



# ACHIEVEMENT OF USING ENGLISH SONGS FOR ENHANCING ENGLISH VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE AND LISTENING STRATEGIES OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE SECOND-YEAR STUDENTS MAJORING IN ENGLISH FOR COMMUNICATION AT A PUBLIC UNIVERSITY IN THE LOWER SOUTHERN REGION OF THAILAND

ผลสัมฤทธิ์ทางการเรียนจากการใช้เพลงภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อเสริมความรู้คำศัพท์ภาษาอังกฤษ และกลยุทธ์การฟังของนักศึกษาที่เรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศ  
ชั้นปีที่ 2 วิชาเอกภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อการสื่อสาร ของมหาวิทยาลัยของรัฐ  
ในภาคใต้ตอนล่างของประเทศไทย

*Thapanee Rattanalert<sup>1\*</sup>, Tanakarn Pataburee<sup>2</sup>, Kanjanarat Urairat<sup>3</sup>,  
Jirayu Songkho<sup>4</sup>, Varidta Tapnimit<sup>5</sup>, Nathanicha Poolsakt<sup>6</sup>, Suwannahong Sangvarn<sup>7</sup>  
and Pattarapim Pannayang<sup>8</sup>*

*Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Liberal Arts,*

*Rajamangala University of Technology Srivijaya<sup>1-8</sup>*

*Corresponding author\*: thapanee.ra@rmutsv.ac.th*

ธีรบัณฑิต<sup>1\*</sup>, ธนกรกานต์ พัทบุรี<sup>2</sup>, กานุจnarัตติ อุ่นรัตน์<sup>3</sup>, จิรายุ สงเคราะห์<sup>4</sup>, วิภูषณ์ เทพนิมิตร<sup>5</sup>,  
ณัฐรัตน์ พุลศักดิ์<sup>6</sup>, สุวรรณหงษ์ ลังวานย์<sup>7</sup>, ภัทรพิมพ์ พันนาเยง<sup>8</sup>  
สาขาวิชาภาษาต่างประเทศ คณะศิลปศาสตร์, มหาวิทยาลัยเทคโนโลยีราชมงคลวิชัย<sup>1-8</sup>  
ผู้รับผิดชอบบทความ\*: thapanee.ra@rmutsv.ac.th

## Abstract

The study aims to: 1) examine the achievement of using English songs for enhancing English vocabulary knowledge of English as a foreign language (EFL) second-year students majoring in English for Communication at a public university in the lower southern region of Thailand, and 2) to study the learning strategies of vocabulary through listening to English songs of the students. 48 second-year students majoring in English for

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Communication at a public university in the lower southern region of Thailand were purposively selected as the participants of the study. 5 out of 48 who possessed the highest scores of post-tests were interviewed to seek the listening strategies. The instruments used to collect data were pretest, posttest, and semi-structured interviews. Data were analyzed by mean ( $\bar{X}$ ), percentage (%), standard deviation (S.D.), and t-test for dependent samples.

The research findings indicate that: 1) The posttest results show a significant improvement in English vocabulary compared to the pretest results at a statistical level of 0.05; 2) The most effective strategy for learning vocabulary from songs is to use English subtitles while watching music videos, followed by noting unfamiliar words. In conclusion, the use of songs to develop English vocabulary knowledge has a positive impact on the students, enabling them to apply their knowledge for educational purposes and daily life.

**Keywords:** Achievement / Listening Strategies / English Songs

### บทคัดย่อ

การศึกษาครั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อ 1) เพื่อศึกษาผลสัมฤทธิ์จากการใช้เพลงภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อเพิ่มพูนคำศัพท์ภาษาอังกฤษก่อนเรียนและหลังเรียนของนักศึกษาชั้นปีที่ 2 วิชาเอกภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อการสื่อสารของมหาวิทยาลัยของรัฐในภาคใต้ตอนล่างของประเทศไทย 2) เพื่อสำรวจกลยุทธ์การเรียนรู้คำศัพท์จากการฟังเพลงภาษาอังกฤษของนักศึกษา กลุ่มตัวอย่างการวิจัยคือนักศึกษาชั้นปีที่ 2 วิชาเอกภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อการสื่อสารของมหาวิทยาลัยของรัฐในภาคใต้ตอนล่างของประเทศไทย จำนวน 48 คน และเลือกกลุ่มตัวอย่างจำนวน 5 คน จากทั้งหมด 48 คน ที่มีผลคะแนนสูงที่สุดเพื่อสัมภาษณ์กลยุทธ์ในการฟังเพลงภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อพัฒนาทักษะด้านคำศัพท์ภาษาอังกฤษ เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการเก็บรวบรวมข้อมูล คือ แบบทดสอบก่อนเรียนและหลังเรียน และแบบสัมภาษณ์กลยุทธ์การฟังเพลง วิเคราะห์ข้อมูลโดยใช้ ค่าเฉลี่ย ( $\bar{X}$ ) ค่าร้อยละ (%) ส่วนเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน (S.D.)

