

Exploring Students' Experience in Learning English Vocabulary Through Song in Spotify

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ABSTRACT

Although previous studies have documented positive outcomes of using Spotify songs for English vocabulary learning, most have focused on measuring learning outcomes or general perceptions, leaving the lived, day-to-day experience of learners largely unexamined. This study therefore aimed to explore how university students experienced the process of learning English vocabulary through Spotify songs and how these experiences shaped their vocabulary development. A qualitative narrative inquiry design was employed, as it allows researchers to capture how learners construct meaning from personal experience over time. The study involved five second-semester students of the English Language Education Study Program at Pakuan University, purposively selected because they actively and independently used Spotify songs as part of their English learning routine. Data were collected through reflective journals and semi-structured narrative interviews and were analyzed using thematic analysis. Five interrelated themes emerged: learning strategies, vocabulary learning process, emotional responses, learning impact, and reflective insight. Participants reported employing strategies such as repeated listening, reading synchronized lyrics, taking vocabulary notes, searching for word meanings, inferring meaning from context, and shadowing pronunciation. Through these strategies, participants perceived gains in vocabulary knowledge, pronunciation awareness, lyric comprehension, motivation, and long-term retention, alongside a growing tendency to regulate their own vocabulary learning. The study concludes that Spotify functioned, in participants' experience, as a contextual and emotionally engaging resource for English vocabulary learning, offering practical implications for integrating music-based, learner-centered activities into vocabulary instruction.

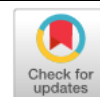
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INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary plays a central role in learning English, as without sufficient vocabulary, students find it difficult to comprehend texts, participate in conversations, or develop other language skills. This makes vocabulary learning a fundamental component of English language teaching (ELT), particularly in EFL contexts such as Indonesia, where limited exposure to authentic English requires learners to develop effective vocabulary knowledge to support overall language proficiency (Sudarman et al., 2022; Saputro et al., 2024).

The way students learn has also changed alongside the development of technology. Learning is no longer confined to the classroom, as students constantly interact with digital platforms in their daily lives, reflecting what is often referred to as technology-enhanced language learning (Rahmani et al., 2022). Among various digital resources, songs have long been recognized as a rich source of vocabulary input because they combine repetition, rhyme, and melody with authentic, contextualized language, conditions that can make new words more memorable and easier to retrieve than isolated word lists. One platform that makes such input readily accessible is Spotify. Although commonly regarded merely as a music streaming application, Spotify functions as a digital learning resource in its own right, since it offers on-demand access to a vast catalogue of English songs together with synchronized lyrics, allowing learners not only to hear vocabulary but also to see how words are spelled, pronounced,

and used in real and meaningful contexts, at their own pace and outside formal instructional time.

From a theoretical perspective, learning vocabulary through songs can be understood through the relationship between repeated exposure, contextualized input, and meaningful learning. Songs expose learners to lexical items through the combination of auditory and written input, enabling them to encounter words in multiple forms. Repeated listening may help learners become more familiar with word forms, meanings, and pronunciation, while accompanying lyrics provide opportunities to connect spoken language with its written representation. Moreover, the musical and emotional dimensions of songs may make vocabulary-learning experiences more engaging and memorable. Nevertheless, repeated exposure alone does not guarantee vocabulary acquisition, as learners may need to pay attention to unfamiliar words, infer their meanings from context, and revisit them to develop more stable lexical knowledge.

Another important aspect of using Spotify songs for vocabulary learning is the opportunity for learners to exercise autonomy in managing their learning experiences. Unlike teacher-directed vocabulary activities, listening to songs allows students to select materials based on their musical preferences, repeat specific sections, follow lyrics, and determine when and how long they engage with English. These choices may encourage personal involvement and sustain motivation, particularly when learners perceive the activity as enjoyable rather than as a formal academic obligation. However, the learning value of this practice may vary depending on individual habits, English proficiency, listening strategies, and willingness to investigate unfamiliar vocabulary. Exploring these differences is therefore important for understanding how students transform everyday music-listening activities into meaningful opportunities for language learning.

