesaan, Penelitian Tindakan Kelas, Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris.

ABSTRACT

This classroom action research examines using sportify as a digital platform to enhance vocabulary mastery and retention among Grade Eight students in rural settings. Conducted at SMP Yapenthom 1 Maumere during the 2024-2025 academic year, the study employed a mixed-method approach, incorporating qualitative and quantitative data collection through observations, questionnaires, interviews, and vocabulary tests. The interaction was implemented in two cycles using the Kemmis and McTaggart action research model. Findings revealed significant improvements in student's vocabulary retention and comprehension, with mean scores of 90.65 in reading and 94.45 in listening skills after the second cycle. Students demonstrated heightened engagement and positively perceived sportify as a learning tool. This study highlights the potential of integrating technology to address educational challenges in rural contexts and provides practical implications for fostering effective and interactive language learning environments.

Keywords: Sportify Integration , Vocabulary Mastery, Classroom Action Research, English Language Learning.

INTRODUCTION

In today's globalized society, mastering multiple languages, particularly English, has become indispensable. English, as the most widely spoken language globally, with over 4,000 million speakers (Crystal, 2003; Rao, 2019), plays a critical role in daily life, serving as a primary tool for education and effective communication. Proficiency in English equips students with the knowledge and opportunities essential for their future, particularly in a world where English frequently emerges as a second or even third language for many learners (Nishanthi, 2018).

In the landscape of rural education, English language learning presents unique challenges, particularly in vocabulary acquisition among secondary school students. Rural educational settings often encounter significant barriers to language education, including limited resources, reduced exposure to English, and socio-economic constraints that impact learning opportunities (Harmon et al., 2000; Izquierdo et al., 2021; Kumar, 2024; Odang et al., 2023; Uran, 2022b). The role of vocabulary in English language learning for junior high school students in rural areas is especially critical, yet consistently underexplored in existing research literature.

Rural students often face disproportionate challenges in vocabulary development. Studies reveal that they have fewer opportunities for English language exposure compared to their urban counterparts (Law et al., 2018; Tay & Uran, 2022; Uran, 2022b). This limited linguistic environment creates substantial gaps in vocabulary acquisition, hindering overall language proficiency. Teachers in rural settings frequently encounter challenges in motivating students to learn English, stemming from factors such as inadequate classroom facilities, students' family backgrounds, and cultural and social influences that may not support their interest in the language. As the authors have observed, English language learning can be a daunting task, and teachers face significant challenges in finding effective techniques to engage students actively.

English serves as a universal language, facilitating communication across borders and playing a vital role in formal and international interactions (Ilyosovna, 2020). The absence of innovative teaching strategies exacerbates these difficulties, making it harder for students to actively engage with the language. Vocabulary mastery is a foundational component of language learning, as it underpins the four key language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—and contributes to the mastery of grammar and pronunciation (Chiriana, 2015; Hendrawaty, 2019). Without sufficient vocabulary, students struggle to comprehend language input and express themselves effectively, hindering their overall language acquisition.

The importance of vocabulary in language learning is well-documented. Wallace (2007) highlights that vocabulary is the cornerstone of communication, while Krashen and Terrell (2008) emphasize that adequate vocabulary is essential for meaningful interaction. Research also shows that vocabulary acquisition is closely tied to literacy development, as time spent reading and exposure to language-rich content are positively correlated with vocabulary growth (Hiebert & Kamil, 2005; Nation, 2001; Uran, 2022a). However, many students, particularly in rural areas, continue to exhibit deficiencies in vocabulary mastery, impeding their ability to understand texts and articulate ideas effectively. To enhance vocabulary mastery, learners must adapt their learning styles and strategies (Mandasari & Wahyudin, 2021; Wahyudin & Rido, 2020) and utilize various media (Sari & Wahyudin, 2019; Sasalia & Sari, 2020) that can facilitate their learning processes.

One potential solution lies in leveraging digital platforms such as Spotify to support vocabulary acquisition. Spotify, a globally popular music and podcast streaming platform, offers a diverse range of audio content that can enrich students' exposure to English in engaging ways. Besides, it offers an accessible, engaging platform that can transcend traditional classroom limitations, providing rural students with unprecedented opportunities for language exposure and interactive learning (Ilyas & Kaniadewi, 2023). In addition, Shen (2009) highlights the cultural, expressive, and therapeutic benefits of songs, which make them valuable resources for language teaching. Spotify's library, including music with lyrics, language-learning podcasts, and audiobooks, aligns with Mayer's (2001) multimedia learning theory. This theory posits that students learn more effectively when auditory and visual elements are combined, enabling them to process vocabulary through multiple sensory channels.

