Spotify and Vocabulary Acquisition: Investigating the Role of English Music Listening Habits among Generation Z

Ludfi Anggraeni[1]([✉]), Fitri Nurdianingsih[2], Refi Ranto Rozak[3]
[1,2,3]English Education Study Program, IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro, Indonesia
ludfianggraeni9@gmail.com, fitri_nurdianingsih@ikippgribojonegoro.ac.id
refi.ranto@ikippgribojonegoro.ac.id

Abstract— In the current era, English is a very important language to learn because it is widely used in various fields of life. One important component in mastering English is vocabulary, which is the most important basis for building language skills. Without adequate vocabulary, it is difficult to understand texts, communicate or express thoughts clearly. This study aims to find out the relationship between the habit of listening to English music on Spotify and the acquisition of English vocabulary in Generation Z. The subjects of this study were 13 students of English Education Study Program of IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro aged 17-23 years old. This research uses a qualitative approach with an interview method to explore their experiences and habits in listening to English music on Spotify. The results of this study show that listening to music regularly can enrich vocabulary through word repetition, context, and interest in song lyrics. In conclusion, the habit of listening to English music on Spotify can support Generation Z's vocabulary acquisition informally.

Keywords— vocabulary, English music listening habit, spotify, generation z

Abstrak— Pada era saat ini, bahasa Inggris merupakan bahasa yang sangat penting untuk dipelajari karena banyak digunakan dalam berbagai bidang kehidupan. Salah satu komponen penting dalam menguasai bahasa Inggris adalah kosakata, yang menjadi dasar terpenting dalam membangun keterampilan berbahasa. Tanpa kosakata yang memadai, akan sulit untuk memahami teks, berkomunikasi, atau mengungkapkan pikiran secara jelas. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui hubungan antara kebiasaan mendengarkan musik berbahasa Inggris di Spotify dengan perolehan kosakata bahasa Inggris pada Generasi Z. Subjek penelitian ini 13 mahasiswa Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro berusia 17–23 tahun. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode wawancara untuk menggali pengalaman dan kebiasaan mereka dalam mendengarkan musik berbahasa Inggris di Spotify. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa mendengarkan musik secara rutin dapat memperkaya kosakata melalui pengulangan kata, konteks, dan ketertarikan terhadap lirik lagu. Kesimpulannya, kebiasaan mendengarkan musik berbahasa Inggris di Spotify dapat mendukung pemerolehan kosakata pada generasi Z secara informal.

Kata kunci— kosa kata, kebiasaan mendengarkan musik berbahasa Inggris, Spotify, Generasi Z

INTRODUCTION

In today's world, mastering English is considered essential due to its widespread use in daily life and professional settings. This is because English is widely used in the field of life. One of the key elements in acquiring English proficiency is vocabulary development. According to Kurnianingsih (2024), vocabulary is fundamental for learners, as having a broad vocabulary can significantly support their journey in mastering the language. This means that vocabulary plays a very important role in mastering a language.

There are various strategies to expand vocabulary, one of which is by integrating technological tools. Nowadays, technology cannot be separated from human life. As stated by Ngafifi (2014), technological advancement is inevitable and grows in line with scientific progress. With this technological advancement, it can be utilized as material for learning. For example, Generation Z — an age group that has grown up surrounded by digital tools.

Pujiono (2021) defines Generation Z as those born between 1995 and 2010, a group characterized by their strong familiarity with technology and frequent use of it in their daily routines. One of the most popular platforms among Generation Z is Spotify. Spotify is an online platform that provides millions of songs in English. In addition to songs this application also provides podcasts and several contests from content creators around the world. Generation Z's habit of listening to music on Spotify can unwittingly add to their vocabulary. Without realizing it, habit of listening to music on Spotify exposes them to new vocabulary embedded in lyrics, thereby enriching their language knowledge.