Understanding vocabulary learning through Spotify consequently requires attention not only to learning outcomes but also to the experiences and interpretations that develop throughout the process. Students may encounter unfamiliar expressions, use contextual clues to interpret lyrics, associate words with personal experiences, and respond emotionally to particular songs. They may also experience difficulties, such as unclear pronunciation, unfamiliar idiomatic expressions, or challenges in understanding lyrics despite repeated listening. These experiences can influence how students approach subsequent listening activities and whether they incorporate music into their broader English-learning routines. Examining students' accounts can therefore provide a more nuanced understanding of the strategies, challenges, emotions, and perceived changes associated with learning vocabulary through Spotify. Such an understanding complements research measuring effectiveness by highlighting how learners experience and make meaning of this informal learning practice.

However, a gap exists between this potential and what happens in formal learning environments. Vocabulary instruction is still often dominated by traditional methods such as memorizing word lists, which, while useful in some respects, are frequently perceived as less engaging and less effective for long-term retention (Ganesan et al., 2025). Meanwhile, many students spend considerable time listening to English songs on Spotify without regarding it as part of their learning process, suggesting that a potentially valuable learning resource remains underutilized.

Previous studies have demonstrated the educational potential of Spotify and English songs. Butar Butar and Katemba (2023) reported that Spotify increased students' motivation to learn English, while Tampubolon and Sitorus (2023) found that songs facilitated vocabulary acquisition through engaging learning activities. Similarly, Hasanah and Suryanto (2024) highlighted Spotify as a source of authentic language exposure that supports vocabulary development. Despite these findings, existing studies mainly rely on quantitative or perception-based designs that capture whether Spotify is effective, but not how students actually go through the process of learning vocabulary from songs over time. This leaves a gap in understanding the lived, subjective dimension of the learning process, that is, how students notice words, make sense of them, feel about the activity, and gradually change their habits,

which a narrative inquiry design is particularly well suited to uncover because it foregrounds individuals' own stories and interpretations of experience rather than aggregated outcomes.

Therefore, this study aims to explore students' lived experiences of learning English vocabulary through Spotify songs using a qualitative narrative inquiry approach. It investigates how students experience vocabulary learning through Spotify songs and how these experiences shape their vocabulary learning. The research question guiding this study is: What are the students' lived experiences in using Spotify songs to learn English vocabulary? The findings are expected to contribute to the growing body of research on technology-enhanced vocabulary learning and provide practical insights for teachers and students in integrating Spotify songs into English vocabulary instruction.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach using a narrative inquiry design to explore students' lived experiences of learning English vocabulary through Spotify songs (Clandinin, 2001; Creswell, 2018). Narrative inquiry was selected because it enables researchers to understand how individuals construct meaning from their personal experiences through stories and reflections. Compared with phenomenology, which centers on the essence of a shared experience across individuals, or case study, which centers on a bounded system, narrative inquiry was considered more appropriate here because it preserves the temporal and personal shape of each participant's story, allowing the researchers to trace how a learner's engagement with Spotify songs unfolded and changed over time. This design was therefore considered appropriate because the study aimed to explore participants' experiences rather than measure the effectiveness of Spotify as a vocabulary learning tool. It is important to note that participants were not assigned or instructed by the researchers to use Spotify for learning purposes; rather, they were students who had already been using Spotify songs independently and voluntarily as part of their personal English learning habits prior to the study, and the research examined this naturally occurring practice.

