



THE EFFECT OF THE SONG LYRICS “BEYOND” TO IMPROVE VOCABULARY IN READING SKILLS AT FIRST SEMESTER STUDENTS

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ABSTRAK

Rendahnya penguasaan kosakata masih menjadi kendala utama bagi pembelajar *English as a Foreign Language* (EFL) karena berdampak pada kemampuan memahami bacaan dan keterlibatan dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis pengaruh penggunaan lirik lagu *Beyond* dari film *Moana 2* terhadap penguasaan kosakata dalam keterampilan membaca mahasiswa. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan desain pra-eksperimen melalui model *one-group pre-test and post-test*. Subjek penelitian terdiri atas 15 mahasiswa semester pertama Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris STKIP PGRI Bangkalan. Data dikumpulkan menggunakan tes kosakata yang diberikan sebelum dan sesudah perlakuan, kemudian dianalisis melalui uji validitas, reliabilitas, normalitas, dan *Paired Sample t-Test* menggunakan IBM SPSS versi 30. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa instrumen valid dan reliabel serta data berdistribusi normal (Asymp. Sig. = 0,087 > 0,05). Nilai rata-rata mahasiswa meningkat dari 63,33 pada *pre-test* menjadi 79,33 pada *post-test*, yang menunjukkan adanya peningkatan yang signifikan setelah perlakuan. Dengan demikian, lirik lagu *Beyond* efektif digunakan sebagai media pembelajaran untuk meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata dalam keterampilan membaca pada pembelajar EFL.

Kata Kunci: *Kosakata, Keterampilan Membaca, Lirik Lagu, Pembelajar Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing*

ABSTRACT

Limited vocabulary mastery remains a major challenge for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, reducing their reading comprehension and engagement with English texts. This study aimed to examine the effect of using the song lyrics of *Beyond* from *Moana 2* on students' vocabulary mastery in reading skills. A quantitative pre-experimental design with a one-group pre-test–post-test approach was employed. The participants were 15 first-semester students of the English Education Study Program at STKIP PGRI Bangkalan. Data were collected using vocabulary tests administered before and after the treatment and analyzed through validity, reliability, normality, and paired-sample *t*-test using IBM SPSS version 30. The findings revealed that the instrument was valid and reliable, while the data were normally distributed (Asymp. Sig. = 0.087 > 0.05). Students' mean score increased from 63.33 in the pre-test to 79.33 in the post-test, indicating a statistically significant improvement after the treatment. These findings demonstrate that the song lyrics of *Beyond* effectively enhance vocabulary mastery in reading skills and can serve as an engaging and meaningful instructional medium for EFL learning.

Keywords: *Vocabulary, Reading Skills, Song Lyrics, EFL Students*



INTRODUCTION

English has evolved into a global language that plays a crucial role in international communication, education, research, business, and various cross-border fields. Although it is not the language with the largest number of native speakers worldwide, English occupies a strategic position as a *lingua franca*, enabling people from diverse linguistic backgrounds to communicate globally (Zeng & Yang, 2024). Its importance has continued to grow as English facilitates intercultural communication, academic collaboration, and international knowledge exchange (Oliveira, 2024). Consistent with the concept of *Global Englishes*, English is now viewed as a means of international communication that supports multicultural interaction and innovation in the era of globalization, rather than being confined to native-speaker contexts (Baker et al., 2026). In Indonesia, English is taught at various educational levels to equip students with effective communication skills while providing access to global information.

Vocabulary mastery is one of the fundamental aspects of English language learning because it directly influences the development of language proficiency. Vocabulary not only supports learners in understanding and producing language but also serves as a key indicator of second-language development (Alshumrani, 2024). The broader students' vocabulary knowledge, the greater their ability to comprehend and use English effectively in various communicative contexts (Sun et al., 2023). In addition to classroom instruction, vocabulary can be developed through authentic sources such as the Internet, social media, music, and digital platforms that provide meaningful language exposure (Fan, 2023). Therefore, vocabulary mastery constitutes an indispensable component of successful English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning.