Given these observations, the researcher is motivated to explore english music listening habits on spotify and the role in vocabulary acquisition among Generation Z. This study aims to provide a deeper understanding of the role of digital media, especially music platforms, in supporting English language acquisition in the digital era. In addition, this study also aims to determine the relationship between the habit of listening to English music on Spotify and vocabulary increase in generation Z.

This research has several benefits including theoretical and practical benefits. The theoretical benefits are expected to help develop the theory of language learning, especially about how digital media helps in adding vocabulary. The first practical benefit is for Generation Z. For generation Z, this research is expected to motivate them to enrich their vocabulary by listening to English music on digital platforms such as Spotify. The second practical benefit is for teachers and educators. For teachers and educators, this research is expected to be a reference in designing English learning strategies. The third practical benefit is for the platform developer (Spotify). This research can be an input to develop other features that can be used specifically for English language learning. And the last practical benefit is for other researchers. this research is expected to be a reference and inspiration for other researchers who want to further examine the relationship between music listening habits and vocabulary addition.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study applied a descriptive qualitative approach to investigate the relationship between listening to English music on Spotify and Generation Z's English vocabulary acquisition. This approach was chosen because it is relevant to the aim of understanding students' direct experiences and subjective perspectives on informal vocabulary learning through music. This study applied a descriptive qualitative approach to investigate the relationship between English music listening habits on Spotify and Generation Z's acquisition of English vocabulary. As explained by Strauss & Corbin (2003), qualitative research is designed to describe events that are heard, felt, and experienced, typically presented in the form of narrative or descriptive explanations.

The research was carried out at IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro, specifically involving students enrolled in the English Education Study Program. The research subjects were 6th semester students who actively listened to English music through Spotify platform. Purposive sampling was applied in selecting participants. This is because this study requires participants who meet specific criteria, such as active habits of listening to English music and willingness to be interviewed and provide relevant documents.

Data collection in this study was conducted through semi-structured interviews and document collection. According to Herdayati and Syahrial (2019), interviews are a method of gathering information through direct questioning to achieve specific research objectives. In this study, interviews were conducted to deeply investigate students' views, experiences, and habits in listening to music and its role in English vocabulary acquisition. This method provides flexibility in obtaining more in-depth information from participants' responses. In addition, documentation was conducted to strengthen the interview results with additional evidence such as screenshots of Spotify playlists, lyrics of frequently sung songs, and interview recordings. Referring to Rahardjo (2011), documentation is a technique of obtaining factual information from various forms of stored data.

The data obtained were analyzed using the interactive analysis model developed by Miles and Huberman. This model consists of three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. In the data reduction stage, the researcher filtered and focused on information that was relevant to the research objectives (Agusta, 2003). After that, the data were presented systematically in narrative form to support the process of drawing conclusions, which was done by identifying recurring patterns or themes from the interview and documentation results (Sufwatillah, 2024).

To ensure the credibility and reliability of the data in this study, researchers applied two main techniques, namely data triangulation and member checking. The aim was to ensure the consistency of information provided by participants and strengthen the findings that emerged from the analysis process. Meanwhile, member checking was carried out by reconfirming the interview results and the researcher's initial interpretation to the participants concerned. Through member checking, participants were given the opportunity to review excerpts of their statements and provide corrections or additional information. Through member checking,

participants are given the opportunity to review the excerpts of their statements and provide corrections or additional information.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study aimed to explore the role of listening to English songs via Spotify in the vocabulary acquisition process of Generation Z. The research focused on students from the English Education Study Program. These students were between 17 and 23 years old. The data were collected through in-depth interviews to gain detailed insights into their experiences and habits.

In English music listening habits and intensity, the interview results show that the majority of respondents have a habit of listening to music every day. Spotify is the main platform used to listen to songs, especially when doing activities such as studying, relaxing or working. Respondents revealed that English songs are their top choice because they are considered interesting and popular. Many of them claimed that English music gives them pleasure and easy access to various genres that support their mood. By listening to music regularly, they also feel more connected to outside cultures and gain new insights into language use. "I often listen to music while doing homework, you could say I listen to music on spotify quite often," said one respondent. This shows that English music has become part of the respondents' daily routine, opening up opportunities for indirect vocabulary acquisition through repetition and repeated exposure.

