

# ENHANCING FIFTH GRADERS' VOCABULARY MASTERY THROUGH SCRIPTED SONGS AT SD NEGERI 16 KESIMAN, DENPASAR TIMUR

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## ABSTRACT

This Classroom Action Research aimed to investigate how the use of scripted songs can improve vocabulary mastery among fifth-grade students at SD Negeri 16 Kesiman, Denpasar Timur. The research question formulated in this study was: How does the use of scripted songs contribute to the improvement of fifth-grade students' vocabulary mastery at SD Negeri 16 Kesiman, Denpasar Timur? Accordingly, the objective was to examine and describe the process and effectiveness of using scripted songs to enhance students' English vocabulary mastery. This study employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) based on the model by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), conducted in two cycles. Each cycle consisted of planning, action, observation, and reflection. The participants were 37 fifth-grade students. Data were collected through pre-tests and post-tests as primary data in each cycle, while observation checklists, interviews, and student feedback forms were used as supporting data. Scripted songs were specifically designed using wild animal themes and descriptive adjectives, in accordance with the students' curriculum. The findings demonstrated a significant improvement in students' vocabulary mastery. The mean score in the preliminary study was 53.9, increasing to 72.8 after Cycle I, and further rising to 85.0 in Cycle II. By the end of the research, all students (100%) successfully achieved the Minimum Completion Criterion (KKM). The use of scripted songs not only improved vocabulary mastery but also fostered a more engaging, confident, and enthusiastic classroom environment. Thus, integrating scripted songs through experiential learning has been proven effective in improving young learners' vocabulary mastery and is recommended for English language instruction in elementary schools.

**Keywords:** scripted songs, vocabulary mastery, classroom action research, elementary students, experiential learning

## INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is considered a crucial foundation in learning a foreign language, especially for young learners in elementary schools. Without a sufficient vocabulary, students are unable to comprehend texts, express their ideas, or communicate effectively in English (Nation, 2001; Lisana et al., 2022). Many studies have emphasized that vocabulary mastery strongly influences the development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills (Kholid, 2024; Anto & Anita, 2023). In Indonesia, the importance of English vocabulary has grown, but many elementary students still struggle to acquire and retain new words, mainly due to limited exposure and monotonous teaching methods (Budasi, 2024).

Traditional vocabulary instruction, which relies heavily on memorization and textbook exercises, is often found to be less effective and engaging for young learners. Research by Kurniawan (2024) and Al-Faris & Jasim (2021) shows that students tend to forget new words quickly if they are not taught in an interactive and enjoyable way. Moreover, English is rarely used outside the classroom, especially in regions like Bali, which makes it even harder for students to practice and remember new vocabulary (Budasi, 2024). As a result, there is a clear need for innovative and effective strategies that can motivate students and support long-term vocabulary learning.

In recent years, various interactive approaches have been explored to enhance students' vocabulary mastery, such as using flashcards (Novasyari, 2024), storytelling (Lumbangaol et al., 2024), and digital media (Haq, 2024). One promising method is the use of songs. Songs naturally attract students' attention, create a positive classroom atmosphere, and make it easier for children to memorize and recall words through rhythm and repetition (Valentino, 2022;

Zaharani, 2023). Tilwani et al. (2022) found that students who learned vocabulary through songs showed better retention and higher test scores than those taught by conventional methods. Similarly, Dinda et al. (2025) reported that songs help students connect vocabulary to real-life usage, improve pronunciation, and increase motivation.

Scripted songs refer to songs that are intentionally designed for educational purposes, in which the lyrics are systematically structured to include specific target vocabulary, grammatical patterns, and contextual meanings. Unlike popular or traditional songs, scripted songs are not merely used for entertainment but are pedagogically constructed to align with learning objectives and students' curriculum. These songs typically incorporate repetition, simple sentence structures, and contextualized language to facilitate vocabulary acquisition and retention among young learners.

However, most previous studies have focused on using popular or traditional songs, rather than scripted songs. Such songs are specifically designed with targeted vocabulary and structures for educational purposes. Wulandari et al. (2018) found that scripted songs can significantly enhance students' overall English competence, but there is limited research examining their effect on specific vocabulary mastery for a focused topic in elementary settings. Additionally, prior research has not adequately addressed how scripted songs can be integrated with experiential learning models and collaborative activities to support long-term retention and classroom participation, particularly in the context of Indonesian elementary schools.