Respondents

The study involved five second-semester students from the English Language Education Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Educational Sciences, Pakuan University, Indonesia, a program in which students receive intensive instruction in English as a foreign language and are therefore expected to actively develop their vocabulary both inside and outside the classroom, making this setting relevant for examining informal, technology-mediated vocabulary learning. The five participants, aged between 18 and 20 years and consisting of both male and female students, had studied English formally for at least six years prior to the study and reported using Spotify to listen to English songs for a minimum of one year. In line with the exploratory and in-depth nature of narrative inquiry, a small number of participants was intentionally chosen so that each individual's story could be documented and analyzed in sufficient depth, rather than aiming for statistical generalizability. Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on the following criteria: actively listening to English songs on Spotify, intentionally using Spotify songs to learn English vocabulary, applying vocabulary learning strategies while listening to songs, and being willing to share their learning experiences in detail. These criteria were established to ensure that participants had sufficiently rich, first-hand experience to narrate, since the quality of narrative data depends on participants' capacity to reflect on and articulate their own learning process. An online screening questionnaire was administered to identify participants who met these criteria.

Instruments

Two instruments were employed to collect the data: reflective journals and semi-structured narrative interviews. Participants completed three reflective journals over a two-week period to document their vocabulary learning experiences through Spotify songs. The journals focused on learning strategies, vocabulary learning processes, emotional responses, learning impact, and personal reflections, guided by prompts such as "What new words did you notice

while listening to songs this week, and how did you try to understand them?", "How did you feel while learning vocabulary through songs today?", and "Has anything changed in the way you learn or use English vocabulary since you started this activity?". Semi-structured narrative interviews were then conducted to obtain more detailed accounts of the participants' experiences, using guiding questions such as "Can you tell me a story about a time when a song helped you understand a new word?", "Which strategy did you find most helpful for remembering vocabulary, and why?", and "How has learning vocabulary through Spotify changed the way you approach English overall?". To enhance the credibility of the findings through data triangulation, document analysis was conducted by examining participants' Spotify playlists, listening history screenshots, and personal vocabulary notes.

Procedures

After obtaining informed consent, participants completed an online screening questionnaire to confirm their eligibility. They then wrote three reflective journals over two weeks while using Spotify songs to learn English vocabulary. Subsequently, semi-structured interviews were conducted to clarify and expand upon the information provided in the journals. All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' permission and transcribed for analysis.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis following [Braun and Clarke's \(2019\)](#) six-phase framework. In the familiarization phase, the researchers repeatedly read the interview transcripts and reflective journal entries while noting initial impressions. In the coding phase, meaningful segments of text, such as references to a particular strategy, feeling, or perceived change, were labelled with descriptive codes. Related codes were then grouped into candidate themes in the searching-for-themes phase; for instance, codes referring to repeated listening, lyric reading, and note-taking were provisionally clustered together. These candidate themes were reviewed against the coded extracts and the full data set to check for internal coherence, refined and clearly named in the defining phase (resulting in the five themes reported below), and finally written up in the report-production phase with supporting participant quotations. Ethical principles were maintained throughout the study by ensuring voluntary participation, obtaining informed consent, and protecting participants' anonymity and confidentiality.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The thematic analysis of the reflective journals, semi-structured narrative interviews, and supporting documents identified five interrelated themes representing students' lived experiences of learning English vocabulary through Spotify songs. These themes are Learning Strategies, Vocabulary Learning Process, Emotional Responses, Learning Impact, and Reflective Insight. Rather than representing separate aspects of learning, these themes illustrate a continuous learning journey in which participants actively regulated their vocabulary learning, developed vocabulary knowledge through authentic language exposure, experienced positive emotional engagement, perceived meaningful learning outcomes, and reflected on their own learning processes.

Learning Strategies

The first theme, Learning Strategies, revealed that participants actively regulated their vocabulary learning while using Spotify songs. Rather than listening only for entertainment, they intentionally employed a range of strategies that can be grouped into three broader categories: exposure-based strategies (repeated listening and reading synchronized lyrics), which increased familiarity with unfamiliar words; meaning-focused strategies (note-taking, consulting digital dictionaries, and inferring meaning from context), which helped participants clarify and retain word meanings; and production-based strategies (shadowing pronunciation), through which participants rehearsed spoken form. Together, these strategies

transformed music listening into a purposeful vocabulary learning activity and reflected learners' active engagement throughout the learning process.