จากการวิจัยพบว่า 1) ผลสัมฤทธิ์จากการใช้เพลงภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อเสริมความรู้คำศัพท์ภาษาอังกฤษของนักศึกษาชั้นปีที่ 2 พบว่าหลังเรียนสูงกว่าก่อนเรียนอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติที่ .05 2) กลยุทธ์การเรียนรู้คำศัพท์จากการฟังเพลงภาษาอังกฤษ คือเปิดชับ (subtitle) ภาษาอังกฤษพร้อมกับ MV ประกอบกับการฟังเพลงมากที่สุด รองลงมาคือจดคำศัพท์ที่ไม่ทราบความหมายเพื่อนำไปค้นหาความหมาย จึงสรุปได้ว่าการใช้เพลงภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อพัฒนาความรู้



ด้านคำศัพท์ภาษาอังกฤษของนักศึกษามีผลสัมฤทธิ์ที่ดีต่อกลุ่มตัวอย่างและสามารถนำไปปรับใช้ในชีวิตประจำวันได้

**คำสำคัญ** : ผลสัมฤทธิ์ / กลยุทธ์การฟังเพลง / เพลงภาษาอังกฤษ

## Introduction

For many decades, English language holds significant importance and plays a crucial role in daily life, particularly in the areas of communication, education, and professional pursuits. Mastering only Thai language is considered insufficient for thriving in today's society. Therefore, possessing a good knowledge of English language skills is deemed superior, both in terms of adaptability to various global events and the ability to integrate into society with happiness. Consequently, it is the reason why educational institutions, for the most part, prioritize and incorporate English as a subject in their curriculum (Kulawanich, 2006).

Thai students notably lack English communication skills, with deficiencies in grammar and vocabulary. Thus, developing a sufficient vocabulary is crucial for skill advancement, serving as the essential foundation for learning English (Kaanon, 2017). In the global context, emphasis on communication competencies is high, urging teachers to prioritize learner-centered activities that focus on listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Rukyu (2016) highlights the importance of listening, as it is the most frequently used language skill which contributes significantly to effective communication. On the other hand, learners possessing poor listening skills can adversely impact other language skills, leading to decreased efficiency in English communication (Hamouda, 2012). One method that can help improve learners' listening skills is using songs. Hamouda (2012) claimed that using songs in English language learning positively influences learners' attitudes, enhances listening skills, and creates a conducive learning environment. Certain studies have highlighted the various benefits of incorporating songs in teaching, including increased enjoyment, cultural understanding, vocabulary teaching, and enhanced memory retention (Griffee, 1992). Saengchai (1990) emphasizes the role of songs in fostering a fun and enjoyable learning environment, reducing tension, and increasing learner interest. Besides, research by Eiamwat (2017) indicates that incorporating song activities significantly improves language learning effectiveness, with high student satisfaction. Kasuwan (2013) suggests a positive correlation between



learning behavior through song activities and improved learning outcomes, including vocabulary knowledge and resilience. Overall, using songs as a teaching medium consistently leads to improved learning outcomes and reduced stress in English language learning, as evidenced by multiple studies conducted in different years.

The researchers hence aimed to investigate the effectiveness of using English songs to improve vocabulary knowledge among EFL second-year students majoring in English for Communication in a public university in the south of Thailand. This is due to its time constraints and pressure in the classroom, EFL students have struggled with memorizing vocabulary, prompting the use of songs as a supportive tool to create a relaxed and enjoyable learning atmosphere. Songs also aid in memory retention and foster enthusiasm, preventing monotony during practice. These benefits extend to students' daily lives, building confidence and motivation for English communication, potentially leading to future self-directed language learning.