Based on this gap, the novelty of this research lies in its focus on using scripted songs that are intentionally developed to teach specific vocabulary related to wild animals and descriptive adjectives, following the students' curriculum in grade five. This study also integrates experiential learning theory and small group discussions, aiming to create a more active, engaging, and supportive learning environment. By concentrating on a specific topic and combining music with collaborative practice, this research seeks to provide new evidence on the effectiveness of scripted songs for vocabulary mastery in elementary education. Therefore, this study aims to address the following research question: How does the use of scripted songs contribute to the improvement of fifth-grade students' vocabulary mastery at SD Negeri 16 Kesiman, Denpasar Timur? The objective of this study is to investigate and describe the process and effectiveness of using scripted songs to enhance students' vocabulary mastery for fifth-grade students at SD Negeri 16 Kesiman, Denpasar Timur.

## **METHOD**

This study employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) based on the Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) model, which involves four key stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. Classroom Action Research (CAR) was selected as the research design because it allows the researcher to improve teaching practices while observing students' learning progress in a real classroom setting. This design is appropriate for addressing practical classroom problems, particularly students' low vocabulary mastery, and evaluating the effectiveness of an instructional intervention through iterative cycles of planning, action, observation, and reflection.

The research was conducted at SD Negeri 16 Kesiman, Denpasar Timur, involving a single class of 37 fifth-grade students aged 10–11 years. The study was carried out in two cycles, with each cycle consisting of two classroom meetings where the use of scripted songs was integrated into English vocabulary lessons, focusing on wild animals and descriptive adjectives. The intervention involved the use of two scripted songs made by the author based on grade 5 curriculum material, specifically developed for this study. Each song focused on wild animals and descriptive adjectives, using simple sentence patterns, repetitive structures, and rhyming elements to support memorization. Each classroom session lasted approximately

80 minutes, including pre-activity (introduction of vocabulary), while-activity (singing, gestures, and group work), and post-activity (practice and evaluation). In the planning stage, the researcher prepared lesson plans, selected and designed scripted songs, and developed supporting materials such as worksheets and assessment tools aligned with the curriculum and the targeted vocabulary. During the action stage, the scripted songs were implemented using experiential learning steps, including singing activities, movement, group discussions, and collaborative games to enhance students' engagement and retention. The observation stage involved monitoring students' participation, motivation, and learning outcomes through classroom observation checklists, while also recording challenges and classroom atmosphere. The reflection stage was used to evaluate the results of Cycle I and to plan improvements for Cycle II.

Quantitative data were collected from pre-tests and post-tests, each consisting of 30 multiple-choice questions to assess students' vocabulary mastery before and after each cycle. Qualitative data were obtained from teacher and student interviews, observation notes, and student feedback forms. Quantitative data from pre-tests and post-tests were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including mean scores and the percentage of students achieving the Minimum Completion Criterion (KKM). The improvement across cycles was compared to determine the effectiveness of the intervention. Qualitative data from observations, interviews, and student feedback were analyzed using thematic analysis, involving data reduction, categorization, and interpretation to identify patterns related to students' engagement, motivation, and classroom interaction.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### RESULT

The preliminary study was conducted to assess the baseline vocabulary mastery of fifth-grade students at SD Negeri 16 Kesiman before the implementation of scripted songs. A pre-test consisting of 30 multiple-choice questions on the topic of wild animals and descriptive adjectives was administered to all 37 students. The results revealed that most students struggled significantly with English vocabulary. As presented in Table 1, only 6 students (16.2%) achieved the Minimum Completion Criterion (KKM) of 75, while the majority, 31 students (83.8%), scored below the required standard. The mean score for the pre-test was 53.9, with the highest score being 80.0 and the lowest score only 23.3. These results clearly indicate that the students' initial vocabulary mastery was far from satisfactory, and traditional memorization-based methods had not supported effective retention and understanding of new words.

**Table I. Pre-Test Results of Fifth-Grade Students (Preliminary Study)**

| No | Aspects   | Result of Preliminary Study |
|----|---|-----------------------------|
| 1  | Mean Score  | 53.9                        |
| 2  | Highest Score                                     | 80.0                        |
| 3  | Lowest Score                                      | 23.3                        |
| 4  | Number of the students who passed the KKM         | 6                           |
| 5  | Number of the students who did not passed the KKM | 31                          |

The data from the pre-test highlight the urgent need for an innovative teaching strategy. With the majority of students unable to reach the minimum standard, it was evident that a more interactive and engaging approach was necessary to improve their vocabulary mastery. These findings served as the foundation for the subsequent implementation of scripted songs in the classroom action research cycles.