Despite its potential, limited research has explored the use of Spotify in vocabulary instruction, particularly in rural contexts where technological infrastructure and educational resources are often constrained. This study seeks to fill this gap by examining the impact of Spotify on vocabulary mastery among Grade Eight students at Yapenthom 1 Junior High School during the 2024–2025 academic year. Using a classroom action research approach, the study aims to explore the application of Spotify as a practical tool for enhancing vocabulary mastery among students, assess the effectiveness of Spotify in facilitating vocabulary retention among students, and provide insights into how digital platforms can enhance language learning in rural schools.

By addressing these objectives, the research aspires to contribute meaningful strategies for improving English language education in rural contexts, ultimately empowering students with enhanced linguistic capabilities and broader learning opportunities. The proposed approach recognizes that rural students require innovative, accessible, and engaging learning methods that can compensate for their limited linguistic environments. Through the strategic integration of Spotify, this study aims to transform vocabulary instruction, making language learning more interactive, personalized, and effective

RESEARCH METHODE

This study employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design using the Kemmis and McTaggart model to investigate the integration of Spotify in enhancing vocabulary mastery among twenty Class VIII B students at SMP Yapenthom 1 Maumere, a rural junior high school. The research, conducted from September 4 to December 4, 2024, utilized a mixed-method approach, collecting data through classroom observations, questionnaires, interviews, documentation, and vocabulary tests. The intervention involved collaborative activities where students identified, analyzed, memorized, and constructed sentences using vocabulary from Spotify content, fostering active engagement and vocabulary retention.

Qualitative data analysis involved categorization and thematic analysis, while quantitative data from questionnaires and vocabulary tests were analyzed by calculating average scores across two cycles of intervention. Each cycle consisted of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection, with the second cycle incorporating refinements based on the findings of the first cycle. The researcher actively participated in all stages of the research process.

By integrating Spotify, this study aimed to create a dynamic, technology-enhanced learning environment to support vocabulary mastery in a rural setting. This innovative approach sought to enhance vocabulary acquisition and foster a more engaging and interactive learning experience for students.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Pre-cycle

In the pre-cycle stage, the researchers conducted classroom observations, teacher and student interviews, and administered a pre-test to establish baseline data on the students' vocabulary proficiency. The observations revealed that students in Class VIII B of SMP Yapenthom I Maumere were generally enthusiastic about learning English, particularly when interactive techniques and applications like Kahoot, YouTube, Google Classroom, and Quizizz were used. However, the observations also showed that students' interest declined during lessons lasting longer than an hour, underscoring the need for engaging icebreakers and games to sustain their focus.

The teacher reported that most students had strong memory retention and actively participated in English lessons but tended to become disengaged without dynamic teaching approaches. According to interviews, 75% of students (n=15) expressed interest in learning English and willingness to follow instructions. However, maintaining their engagement depended heavily on the teacher's ability to make lessons enjoyable and varied. The pre-test results highlighted students' vocabulary deficiencies, particularly in their ability to retain and use English words effectively in reading and listening activities.

The pre-test results indicated an average score of 74.85, with 85% of the students achieving the passing threshold. While the majority of students passed, their scores highlighted varying levels of proficiency. Several students were clustered around the passing score (above 70), with only a few achieving significantly higher scores (above 80). This suggests that while most students possessed a basic understanding of vocabulary, their overall mastery remained limited. Consequently, this variability underscored the need for an intervention to address the gaps in vocabulary retention and application. Based on these findings, the researcher implemented a Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach with Spotify as a vocabulary enhancement tool.

Table 1. The Result of Pre-test.

		Frequenc y	%	Mean	Sum	Std. Deviation	Minimu m	Maximu m
Score	Pass	17	85%	76.59	1302	4.65	70	85
	Fail	3	15%	65	195	0	65	65
Total		20	100%	74.85	1497	6.01	65	85

Cycle 1

In the first cycle, the researchers implemented the intervention by integrating Spotify into classroom activities. Students engaged with English vocabulary through listening to audio content from Spotify, reading the passages, identifying target words, and applying them in context. Despite the novelty and interactive nature of the activities, some challenges emerged. The researchers noted that students required clearer explanations, better class management, and opportunities to ask questions. Additionally, noise levels in the classroom occasionally disrupted the learning process.

Post-test results from Cycle 1 indicated improvements in vocabulary mastery with 100% of students meeting the success criteria in both reading vocabulary and listening comprehension. However, the reflection process revealed areas for improvement. The researcher identified the need for: (1) clearer initial instructions, (2) incorporating dictionaries to support vocabulary understanding, (3) maintaining an engaging class atmosphere with loud, clear explanations, and (4) aligning the lesson plan more effectively with the Spotify-based activities. These refinements informed the strategies implemented in Cycle 2 to address the identified challenges and optimize the intervention's effectiveness.