One participant described how repeated listening naturally strengthened vocabulary retention:

"Yang aku sadarin dari strategi ini, mengulang-ulang lagu itu tanpa sadar bikin kata-katanya lebih cepet keingetan."

("What I realized from this strategy is that replaying the same songs repeatedly made the words easier to remember without me realizing it.")

Another participant explained that vocabulary learning involved several deliberate steps rather than simply listening to songs:

"Yang pertama saya mendengarkan lagunya sambil membaca lirik, terus saya mencatat kosakata baru yang saya dapat, terus saya cari tahu artinya, lalu memahami konteksnya dari kata tersebut. Terus saya juga mengulang lagu yang sama beberapa kali."

These excerpts demonstrate that participants actively regulated their own vocabulary learning by combining multiple complementary strategies. Repeated listening increased familiarity with unfamiliar vocabulary through continuous exposure, while reading synchronized lyrics enabled participants to connect spoken and written forms of words. Note-taking and dictionary consultation supported vocabulary retention and meaning clarification, whereas contextual guessing encouraged learners to infer meanings before verifying them. In addition, one participant reported practicing pronunciation through shadowing by imitating the singer's pronunciation, indicating that learners adapted different strategies according to their individual preferences.

These findings support [Oxford's \(1990\)](#) Language Learning Strategies theory, which argues that successful language learners consciously employ cognitive, memory, compensation, and metacognitive strategies to facilitate language acquisition. Repeated listening, lyric reading, note-taking, and shadowing represent cognitive and memory strategies that strengthen vocabulary acquisition, while contextual guessing reflects compensation strategies that promote independent learning. Furthermore, the participants' ability to combine several strategies aligns with [Griffiths \(2018\)](#), who argues that successful learners demonstrate strategic flexibility by selecting different strategies according to their learning needs rather than relying on a single technique.

It should be noted that participants did not adopt these strategies uniformly. Their choices appeared to be shaped by individual differences such as musical preference, prior English proficiency, and familiarity with particular songs or genres; participants who described themselves as more confident in English tended to rely more on contextual inference, whereas those still building confidence leaned more heavily on note-taking and dictionary use to confirm meaning before moving on. This variation suggests that Spotify-based vocabulary learning is not a single fixed pathway but a flexible resource that learners adapt to their own needs and learning styles.

The findings also extend previous studies on Spotify as a vocabulary learning medium. [Butar Butar and Katemba \(2023\)](#) reported that Spotify increased students' motivation to learn English through its accessibility and lyric features. Similarly, [Hasanah and Suryanto \(2024\)](#) found that Spotify facilitated vocabulary learning by providing authentic English songs supported by synchronized lyrics. The present study extends these findings by demonstrating not only that Spotify motivates learners but also how students intentionally utilize its features to regulate their vocabulary learning through repeated listening, lyric analysis, vocabulary recording, contextual interpretation, and pronunciation practice. These findings suggest that Spotify functions not merely as a music streaming platform but as a learner-centered environment that promotes autonomous vocabulary learning.

Vocabulary Learning Process

The second theme, Vocabulary Learning Process, illustrates how participants gradually developed vocabulary knowledge through repeated interaction with English songs on Spotify. Across the reflective journals and interviews, participants described vocabulary

learning as a progressive process that involved recognizing unfamiliar words, understanding their meanings through contextual interpretation, and applying newly acquired vocabulary in meaningful communication. Rather than memorizing isolated vocabulary lists, participants learned words naturally through authentic song lyrics and repeated exposure.

One participant explained that paying closer attention to song lyrics helped identify vocabulary that had previously gone unnoticed:

"Pas aku nyoba dengerin Love Yourself sambil beneran merhatiin liriknya, aku nemuin beberapa kata yang selama ini aku skip gitu aja. Kayak vulnerable, parade, holdin' on."

("When I tried listening to Love Yourself while really paying attention to the lyrics, I found several words that I had been skipping all along, such as vulnerable, parade, and holdin' on.")