In attention to music and lyrics, while most are initially more interested in the rhythm of the music, if the song is catchy, they start to pay attention to the lyrics. Attention to lyrics often arises when the song has an emotional meaning or strong lyrics. When the song manages to touch their feelings, respondents tend to understand more deeply the message that the singer wants to convey through the lyrics. This shows that music can be an effective tool in developing language comprehension, especially when supported by personal interest in the meaning behind the lyrics. Respondents said that when they listen to English music they mostly focus on the music, but sometimes if there are good lyrics they also focus on the lyrics. This awareness of understanding the meaning of the song demonstrates cognitive engagement in the language learning process, where intrinsic motivation plays an important role in enriching vocabulary and understanding language use in social contexts.
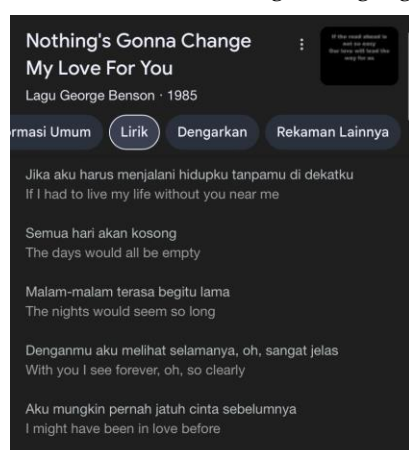
In discovery of new vocabulary, the respondents in this study revealed that they often encounter new vocabulary when listening to English songs. The most common type of vocabulary they encountered were adjectives that usually appeared in the context of a particular emotion or atmosphere in the song. This discovery process is not always planned, but comes naturally when they listen to a song whose lyrics catch their attention. The meanings of these words are usually understood through the context of the song, or through their own searches using online dictionaries and lyric websites.

"Often, especially adjectives, usually in the songs I listen to I find many new adjectives". (Respondent 7, interviewed in 12 March 2025).

This shows that English songs not only convey emotional messages, but also provide a strong linguistic stimulus to listeners.

The main strategy respondents use to understand new vocabulary is by utilizing online dictionaries or translator apps such as Google Translate. In addition, they also often open song lyrics websites and watch lyric videos on YouTube that are equipped with translations to help understand the meaning of unfamiliar words or phrases. If they still experience difficulties, some respondents choose to ask directly to friends who understand better. Others even seek additional explanations on social media such as TikTok or read online articles that discuss the meaning of song lyrics in more depth. These strategies show that respondents are active and adaptive in using various digital resources to support vocabulary learning independently.

Picture 1. Search meaning from google   **Picture 2.** Search meaning from Youtube
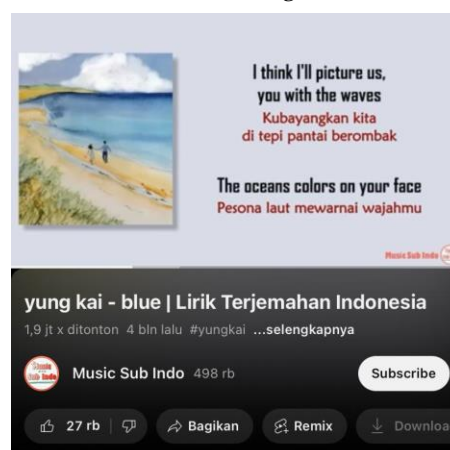
From the documentation above, it can be seen that respondents used several media aids to find the meaning of the vocabulary encountered in the song lyrics. Documentation 1 shows how the respondents searched for the meaning of the lyrics using Google. While documentation 2 shows the respondent's search for lyric videos and translations on YouTube.