Among the four language skills, reading is considered one of the most essential because it enables learners to acquire information, expand their knowledge, develop critical thinking skills, and improve academic achievement. However, successful reading comprehension largely depends on adequate vocabulary knowledge. In the EFL context, limited vocabulary frequently becomes a major obstacle that prevents learners from understanding texts, identifying key information, and constructing meaning effectively (Wahyudi & Kusumawardani, 2024). Reading itself is an active process involving not only word recognition but also the comprehension, interpretation, and evaluation of information presented in a text (Bonganciso & Bonganciso, 2022). Consequently, reading ability and vocabulary mastery are mutually reinforcing components that contribute to learners' overall language competence (Zila & Septiana, 2024).

Despite the crucial role of vocabulary mastery, many EFL learners continue to experience difficulties in expanding their vocabulary due to learning approaches that are often unengaging and predominantly rely on *rote memorization*. Such approaches frequently reduce students' motivation and participation, causing newly learned vocabulary to be easily forgotten and difficult to apply in reading contexts. As a result, learners often struggle to comprehend English texts despite possessing basic grammatical knowledge. Therefore, more innovative and contextualized instructional media are needed to facilitate vocabulary development while simultaneously enhancing reading skills.

One instructional medium that has received considerable attention in English language teaching is song lyrics. Songs provide authentic language input by introducing vocabulary in meaningful contexts, making new words easier for learners to understand and remember. Through repetition, rhythm, and emotional engagement, song lyrics promote vocabulary retention more effectively than traditional word-list learning. Furthermore, reading and analyzing song lyrics encourage learners to infer meaning from context, recognize new



expressions, and develop lexical knowledge that supports reading comprehension (Mannarelli & Serrano, 2022). The use of songs as authentic learning materials has also been shown to increase learners' engagement while enriching their vocabulary acquisition (Zhang et al., 2023; Butar Butar & Katemba, 2023).

Previous studies have consistently demonstrated the positive effects of music and songs on English language learning. Zaharani (2023) found that music significantly improved students' vocabulary mastery. Similarly, Luo et al. (2022) reported that integrating songs into English language instruction enhanced both students' learning interest and academic achievement. Beyond cognitive development, songs have also been found to increase learners' motivation and engagement throughout the learning process. These findings indicate that songs represent an effective instructional medium for vocabulary learning in EFL contexts.

Nevertheless, most previous studies have primarily focused on improving vocabulary acquisition and retention in general, while research investigating how enhanced vocabulary contributes to reading comprehension remains relatively limited. Moreover, the majority of existing studies have involved secondary school students and have employed popular songs in general instructional settings. Research specifically examining the use of movie soundtrack lyrics as instructional materials for university-level EFL learners is still scarce. To date, studies investigating the use of the song *Beyond* from *Moana 2* as a learning medium remain very limited, despite the song containing rich vocabulary and narrative themes that have the potential to support vocabulary development and reading comprehension. This research gap highlights the need for further empirical investigation into the effectiveness of song lyrics as instructional media in higher education EFL contexts.

Based on this gap, the present study investigates the effect of using the lyrics of *Beyond* from *Moana 2* on vocabulary mastery in reading skills among first-semester students at STKIP PGRI Bangkalan. In this study, the lyrics of *Beyond* serve as the independent variable, while vocabulary mastery in reading skills functions as the dependent variable. The study is grounded in the assumption that engaging students in understanding meaningful song lyrics can enrich their vocabulary knowledge while simultaneously supporting reading comprehension. Therefore, this research aims to provide empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of song lyrics as an alternative instructional medium for teaching vocabulary and reading skills to EFL learners.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a quantitative approach using a pre-experimental design with a one-group pre-test and post-test design. The research was conducted at STKIP PGRI Bangkalan and involved 15 first-semester students of the English Education Study Program. The participants were selected because they were in the early stage of learning English and experienced difficulties in vocabulary mastery. The study aimed to examine the effect of using the song lyrics of *Beyond* on students' vocabulary mastery in reading skills. The research was carried out over three weeks, consisting of a pre-test, treatment sessions, and a post-test.