## Objectives

1. To investigate the achievement of using English songs for enhancing English vocabulary knowledge before and after listening to English songs of second-year students majoring in English for Communication
2. To study listening strategies for vocabulary acquisition after listening to English songs of second-year students majoring in English for Communication

## Research and Methodology

A study of achievement of using English songs for enhancing English vocabulary knowledge and listening strategies of EFL second-year students is a mixed-methods study, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative approaches.

### 1. Participants

48 second-year undergraduate students majoring in English for Communication program at a public university in the lower southern region of Thailand selected through a purposive sampling technique participated in this study. 5 of 48 students who possessed the highest mean score were then chosen to participate in an interview session.



## 2. Research Methodology

### 2.1 Research Instruments

1) English songs: Blinding Lights by The Weeknd, Circles by Post

Malonewere, and Don't Start Now by Dua Lipa were determined and selected as its vocabularies contained in the song covered in the English language courses offered for second-year student's level.

2) A pre-test and post-test consisting of 30 items related to the vocabulary in the selected English songs were distributed to the participants. The tests were tested by three experts who have English teaching experience over 3 years to ensure its validity, resulting in the omission of 7 items deemed excessively difficult, too easy, or irrelevant to the vocabulary both in the songs and English courses. The remaining 23 items were subjected to further validity testing by the same three experts, yielding a validity and reliability coefficient over 0.50, indicating the test's favorable results.

3) A semi-structured interview exploring the listening strategies for vocabulary acquisition through listening to international songs consisted of 5 questions were also checked by the three experts, showing its acceptable validity.

### 2.2 Data Collection Procedure

The research started with the administration of a pretest consisting of 23 questions, which the participants were allotted 45 minutes to complete. Subsequently, the participants underwent a 10-day period of studying and listening the 3 given songs. Throughout this stage, the researchers created an online chat platform to monitor and support the participants' progress. Upon completion of the study period, the participants were required to take a posttest within 45 minutes. The researchers, additionally, conducted interviews on the 5 participants who obtained the highest scores. The interviews aimed to investigate the learning strategies for English vocabulary acquisition through listening to English songs.

### 2.3 Data Analysis

The statistics run to determine the achievement of English vocabulary acquisition through listening to English songs of second-year students majoring in Foreign Languages for Communication were mean ( $\bar{X}$ ), standard deviation (S.D.), and t-test for



dependent samples. In terms of the analysis of the interview data on listening strategies, the data were presented in the descriptive manner.

## Results

The researchers collected and analyzed data to address the research objectives. The research findings are presented as follows:

Objective 1: To demonstrate the outcomes of using English songs to enhance English vocabulary knowledge of EFL second-year students majoring in English for Communication. The researchers collected data from pre-test and post-test, as indicated in the analysis results presented in Part 1, which include the analysis of the pre-test and post-test results.

Objective 2: To present the results of investigating the listening strategies employed by EFL second-year students majoring in English for Communication in vocabulary acquisition through listening to English songs. The researchers developed a semi-structured questionnaire and collected data, as indicated in the analysis results presented in Part 2, which include the analysis of the interview results on listening strategies in vocabulary acquisition through listening to English songs by the students.

### 1. Analysis of Pre-test and Post-test Results

**Table 1** Illustrates the comparison of pre-test and post-test scores obtained from the use of international songs to enhance English vocabulary knowledge among the EFL second-year students.

	N	Full Score	( $\bar{X}$ )	(S.D.)	t-value	P
Pre-test	48	23	9.02	4.59	4.84	0.05
Post-test	48	23	14.15	4.96		

\* $p \leq .05$

From Table 1, it was found that the achievement of using English songs to enhance English vocabulary knowledge of the second-year students majoring in English for Communication was satisfied. The pre-test scores of the participants had a mean of 9.02 with a standard deviation of 4.59, while the post-test scores had a mean of 14.15 with a standard deviation of 4.96. These results indicated that the post-test scores of the participants were significantly higher than the pre-test scores at a statistically significant different level of .05.

2. The results of the analysis of listening strategies for English vocabulary acquisition from listening to English songs.

Table 2 Presents the analysis of vocabulary learning strategies from listening to English songs.