This reflection demonstrates that vocabulary learning began with learners consciously noticing unfamiliar words during meaningful listening activities. Instead of encountering vocabulary in isolation, participants became aware of new lexical items while engaging with authentic song lyrics. Repeated exposure encouraged them to recognize words that had previously been ignored and motivated them to explore their meanings further.

Another participant described how vocabulary learning continued beyond understanding meanings by actively using newly learned words in daily practice:

"Setelah mengetahui artinya, saya mencoba menggunakan kata-kata tersebut dalam kalimat sederhana, misalnya 'I found peace in music' atau 'Yesterday was one of my best memories.'"

("After finding out the meanings, I tried to use the words in simple sentences, such as 'I found peace in music' or 'Yesterday was one of my best memories.'")

The excerpts indicate that participants' vocabulary learning extended beyond recognizing and understanding new words. They gradually integrated newly acquired vocabulary into meaningful communication, demonstrating increasing confidence in using English in authentic contexts. Several participants also reported becoming more aware of pronunciation, multiple meanings of words, and contextual word usage through continuous interaction with song lyrics. These experiences suggest that vocabulary learning developed progressively through authentic language exposure rather than through rote memorization.

The findings are consistent with Nation's (2022) framework of vocabulary knowledge, which emphasizes that vocabulary learning involves mastery of word form, meaning, and use. Participants first recognized unfamiliar lexical forms while listening to songs, then explored their meanings through dictionaries and contextual interpretation, and finally applied the vocabulary in their own communication. This progression reflects the interconnected nature of vocabulary development proposed by Nation, in which meaningful learning occurs when learners understand not only what a word means but also how it functions in different contexts.

Furthermore, these findings support Krashen's Input Hypothesis, which argues that language acquisition occurs when learners are exposed to meaningful and comprehensible input. English songs provided authentic linguistic input that enabled participants to encounter vocabulary naturally within meaningful contexts rather than through decontextualized word lists. The combination of repeated exposure, contextualized language, and learner engagement facilitated gradual vocabulary acquisition without creating excessive learning pressure.

The present findings also complement previous studies on Spotify and vocabulary learning. Tampubolon and Sitorus (2023) demonstrated that learning through Spotify improved students' vocabulary mastery, while Hasanah and Suryanto (2024) highlighted Spotify's potential to provide authentic language input. Extending these studies, the present research explains how vocabulary knowledge develops through learners' lived experiences. Rather than focusing solely on learning outcomes, this study demonstrates that vocabulary acquisition is a gradual and reflective process in which learners actively notice unfamiliar words, interpret their meanings within authentic contexts, and progressively incorporate them into meaningful language use.

Emotional Responses

The third theme, **Emotional Responses**, revealed that participants generally experienced positive emotions throughout their vocabulary learning journeys using Spotify songs, although these emotions were not uniform in kind or intensity. Across the reflective journals and interviews, participants most frequently described enjoyment and relaxation, but their accounts also pointed to curiosity toward unfamiliar lyrics, a quiet sense of confidence after successfully decoding a line, and, for a few participants, occasional frustration when a song's meaning remained unclear despite repeated listening. Unlike conventional vocabulary learning, which was often associated with memorizing word lists or studying from textbooks, Spotify created a more engaging learning environment that encouraged participants to interact with English vocabulary voluntarily, with the emotional tone of that engagement shifting depending on how personally meaningful or difficult a given song was to them.

One participant reflected that learning vocabulary through songs felt more enjoyable than expected:

"Kesan pertama aku dari cara belajar ini, ternyata lebih asik dari yang aku kira. Nggak kerasa kayak lagi belajar. Mungkin karena ada unsur musiknya, jadi otak lebih santai dan kata-katanya lebih gampang nyantol."

("My first impression of this learning method is that it turned out to be more enjoyable than I expected. It did not feel like studying. Perhaps because of the musical element, my mind felt more relaxed and the words were easier to remember.")

This reflection illustrates that music created a relaxed learning atmosphere in which vocabulary learning occurred naturally. Rather than perceiving vocabulary learning as an academic task, participants experienced it as an enjoyable activity that reduced learning pressure and encouraged more frequent engagement with English songs. The emotional connection with music appeared to facilitate vocabulary retention by making the learning experience more meaningful.