Based on the findings of the preliminary study, the first cycle was designed to introduce scripted songs as a new strategy to improve students' vocabulary mastery. During Cycle I, two classroom meetings were conducted, each focusing on different aspects of vocabulary related to wild animals and descriptive adjectives. In the planning stage, the researcher carefully selected and designed scripted songs that matched the lesson objectives and vocabulary targets. Lesson plans, worksheets, and supporting teaching materials were prepared to support the activities.

### Cycle I

After implementing the scripted songs and supporting activities in Cycle I, a post-test was given to all students to measure the progress in their vocabulary mastery. The post-test consisted of 30 multiple-choice questions, similar in format to the pre-test, and was designed to assess students' understanding of vocabulary related to wild animals and descriptive adjectives. The results showed a clear improvement compared to the preliminary study. As presented in Table 2, the mean score increased to 72.8, with 20 out of 37 students (54%) successfully passing the Minimum Completion Criterion (KKM) of 75. The highest score achieved was 100.0, while the lowest score in this cycle was 36.6. However, there were still 17 students (46%) who did not reach the KKM, indicating that while significant progress had been made, further support and adjustment to teaching methods were still necessary.

**Table II. Post-Test Results of Fifth-Grade Students in Cycle I**

| No | Aspects   | Result of Preliminary Study | Result of Post-Test Cycle I |
|----|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1  | Mean Score  | 53.9                        | 72.8                        |
| 2  | Highest Score                                     | 80.0                        | 100.0                       |
| 3  | Lowest Score                                      | 23.3                        | 36.6                        |
| 4  | Number of the students who passed the KKM         | 6                           | 20                          |
| 5  | Number of the students who did not passed the KKM | 31                          | 17                          |

The improvement in students' performance after Cycle I indicated that the use of scripted songs, along with interactive singing, gestures, and group activities, was effective in increasing students' engagement and helping them remember new vocabulary. Many students became more enthusiastic and confident in using English words, as observed during class discussions and vocabulary games. Nevertheless, since nearly half of the class still had not passed the KKM, it was clear that further modification and enrichment of learning activities were required in the next cycle to ensure all students could reach the expected level of mastery.

Observations during Cycle I showed that the introduction of scripted songs brought a noticeable change in the classroom atmosphere. Students who were previously less interested in vocabulary lessons became more engaged, especially when singing the songs and performing related gestures. The use of music made learning English vocabulary more fun and less intimidating, encouraging even shy students to participate in class activities. Many students demonstrated increased enthusiasm and were more willing to repeat the song lyrics, which helped them memorize new words more effectively. Teachers noted that students paid better attention and were generally more motivated during lessons compared to the initial observations in the preliminary study.

However, despite these positive improvements, several students continued to struggle when asked to apply new vocabulary in written exercises and post-test items. While most students could follow the singing and gestures, some had difficulty remembering the meanings and spelling of certain words outside the context of the song. The observation checklist

indicated that participation was higher, but not all students were able to fully master the targeted vocabulary. These findings suggested that, although scripted songs made the lessons more enjoyable and improved vocabulary mastery for many students, there was still a need for additional support and varied activities. As a result, the reflection at the end of Cycle I highlighted the importance of introducing new strategies, such as more interactive practice, repetition, and possibly peer support to help all students reach the minimum learning standard in the next cycle.

## Cycle II

In Cycle II, several improvements and adjustments were made to the teaching and learning process based on the reflection from Cycle I. The teacher continued to use scripted songs but with additional strategies to address students' difficulties. These included more frequent repetition of key vocabulary, the use of visual aids and flashcards, and a stronger emphasis on pronunciation and word meaning during each activity. Students were encouraged to practice not only by singing but also by engaging in pronunciation drills and writing short sentences using the new words. The teacher provided more individual attention to students who still struggled and gave regular feedback to ensure every student could follow the lessons. Homework assignments and additional vocabulary games were also introduced to reinforce learning outside class hours.

After these adjustments, a post-test was conducted to measure students' vocabulary mastery at the end of Cycle II. The results showed a remarkable improvement compared to previous cycles. As shown in Table 3, all 37 students (100%) were able to achieve the Minimum Completion Criterion (KKM) of 75, with the mean score rising to 85.0. The lowest score in Cycle II was 76.6, while the highest score remained at 100.0. This indicated that not only had the overall class average increased, but also that no student was left behind in meeting the required standard for vocabulary mastery.