Table 2. The Result of Post-test 1

		<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Sum</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>
Reading	Pass	20	100%	87.80	1756	4.6	80	96
Listening	Pass	20	100%	89.35	1787	5.34	80	97

Cycle 2

In Cycle 2, the researchers refined the teaching approach based on feedback from Cycle 1. Students demonstrated increased engagement, actively participating in class activities and posing questions during discussions. To address issues from the first cycle, the researchers provided clearer instructions, maintained a lively class atmosphere, and adjusted activities to better suit the student's needs. The results of Cycle 2 showed significant improvement in students' vocabulary mastery. Post-test results indicated that while 100% of students still met the success criteria in both reading and listening skills, the mean score for reading improved to 90.65 and listening achieved a mean score of 94.45. These results highlight a notable increase in performance compared to the previous cycle.

Qualitative data from observations, interviews, and questionnaires supported the quantitative findings. Students displayed high levels of enthusiasm and collaboration during the Spotify-based learning activities. Additionally, 95% of participants (n=19) expressed positive perceptions of Spotify as an engaging and effective tool for vocabulary retention. Based on these results, the researchers and the English teacher concluded that the intervention had successfully enhanced students' vocabulary mastery. With all students meeting the success criteria and the desired outcomes achieved, no further cycles were deemed necessary.

Table 3. The Result of Post-test 2

		<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Sum</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>
<i>Reading</i>	<i>Pass</i>	20	100%	90.65	1813	4.17	85	98
<i>Listening</i>	<i>Pass</i>	20	100%	94.45	1889	3.5	85	100

The following figures represent the improvement trajectory in vocabulary mastery across the pre-cycle and two post-tests.

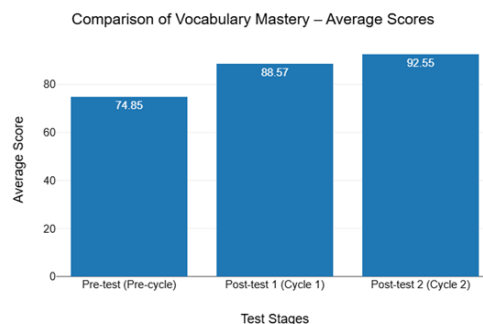


Figure 1. Comparison of Vocabulary Mastery – Average Score

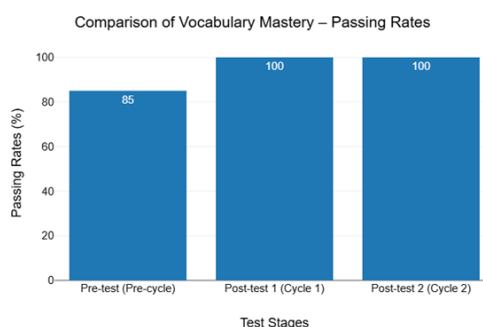


Figure 2. Comparison of Vocabulary Mastery – Passing Rates

Discussion

The findings indicate that integrating Spotify into English lessons effectively improved students' vocabulary mastery in both listening and reading comprehension. This improvement stemmed from the alignment of the intervention with key principles of effective teaching, including goal-oriented instruction, differentiated learning, reflective practice, and the strategic use of interactive tools to maintain student engagement. The implementation of the Classroom Action Research (CAR) methodology allowed for continuous refinement of teaching practices, ensuring that the intervention met the diverse needs of students and addressed classroom challenges effectively.

Interactive Learning through Technology

Spotify served as a transformative tool for creating an engaging and dynamic learning environment. Unlike traditional vocabulary learning methods, the integration of Spotify exposed students to authentic language input through songs, podcasts, and spoken word, allowing them to engage with vocabulary in real-world contexts. Students actively listened to content, identified new words, and practiced using them in meaningful ways, fostering both retention and application. This process also enhanced their listening skills as they became attuned to different accents, intonations, and contexts.

Moreover, the use of Spotify encouraged collaboration, as students worked in teams to discuss and analyze vocabulary. This interaction not only improved vocabulary acquisition but also developed teamwork and communication skills. Such collaborative, technology-driven approaches align with research emphasizing the importance of digital tools in language teaching, which not only engage students but also prepare them for language use in the digital age (Burns, 2010; Santosa et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2024).

Spotify's versatility also allowed the teacher to tailor content to students' interests, further motivating them to participate (Ilyas & Kaniadewi, 2023). For instance, incorporating popular songs or culturally relevant podcasts provided a sense of familiarity, making the lessons relatable and enjoyable. This highlights the importance of using technology that resonates with students' preferences to maintain engagement and facilitate deeper learning.