Another participant described how curiosity encouraged voluntary vocabulary learning:

"Kayak waktu dengerin Who Knows-nya Daniel Caesar dan nemu kata precarious, aku nggak nyari artinya karena disuruh, tapi karena beneran pengen tahu lagunya ngomong apa."

("When I listened to Who Knows by Daniel Caesar and found the word precarious, I did not look up its meaning because I was told to, but because I genuinely wanted to know what the song was saying.")

The excerpt demonstrates that participants' motivation emerged from personal curiosity rather than external academic requirements. Their desire to understand song lyrics encouraged them to search for unfamiliar vocabulary voluntarily, making vocabulary learning a self-initiated process. Several participants also reported feelings of satisfaction after successfully understanding difficult lyrics, which further motivated them to continue learning through English songs.

These findings support Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis (as cited in Gong, 2023), which proposes that language acquisition is facilitated when learners experience low anxiety and positive emotional engagement. The relaxed and enjoyable environment created by music appeared to lower participants' affective filters, allowing them to process and retain new vocabulary more effectively. Positive emotions such as enjoyment, curiosity, and satisfaction not only enhanced learners' engagement during listening activities but also encouraged them to interact with English vocabulary more consistently over time.

The findings are also consistent with Nie et al. (2022), who argue that songs promote positive emotional engagement by reducing learning anxiety while increasing learners' motivation and enjoyment. Similarly, Butar Butar and Katemba (2023) reported that Spotify increases students' motivation to learn English because it combines entertainment with language learning. Extending these findings, the present study demonstrates that emotional

engagement was not merely an accompanying experience but a key factor that sustained participants' willingness to continue learning vocabulary independently. Through authentic songs that matched their personal preferences, participants developed a positive emotional connection with English learning, transforming vocabulary acquisition into a meaningful and enjoyable lifelong learning experience.

Learning Impact

The fourth theme, **Learning Impact**, revealed that learning English vocabulary through Spotify songs generated impacts that participants perceived as extending beyond vocabulary acquisition itself. Across the reflective journals and interviews, participants reported perceived improvements along several dimensions: an expanding vocabulary size as new words accumulated week by week, greater ease in recognizing word forms in unrelated contexts outside the songs, sharper pronunciation awareness gained from imitating singers, and, for several participants, a stronger willingness to guess meaning from context rather than immediately reaching for a dictionary. More importantly, participants described changes in the way they approached English learning, suggesting that the experience influenced both their perceived language development and their learning behaviors.

One participant described how the experience had changed the way unfamiliar vocabulary was processed in everyday situations:

"Kini, setiap kali saya mendengar kata asing di platform mana pun, secara otomatis otak saya mencoba mencari 'irama' atau konteks kalimatnya, mirip seperti saat saya membedah lirik di Spotify."

("Now, every time I hear an unfamiliar word on any platform, my brain automatically tries to find its rhythm or sentence context, similar to when I analyzed lyrics on Spotify.")

Rather than representing a strategy used only while listening to songs, this reflection indicates that participants transferred their vocabulary learning strategies into other language-learning situations. The ability to infer meanings from contextual and rhythmic cues became an automatic habit that extended beyond Spotify, demonstrating that participants had internalized the learning experience. Other participants also reported remembering vocabulary more easily because words were associated with melodies, emotions, and authentic situations, while several described improvements in pronunciation and listening comprehension through repeated exposure to English songs.

These findings are consistent with [Kolb's \(2014\) Experiential Learning Theory](#), which explains that learning develops through meaningful experiences that are transformed into new knowledge and applied in different situations. Participants' experiences illustrate the stages of abstract conceptualization and active experimentation, as vocabulary learned through songs was transferred into classroom activities, conversations, films, and other authentic English-language contexts. Rather than remaining isolated knowledge, vocabulary became part of participants' everyday language use.