**Table III. Post-Test Results of Fifth-Grade Students in Cycle II**

| No | Aspects   | Result of Preliminary Study | Result of Post-Test Cycle I | Result of Post-Test Cycle II |
|----|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1  | Mean Score                                      | 53.9                        | 72.8                        | 85.0                         |
| 2  | Highest Score                                   | 80.0                        | 100.0                       | 100.0                        |
| 3  | Lowest Score                                    | 23.3                        | 36.6                        | 76.6                         |
| 4  | Number of the students who passed the KKM       | 6                           | 20                          | 37                           |
| 5  | Number of the students who did not pass the KKM | 31                          | 17                          | 0                            |

These findings demonstrate that the combination of scripted songs with additional support strategies was highly effective in improving students' vocabulary mastery. Students not only became more confident and enthusiastic in participating in English lessons but were also able to apply their vocabulary knowledge in various activities, both orally and in writing. Classroom observations noted that students were more active, independent, and willing to answer questions or complete vocabulary tasks on their own. This significant achievement in Cycle II confirms that the refinements made to the teaching approach successfully addressed the remaining challenges from the previous cycle and ensured that every student reached the desired level of learning.

Moreover, student feedback collected at the end of Cycle II reflected overwhelmingly positive responses to the learning activities. Over 90% of students stated that learning vocabulary through scripted songs made English lessons more enjoyable and less stressful.

Many students reported that the repetition and use of songs helped them remember new words more easily and boosted their confidence when speaking or writing in English. Teachers also observed that students became more motivated to participate, showed greater independence during tasks, and demonstrated noticeable improvement in their ability to use new vocabulary accurately. These results indicate that the integration of scripted songs, combined with targeted support and engaging classroom practices, not only improved academic outcomes but also fostered a positive and supportive learning environment for all students.

### **The Best Syntax of Scripted Songs**

The best syntax of scripted songs, as identified in this research, refers to the most effective structure and arrangement of lyrics that help students master new vocabulary in a memorable and meaningful way. During the implementation in the classroom, it was found that scripted songs which used simple sentence patterns, repetitive structures, and clear context were the most successful in supporting students' learning. For example, the lyrics often began with straightforward subject-verb-object constructions, such as "The lion is strong," or "The elephant is big and gray." This simplicity allowed students to focus on key vocabulary items, while repetition of these patterns in each verse helped reinforce understanding and recall. By integrating adjectives and nouns directly from the curriculum topics, the songs naturally provided both exposure and practice with target words.

Another important feature of the best scripted song syntax was the use of contextual phrases and descriptive language that matched students' everyday experiences. The lyrics did not merely list vocabulary words, but arranged them in sentences that described actions, colors, sizes, and characteristics of animals, such as "The monkey jumps high," or "The tiger is fast and brave." This approach enabled students to associate new words with real-life situations and make meaningful connections. The inclusion of rhymes and rhythmic repetition within lines also proved effective, as it increased students' motivation to sing along, made pronunciation practice easier, and supported better retention of both vocabulary and basic sentence structure. Observations during lessons showed that students found it easier to memorize and use new phrases when the song lyrics were logically structured and related to what they already knew.

The findings further indicate that the best syntax for scripted songs should be short, direct, and easy to follow, avoiding overly complex grammar or unfamiliar language. The ideal songs included repeated refrains, familiar question-and-answer patterns, and opportunities for students to substitute words (for example, changing the animal or adjective within a sentence). This flexibility encouraged active participation, as students could adapt the lyrics and practice creating their own sentences using the same structure. Overall, the research concluded that scripted songs with clear, repetitive, and context-rich syntax provided an effective model for vocabulary learning, helping fifth-grade students at SD Negeri 16 Kesiman to internalize new English words and use them confidently in both spoken and written communication.

## **DISCUSSION**

The findings of this study clearly demonstrate that integrating scripted songs into English vocabulary instruction significantly improves the vocabulary mastery of fifth-grade students at SD Negeri 16 Kesiman. The substantial increase in average test scores, from 53.9 in the preliminary study to 85.0 in the post-test of Cycle II, as well as the achievement of all students passing the Minimum Completion Criterion (KKM), reflect the effectiveness of this intervention. These improvements were not only quantitative but also observed in students' increased enthusiasm, confidence, and willingness to participate in class activities. This study directly answers the research question, confirming that scripted songs, when combined with experiential learning activities and collaborative group work, provide a powerful medium for enhancing vocabulary retention and active language use among young learners.