The research instrument was a vocabulary test consisting of ten multiple-choice questions developed based on the lyrics of *Beyond*. The test was administered twice: as a pre-test to measure the students' initial vocabulary mastery and as a post-test to assess their improvement after the treatment. The test items focused on the students' ability to identify word meanings and understand vocabulary use within reading contexts. The research procedure began with a 30-minute pre-test, followed by instructional activities using the song lyrics of *Beyond*, *Into the Unknown*, and *Speechless*. During the treatment, the students read and

analyzed the song lyrics, identified unfamiliar vocabulary, discussed the meanings of the lyrics, and interpreted vocabulary usage within context before completing the post-test, which employed the same format as the pre-test.

The data were analyzed quantitatively using IBM SPSS version 30. Prior to the main analysis, the research instrument was subjected to validity and reliability tests to ensure its measurement quality. A One-Sample Kolmogorov–Smirnov test was then conducted to determine whether the data were normally distributed. After the normality assumption was satisfied, the data were analyzed using a paired-samples *t*-test to compare the pre-test and post-test scores and determine the statistical significance of the effect of using the song lyrics of *Beyond* on the students' vocabulary mastery in reading skills.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Validity Test Results

Before analyzing the research findings, the research instrument was first evaluated to ensure its quality and suitability as a data collection tool. The instrument evaluation included validity and reliability tests to determine whether the instrument accurately measured the research variable and produced consistent data. The validity test was conducted using the Pearson Product–Moment Correlation to examine the relationship between the measurement scores, while the reliability test was performed using Cronbach's Alpha to assess the internal consistency of the instrument. These procedures are essential in quantitative research because valid and reliable instruments produce more accurate and trustworthy data. Therefore, the results of the validity and reliability tests are presented prior to the main statistical analysis. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Validity and Reliability Test Results of the Research Instrument

Test Aspect	Indicator	Result	Interpretation
Validity	Pearson Correlation	0.658**	Valid
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.008	Significant ($p < 0.05$)
	Number of Respondents (<i>N</i>)	15	–
Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha	0.737	Reliable
	Number of Items	2	–

Note. $p < 0.01$ (2-tailed).

As shown in Table 1, the instrument testing results indicate that the Pearson correlation coefficient between the pre-test and post-test scores was 0.658, with a significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) of 0.008 for 15 respondents. Since the significance value was lower than 0.05, the correlation between the two sets of scores was statistically significant, indicating that the instrument met the validity criterion. Furthermore, the reliability analysis produced a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.737, which exceeded the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.70, demonstrating good internal consistency. Therefore, the research instrument was considered valid and reliable for measuring students' vocabulary mastery in reading skills.

Normality Test Results

Before testing the research hypothesis using the Paired Samples *t*-test, a normality test was conducted to ensure that the data met the assumption of normal distribution. Testing for normality is an essential prerequisite in parametric statistical analysis because the validity and accuracy of the hypothesis testing depend on whether the data are normally distributed. In this study, the normality test was performed on data obtained from 15 participants using the One-Sample Kolmogorov–Smirnov test in SPSS. This method was selected to evaluate the extent to which the sample data conform to a normal distribution based on the resulting significance value. The results of the normality test were subsequently used to determine the appropriateness of applying a parametric statistical test in the next stage of data analysis. The complete results of the normality test are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. One-Sample Kolmogorov–Smirnov Normality Test Results

Component	Subcomponent	Value
N		15
Normal Parameters	Mean	0.0000000
	Std. Deviation	4.47213595
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	0.206
	Positive	0.139
	Negative	–0.206
Test Statistic		0.206
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		0.087
Monte Carlo Sig. (2-tailed)	Sig.	0.080
99% Confidence Interval	Lower Bound	0.073
	Upper Bound	0.087