The findings also complement [Hasanah and Suryanto \(2024\)](#), who identified Spotify as an effective platform for vocabulary learning because of its accessibility and lyric features. The present study extends these findings by demonstrating that Spotify contributed not only to vocabulary development but also to broader changes in learning habits, learner autonomy, pronunciation awareness, and confidence in using English. These impacts suggest that Spotify functioned as an experiential learning environment that encouraged learners to integrate vocabulary learning into their daily lives rather than limiting it to formal classroom settings.

Reflective Insight

The final theme, **Reflective Insight**, highlights participants' ability to evaluate and make personal meaning from their experiences of learning English vocabulary through Spotify songs. Rather than simply describing what they had learned, participants reflected on the effectiveness of Spotify as a learning resource, recognized its strengths and limitations, and considered how the experience had influenced their future learning practices. These reflections

demonstrate that vocabulary learning through Spotify promoted not only language development but also greater awareness of learners' own learning processes.

One participant reflected on how the experience had changed her perspective toward vocabulary learning:

"Kalau ditanya apakah cara ini mempengaruhi cara aku belajar bahasa Inggris secara keseluruhan, jawabannya iya banget. Aku jadi lebih berani buat tebak-tebak arti kata dari konteks, lebih tahu sama pengucapan, dan yang paling penting, aku nggak lagi nganggap belajar kosakata itu sesuatu yang bosenin."
 ("If asked whether this method has influenced the way I learn English overall, the answer is definitely yes. I've become more confident in guessing meanings from context, more aware of pronunciation, and most importantly, I no longer consider learning vocabulary boring.")

Another participant offered a balanced evaluation by acknowledging both the benefits and limitations of Spotify:

"Meskipun demikian, saya merasa metode ini sangat membantu walaupun tidak sepenuhnya bisa menggantikan pembelajaran formal... Spotify bagi saya adalah pendukung utama yang sangat efektif untuk membangun kepercayaan diri dan keakraban dengan bahasa Inggris."

These reflections demonstrate that participants moved beyond recalling their experiences to critically evaluating how Spotify supported their vocabulary learning. Rather than viewing Spotify as a complete substitute for formal instruction, participants recognized it as a complementary learning resource that was particularly effective for vocabulary development, pronunciation awareness, and listening practice while acknowledging the continued importance of classroom learning and other educational resources. Several participants also reported that their positive experiences with Spotify encouraged them to explore additional learning resources, such as YouTube, podcasts, and English-language films, reflecting an increasingly autonomous approach to language learning.

These findings support [Ryan and Ryan's \(2013\)](#) 4Rs model of reflective learning, which proposes that meaningful reflection develops progressively from reporting experiences to relating them to personal contexts, reasoning about their significance, and reconstructing future learning practices. Participants demonstrated this progression by recognizing how Spotify influenced their learning habits, evaluating its effectiveness critically, and integrating it into their long-term English learning routines. Their reflections indicate that Spotify became more than a music streaming platform; it evolved into a personally meaningful learning resource that supported self-directed vocabulary learning and reflective language development.

CONCLUSIONS

This study explored five university students' lived experiences of using Spotify songs to learn English vocabulary. The findings revealed five interconnected themes: Learning Strategies, Vocabulary Learning Process, Emotional Responses, Learning Impact, and Reflective Insight. Participants combined exposure-based, meaning-focused, and production-based strategies, gradually developed vocabulary through repeated exposure to authentic lyrics, and experienced predominantly positive emotions that sustained engagement. They also reported improvements in vocabulary, pronunciation, and confidence, although these outcomes were not objectively measured. Spotify functioned as a flexible, enjoyable, and contextual learning environment that supported learner autonomy through self-selected songs and personalized strategies. These findings suggest that English teachers could integrate Spotify into vocabulary instruction through unfamiliar-word recording, lyric discussions, and reflective journals. However, the study's small sample, single-university context, and reliance on self-reported data limit generalizability. Future research should involve larger, more diverse samples and objective vocabulary assessments to examine learning outcomes more rigorously.

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