This result is consistent with prior research highlighting the positive effects of music and songs in language learning. For example, studies by Wulandari et al. (2018) and Tilwani et al. (2022) also reported that songs can improve students' vocabulary acquisition, motivation, and classroom engagement. These findings not only confirm previous studies but also extend them by demonstrating that scripted songs, which are intentionally designed for instructional purposes, may provide more targeted vocabulary learning compared to the use of general songs. However, this study advances previous findings by specifically focusing on scripted songs. The songs are intentionally designed with targeted vocabulary and structures that have proven more effective for supporting mastery of specific topics, such as wild animals and descriptive adjectives, within the elementary school curriculum. The experiential learning framework further supported the learning process, enabling students to experience, reflect, conceptualize, and apply new vocabulary through meaningful, enjoyable activities.

Another important aspect found in this research is the role of collaborative learning and peer interaction. During the intervention, group discussions and games encouraged all students, including those who were initially shy or less confident, to participate and practice using new vocabulary. These opportunities for interaction helped lower students' anxiety, fostered a supportive classroom atmosphere, and allowed them to receive feedback and support from both teachers and classmates. This aligns with social constructivist perspectives, which emphasize that language learning is most effective in a social, interactive context.

Additionally, the positive changes in students' attitudes toward English lessons were evidenced by classroom observations and feedback forms. More than 90% of students reported enjoying the lessons, feeling more motivated, and finding it easier to remember new words when learning through songs. The classroom atmosphere also shifted from being passive and teacher-centered to lively, student-centered, and cooperative. This transformation suggests that scripted songs, when combined with engaging, student-focused methods, can address common problems in vocabulary teaching, such as boredom, lack of motivation, and poor retention.

The novelty of this research lies in its specific and contextual application of scripted songs, not only as a tool for general language development but also for achieving targeted vocabulary outcomes in accordance with the curriculum. The use of scripted songs focused on wild animals and adjectives, together with experiential and collaborative learning stages, resulted in higher test scores, increased student engagement, and improved classroom dynamics. These findings suggest that the integration of scripted songs can be recommended as an innovative, practical, and enjoyable approach for teaching vocabulary in elementary schools, particularly in contexts where English is not frequently used outside the classroom.

Overall, this study not only supports existing theories and research on music in language education but also provides new evidence for the value of carefully designed scripted songs as part of a comprehensive vocabulary instruction strategy. The results highlight the importance of active, interactive, and contextually relevant teaching methods for improving language learning outcomes and ensuring that all students have the opportunity to succeed and enjoy their English learning experience.

Despite the positive findings, this study has several limitations. The research was conducted in a single class with a relatively small sample size, which may limit the generalizability of the results. Additionally, the duration of the intervention was relatively short, focusing only on two cycles. Future studies are recommended to involve larger samples, longer implementation periods, and different educational contexts to validate and extend these findings.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the use of scripted songs appears to be an effective and practical approach to improving vocabulary mastery among fifth-

grade students at SD Negeri 16 Kesiman, Denpasar Timur. The integration of scripted songs into English lessons not only resulted in a significant increase in students' vocabulary test scores but also contributed to a more engaging, enjoyable, and student-centered learning environment. By following experiential learning steps and encouraging collaborative group activities, students became more confident, motivated, and able to use new vocabulary in both speaking and writing. The improvement from 16% of students achieving the minimum criterion in the pre-test to 100% in the final post-test indicates the potential effectiveness of this method in enhancing vocabulary learning. Therefore, scripted songs, particularly when designed to align with the curriculum and students' needs, can be considered as an innovative teaching strategy for elementary English classes.

Based on these conclusions, several suggestions can be proposed. Teachers are encouraged to incorporate scripted songs into vocabulary instruction and to combine them with experiential, interactive, and collaborative activities to enhance student engagement and retention. Schools are expected to support teachers by providing appropriate resources and training related to music-based learning. Students are also encouraged to actively participate in song-based activities and practice using new vocabulary both inside and outside the classroom. For future researchers, it is recommended to explore the use of scripted songs across different vocabulary topics, grade levels, and educational contexts, as well as to examine their long-term effects on vocabulary retention.

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