Based on Table 2, the One-Sample Kolmogorov–Smirnov test showed that the data collected from 15 respondents had an Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.087, which was higher than the significance level of 0.05. This result indicates that the data were normally distributed, satisfying one of the fundamental assumptions for parametric statistical analysis. Moreover, the Monte Carlo significance test yielded a significance value of 0.080 with a 99% confidence interval ranging from 0.073 to 0.087, further confirming that the data did not significantly deviate from a normal distribution. In addition, the test statistic of 0.206, together with a residual mean close to zero and a standard deviation of 4.472, indicates that the data dispersion was appropriate for further statistical analysis. Based on these findings, the normality assumption was fulfilled, allowing the use of a paired-samples *t*-test to examine the effect of using the song lyrics of *Beyond* on students' vocabulary mastery in reading skills.

Paired-Sample Statistics

After the research instrument had been confirmed as valid and reliable, descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to provide an overview of the students' learning outcomes

before and after the treatment. This analysis compared the students' vocabulary mastery in the pre-test and post-test based on the mean scores, number of respondents, and score variability. Through descriptive statistics, the researcher identified the initial changes following the implementation of learning activities using the song lyrics of *Beyond* before proceeding to hypothesis testing. The results of the paired-sample statistics are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Paired-Sample Statistics

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Pre-Test	63.33	15	9.759
Post-Test	79.33	15	5.936

As presented in Table 3, the paired-sample statistics indicate a difference in students' learning outcomes before and after the implementation of instruction using the song lyrics of *Beyond*. The mean score increased from 63.33 in the pre-test to 79.33 in the post-test, while the number of respondents remained constant at 15 students in both assessments. In addition, the standard deviation decreased from 9.759 to 5.936, indicating that the variation in students' scores became smaller after the treatment. This reduction in score variability suggests that students' vocabulary mastery became more homogeneous following the instructional intervention. Descriptively, these findings indicate that the use of the song lyrics of *Beyond* had a positive effect on improving students' vocabulary mastery in reading skills, which was subsequently confirmed through inferential statistical analysis.

Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesis testing was conducted to determine whether the use of the song lyrics of *Beyond* had a significant effect on students' vocabulary mastery in reading skills. Prior to hypothesis testing, the data were examined using the One-Sample Kolmogorov–Smirnov test, which produced an Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.087. Since this value exceeded 0.05, the data were considered normally distributed and therefore met the assumption for parametric statistical analysis using a paired-samples *t*-test. In this study, the null hypothesis (H_0) stated that the use of the song lyrics of *Beyond* had no significant effect on improving the vocabulary mastery in reading skills of first-semester students at STKIP PGRI Bangkalan, whereas the alternative hypothesis (H_1) stated that the song lyrics had a significant effect.

The analysis revealed that the students' mean score increased from 63.33 in the pre-test to 79.33 in the post-test, accompanied by a decrease in the standard deviation from 9.759 to 5.936, indicating that students' performance improved and became more consistent after the treatment. Based on the results of the paired-samples *t*-test, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected, while the alternative hypothesis (H_1) was accepted. Therefore, it can be concluded that the use of the song lyrics of *Beyond* had a statistically significant effect on improving the vocabulary mastery in reading skills of first-semester students at STKIP PGRI Bangkalan. These findings suggest that song lyrics can serve as an effective instructional medium for enhancing vocabulary mastery while simultaneously supporting reading comprehension in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning.



Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the use of the song lyrics of *Beyond* significantly improved students' vocabulary mastery in reading skills. The increase in the mean score from 63.33 in the pre-test to 79.33 in the post-test suggests that the students were able to acquire and retain more vocabulary after participating in learning activities based on song lyrics. This improvement may be attributed to the fact that song lyrics provide **authentic language input**, presenting vocabulary in meaningful contexts that facilitate comprehension and retention. Unlike conventional vocabulary learning methods, songs combine repetition, rhythm, and emotional engagement, all of which contribute to more effective vocabulary acquisition. Throughout the instructional process, the students actively identified unfamiliar words, discussed their meanings, and interpreted the lyrics, promoting deeper lexical processing and strengthening long-term vocabulary retention.