Differentiated and Adaptive Instruction

The intervention's success also lay in its ability to address the varied learning needs of students. Differentiated instruction, supported by the flexibility of Spotify, ensured that students progressed at their own pace. For instance, advanced learners could focus on more complex vocabulary, while struggling students were provided with simpler tasks and additional support through peer collaboration and dictionary use.

Collaborative group work played a pivotal role in levelling the playing field, allowing students with different abilities to learn from one another. This inclusive approach aligns with contemporary educational practices, which emphasize the need for tailored learning experiences that consider individual strengths and weaknesses (Davidson & Uran, 2022). By leveraging the interactive and adaptive features of Spotify, the teacher created an inclusive learning environment that catered to diverse proficiency levels and learning styles (Yue & Dong, 2024).

The Role of Reflection and Iterative Improvement

The iterative nature of the CAR approach was instrumental in the intervention's success. Reflection after Cycle 1 revealed specific areas for improvement, such as the need for clearer instructions, better classroom management, and more effective use of Spotify. These insights informed the adjustments made in Cycle 2, which resulted in significant gains in student outcomes.

The reflective process also allowed the teacher to identify and address practical challenges, such as maintaining a lively but controlled classroom atmosphere and ensuring that

all students understood the tasks. This underscores the value of teacher reflection in identifying areas for growth and implementing targeted strategies to optimize learning (Burns, 2010; Harmer, 2001). The continuous cycle of action, observation, and reflection not only improved student outcomes but also enhanced the teacher's instructional skills.

Student Perceptions and Engagement

Student feedback and observational data highlighted the positive impact of Spotify on their learning experience. The majority of students described the lessons as enjoyable and engaging, with the gamified elements of the Spotify-based activities fostering enthusiasm and sustained interest. This enthusiasm translated into active participation, with students collaborating in teams, posing questions, and sharing their ideas.

The students' perceptions further validated the effectiveness of Spotify as a teaching tool. Many students reported that Spotify made learning vocabulary easier and more enjoyable, as it combined entertainment with education. This reflects the importance of using tools that not only deliver educational content but also captivate learners' attention. The gamified nature of the activities encouraged friendly competition, which further motivated students to excel.

Moreover, the intervention's focus on teamwork and communication helped foster a positive classroom environment. By working in groups, students developed peer support systems, which not only improved their vocabulary mastery but also strengthened their interpersonal skills. These findings align with the growing body of research advocating for the integration of gamified, collaborative activities in language learning to enhance engagement and achievement (Bustillo et al., 2017; Deterding et al., 2011).

Implications for Teaching Practices

The study underscores the potential of integrating digital tools like Spotify into English language teaching. It highlights the importance of selecting tools that align with students' interests and needs while promoting active and collaborative learning. Teachers should consider incorporating similar technology-driven approaches to create engaging, student-centered learning environments.

Additionally, the iterative nature of CAR demonstrated the value of reflective teaching practices in identifying and addressing challenges. Educators are encouraged to adopt a flexible mindset, continuously evaluating and adapting their methods to meet their students' needs.

Finally, the success of this intervention highlights the importance of designing lessons that are goal-oriented, differentiated, and interactive. By combining these elements, teachers can create meaningful learning experiences that foster not only vocabulary mastery but also critical thinking, communication, and collaboration skills.

CONCLUSION

This study examined students' perspectives on the use of Spotify as a tool to enhance vocabulary mastery in an English classroom. The findings indicated that students responded positively to Spotify, recognizing it as an engaging and effective learning resource. Through Classroom Action Research (CAR) conducted in two cycles, the study evaluated the impact of Spotify on vocabulary learning using observations, tests, questionnaires, and interviews. Quantitative results demonstrated significant improvements, with mean scores of 90.65 in reading and 94.45 in listening vocabulary mastery. Qualitative data further supported these findings, highlighting positive shifts in students' attitudes, behaviors, and overall learning experiences.

The study provides valuable insights for students, teachers, and future researchers. Students are encouraged to engage actively in learning and utilize Spotify beyond the classroom for independent vocabulary reinforcement. For EFL teachers, the research highlights the benefits of integrating Spotify into lessons to enhance engagement and vocabulary retention.

Educators should explore diverse teaching methods and continuously reflect on their practices to optimize learning outcomes. Future researchers can expand upon this study by investigating Spotify's role in other language skills or educational settings, employing varied methodologies to assess long-term impacts. Overall, this study reinforces the importance of technology-enhanced language instruction, emphasizing Spotify's potential as a practical tool for vocabulary development.

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