All respondents stated that listening to English songs had a positive impact on improving their vocabulary. They believe that this activity not only introduces new vocabulary, but also strengthens the memory of those words. Besides idioms and slang, music also supports them in understanding the meaning of words through the emotional context created in the lyrics and melodies. The use of repeated words in songs makes the vocabulary easier to remember than conventional learning methods.

The way respondents learn vocabulary through music involves activities such as listening to the song while looking at the lyrics, translating unknown terms, and singing the song back. This process helps them understand the meaning of words more deeply while practicing pronunciation. Most respondents found this approach effective because it was fun and not boring. Moreover, this method is seen as adaptable since it can be applied at any time and in any place without being restricted by specific schedules or locations.

The main challenges respondents face when learning vocabulary through music include the fast tempo of songs, as well as the use of idioms and slang that are difficult to understand without proper context. Some songs do not have a lyrics feature on Spotify, so they need to look them up manually on the internet or other platforms. This difficulty increases when the lyrics are poetic or highly symbolic, so the actual meaning is not straightforward.

> "What I like is that learning doesn't feel like learning. But the challenge is that sometimes the lyrics are too poetic or slang, so it's hard to understand". (Respondent 12, interviewed in 9 April 2025).
> However, respondents still saw the challenge as an element of the learning process that was fun and not burdensome.

The majority of respondents recognized a positive relationship between listening to music and vocabulary acquisition. They feel that the more they listen, the more vocabulary they learn. They think there is a connection between music and vocabulary acquisition. But a small respondents said this method is not the most important and prefer the reading method. But overall all respondents stated that there is a positive relationship between listening to English music on spotify and vocabulary acquisition. Music is viewed as an enjoyable and efficient learning tool, particularly because it aids in retaining new vocabulary through repeated exposure and emotional connection.

The respondent suggests that beginner learners start with English songs that are simple and easy to understand. The first step suggested is to read the lyrics while listening to the song, then repeat it several times to make the vocabulary easier to memorize. They also recommended choosing songs with slow tempo and clear pronunciation to make it easier to follow, especially for beginners. Respondents believe that this method can contribute to the gradual improvement of vocabulary comprehension in a fun way.

> "Choose songs with clear and easy-to-understand lyrics, listen to them repeatedly, and look up the meaning of words you don't understand. Also try writing or singing the lyrics to help remember new vocabulary better". (Respondent 4, interviewed in 5 March 2025)

In addition, additional activities such as recycling the lyrics or singing the song again are considered effective for improving the recall of new vocabulary that has been mastered.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings and discussion above, it can be inferred that English music plays a significant role in enhancing the vocabulary of its listeners. The intensity of listening to music is quite high, where almost all respondents stated that they listen to music every day. Although initially music was only enjoyed for entertainment, many respondents were then interested in paying attention to song lyrics because they wanted to understand their meaning. This is the first step for

respondents to enrich their vocabulary. The majority of respondents admitted that they often found new vocabulary when listening to songs, especially adjectives. The most common strategies respondents use to understand new words are to use online translations, write them down in a personal book, and try to apply them in other sentences or situations to make them easier to remember.

English music has a positive impact on vocabulary acquisition. Music that is played repeatedly allows repetition of vocabulary which makes it easier for respondents to remember. In addition, in this way, respondents who accidentally learn to acquire new vocabulary. This certainly makes the learning process more enjoyable and does not feel like rigid learning. Despite challenges such as fast pronunciation, idioms and slang that are difficult to understand, respondents still see music as an effective learning tool. They suggested that beginner learners should choose songs with clear lyrics, moderate tempo, and likeable, so that the learning process feels more natural and enjoyable.

Previous research also supports these findings. For instance, research by Butar Butar and Katemba (2023) revealed that EFL students responded positively to learning vocabulary by listening to English songs on Spotify. They viewed Spotify as a valuable tool for vocabulary development due to its access to English song lyrics, which support the learning process. In addition, research by Wulandari et al. (2024) also showed that English songs have an important role in improving adolescents' English vocabulary and can be used effectively as a medium to improve adolescents' English vocabulary.