These findings support the view that reading is an active process involving not only the direct comprehension of information but also the application of various strategies to construct meaning. Effective readers employ strategies such as predicting, monitoring comprehension, identifying key information, and evaluating textual content to achieve a deeper understanding (Sun et al., 2021). In the present study, the students did more than simply read the song lyrics; they actively interacted with the text by translating unfamiliar vocabulary, interpreting word meanings based on context, and discussing the lyrics with their classmates. These activities not only enhanced vocabulary mastery but also facilitated a more comprehensive understanding of the text, thereby contributing to the development of their reading skills.

The present findings are also consistent with previous studies highlighting the effectiveness of songs in English language learning. Nie et al. (2022) reported that songs facilitate vocabulary acquisition through repeated language exposure, rhythm, and meaningful lyrical contexts, thereby supporting vocabulary retention in long-term memory. Similarly, Nushi and Amini (2022) found that song-based instruction enhances learners' recognition of word forms, form-meaning connections, and collocational knowledge among learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The findings of this study are further supported by Zaharani (2023), who reported that the use of songs positively influences students' vocabulary acquisition. During the learning process, the students appeared more enthusiastic, actively participated in discussions, and engaged more fully in classroom activities because songs created a more enjoyable, comfortable, and motivating learning environment.

The findings also reinforce those of Odo (2022), who argued that English songs provide repeated, contextualized, and memorable language exposure, making them an effective medium for second-language vocabulary learning among EFL students. In the present study, the improvement in vocabulary mastery was reflected not only in the increase in the mean score but also in the reduction of the standard deviation from 9.759 in the pre-test to 5.936 in the post-test. This decrease indicates that the students' performance became more homogeneous following the instructional intervention. Therefore, the use of song lyrics not only improved overall learning outcomes but also reduced differences in vocabulary mastery among students with varying levels of prior knowledge.

From an educational perspective, these findings suggest that song lyrics can serve as an effective alternative instructional medium in English language teaching, particularly for enhancing vocabulary mastery in reading skills. The use of songs enables instructors to integrate vocabulary learning, reading activities, pronunciation practice, and classroom discussion into a single contextualized and meaningful learning experience. In addition to increasing students' engagement, songs may also reduce language-learning anxiety and enhance learners'



confidence when encountering unfamiliar vocabulary. Overall, the findings demonstrate that the song lyrics of *Beyond* effectively improved the vocabulary mastery in reading skills of first-semester students at STKIP PGRI Bangkalan. Therefore, the integration of song lyrics into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction can be considered an effective pedagogical strategy for promoting vocabulary development and supporting reading comprehension.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the use of the song lyrics of *Beyond* from *Moana 2* effectively improved the vocabulary mastery in reading skills of first-semester students at STKIP PGRI Bangkalan. This conclusion is supported by the significant increase in the students' mean score, which rose from 63.33 in the pre-test to 79.33 in the post-test. The findings also demonstrate that song lyrics can serve as an engaging instructional medium in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms by facilitating vocabulary acquisition, encouraging active student participation, and creating a more enjoyable learning environment. These results provide valuable pedagogical implications for English language teaching, particularly in EFL contexts. English teachers and lecturers are encouraged to incorporate authentic learning materials, such as English song lyrics, into vocabulary and reading instruction to create more meaningful and engaging learning experiences. Selecting songs that are appropriate for learners' characteristics can enhance learning motivation, promote active engagement, and help students acquire vocabulary in meaningful contexts. Therefore, integrating songs into classroom instruction can be considered an effective complementary strategy to conventional vocabulary teaching methods.

Despite these positive findings, several limitations should be acknowledged. This study employed a pre-experimental design involving only a single group of 15 students, which limits the generalizability of the findings to a broader population. Therefore, future studies are recommended to employ true experimental or quasi-experimental designs with larger sample sizes and control groups to provide stronger empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of song-based instruction. Furthermore, future research may explore the use of various movie soundtracks, music genres, or other digital learning media to enhance different aspects of English language proficiency, including listening, speaking, writing, and reading comprehension.

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