Furthermore, research by Rozak & Matin (2025) introduced the concept of narrow listening in listening learning, which can be practically applied through music to enrich vocabulary understanding in a deep and thematic way. In this context, English songs are not only a means of entertainment, but also a valuable source of linguistic input. Interestingly, research by Nurdianingsih & Hidayati (2024) shows that exposure to slang in informal communication—often sourced from songs, social media, and movies—helps students understand a variety of vocabulary that is not formally taught in the classroom. This confirms that songs, with their idiom content and distinctive expressions, can expand students' linguistic abilities from both formal and informal sides. Therefore, English songs become a learning medium that is not only effective but also fun, as they encourage learners to acquire language naturally, contextually, and continuously. Moreover, Tirtanawati & Putri (2021) emphasize the importance of metacognitive strategies in enhancing students' listening comprehension and vocabulary acquisition, highlighting that such strategies enable learners to plan, monitor, and evaluate their understanding effectively . Overall, it can be concluded that listening to English music on Spotify and vocabulary acquisition for Generation Z are interconnected.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer would like to thank, The supervisors, Dr. Refi Ranto Rozak, M.Pd. and Mrs. Fitri Nurdianingsih, M.Pd. who have provided direction and input during the process of preparing this article. The participants, specifically sixth-semester students from the English Education Study Program at IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro, generously dedicated their time and shared meaningful insights. The committee of the National Seminar of the Faculty of Language and Arts Education, IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro, which has given the opportunity to present the results of this research.

REFERENCES

Agusta, I. (2003). Analisis data kualitatif: Proses pengurangan data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. *Jurnal Penelitian Sosial, 6*(2), 142–155.

Butar Butar, E. L., & Katemba, C. V. (2023). EFL students' perceptions toward vocabulary learning by listening to English songs on Spotify. *Journey: Journal of English Language and Pedagogy, 6*(1), 194–205. Doi https://doi.org/10.33503/journey.v6i1.628

Herdayati, S. P., & Syahrial, S. T. (2019). Desain Penelitian dan Teknik Pengumpulan Data dalam Penelitian. *Jurnal Online Internasional, 7*(1), 3–8.

Hidayati, F. & Nurdianingsih, F. (2024). A study of slang language usage in speaking English by the sixth semester students of English Study Program at IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro (Skripsi Sarjana, IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro). IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro Repository.

Kurnianingsih, N. (2024). The use of English vocabulary podcast on Spotify application to improve the students' vocabulary mastery of the eighth grade of MTs Darunnajah Sambikarto [Skripsi Sarjana, Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Metro]. IAIN Metro Digital Repository. https://repository.metrouniv.ac.id/id/eprint/9220/

Pujiono, A. (2021). Media sosial sebagai media pembelajaran bagi generasi Z. *Journal of Christian Education, 2*(1), 1–19. https://doi.org/10.46445/djce.v2i1.396

Rahardjo, M. (2011). Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif. Jakarta: PT Raja Grafindo Persada.

Rozak, R. R., & Matin, M. F. (2025). Students' engagement in narrow listening: A case of an extensive listening course. *Journal of Language and Education Research, 15*(1), 23–35.

Sufwatillah, A. (2024). Teknik analisis data kualitatif. *Jurnal Metodologi Penelitian, 9*(1), 22–30.

Tirtanawati, M. R., & Putri, R. A. (2021). Supporting Students Listening Comprehension Skill Through Metacognitive Strategies. *JOEL: Journal of Educational and Language Research, 1*(5), 549–562. https://doi.org/10.53625/joel.v1i5.771

Wulandari, R. S., Putri, A. R., & Widyawati, W. (2024). The role of song as a media to improve English vocabulary on teenagers. *Salience Journal, 4*(1), 36–44.