\*P=participant

N	The song that I feel satisfied	The song that I feel dissatisfied	Listening Strategies	Listening repetition levels	Is there an increase in vocabulary knowledge?
P1	The song "Don't Start Now" is familiar and well-liked. I am able to sing along to this song and there are some vocabulary words in it that I am familiar with.	The song "Circles" due to the difficult-to-understand pronunciation of the male singer's voice.	My strategy is to open English subtitles while watching the music video and listening to the song. If one is unfamiliar with the meaning, they can search for the meaning using a dictionary.	More than 7 times	Engaging in listening activities serves as the most accessible starting point for enhancing English vocabulary knowledge. I think it leads to a significant increase in English vocabulary proficiency.

Table 2 (Cont.)

N	The song that I feel satisfied.	The song that I feel dissatisfied.	Listening Strategies	Listening repetition levels	Is there an increase in vocabulary knowledge?
P2	“Don’t Start Now” is catchy and familiar melodies, making it a song that is easy to listen to and widely recognized.	The song “Blinding Lights” has significantly faster tempo compared to other songs, as well as its incorporation of lyrics containing vocabulary that may be challenging for me to comprehend upon initial listening.	During the initial listening session, I played the songs without the accompaniment of a music video, subtitles, or any supplementary visual aids. Subsequent listening sessions involved the inclusion of song lyrics (subtitles) and frequent repetitions, in addition to adding the song to the daily playlist, helping me foster familiarity and enhance the sense of comfort with the song.	More than 10 times	For me, listening to English songs contributes to an increased knowledge of both old and new English vocabulary, as it serves as the easiest starting point for learning. The act of listening itself facilitates the acquisition of English language vocabulary.

Table 2 (Cont.)

N	The song that I feel satisfied	The song that I feel dissatisfied	Listening Strategies	Listening repetition levels	Is there an increase in vocabulary knowledge?
P3	"Circles" has slow tempo, making it easy to listen to repeatedly. The song incorporates interesting vocabulary that has been encountered in English language courses, facilitating a deeper understanding and connection with the lyrics.	"Blinding Lights" has faster and higher tempo when compared to other songs, along with the inclusion of vocabulary within the lyrics that may pose a challenge for comprehension.	Repeated listening and simultaneous display of song lyrics (subtitles) are my strategies to enhance comprehension of the song's content. This approach of combining multiple listening sessions and visual aids help me foster a deeper understanding of the lyrics.	More than 5 times	This facilitates an increased acquisition of English vocabulary from the three English songs, and furthermore allows for the application of these vocabulary words in both educational and daily life contexts.

Table 2 (Cont.)

N	The song that I feel satisfied.	The song that I feel dissatisfied.	Listening Strategies	Listening repetition levels	Is there an increase in vocabulary knowledge?
P4	The song "Circles" is notable for its easy listening nature, moderate tempo, and clear enunciation by the vocalist, making it easy to comprehend the pronunciation of vocabulary words within the lyrics.	"Blinding Lights" is challenging to understand due to the vocalist's pronunciation, as the song features a relatively fast tempo, causing me some difficulty in keeping up with the lyrics and vocabulary.	During the initial listening session, I played the song without opening the subtitles and focused on identifying interesting keywords and unfamiliar vocabulary. Subsequent listening sessions involved opening the subtitles and watching the accompanying video to familiarize with the vocabulary heard in the song.	More than 6 times	Engaging in this activity has allowed me to expand my knowledge of English vocabulary. The encounter with unfamiliar words has sparked me a desire to seek their meanings, fostering a greater inclination towards word exploration. Furthermore, the acquired vocabulary can be readily applied in both educational and daily life contexts.

Table 2 (Cont.)

N	The song that I feel satisfied.	The song that I feel dissatisfied.	Listening Strategies	Listening repetition levels	Is there an increase in vocabulary knowledge?
P5	"Circles" is easy to listen to due to its simplicity, moderate tempo, and clear enunciation of each phrase, introducing vocabulary words that were previously unheard of. This generates my sense of curiosity and interest in actively engaging with the song.	For me "Blinding Lights" presents a challenge in terms of comprehending the lyrics due to its relatively fast tempo. I had to repeat listening this song many times compared to other songs, and the duration of each session is extended, as it is difficult to keep up with the song's phrases.	Repetitive listening to the songs helps me foster a sense of familiarity, leading to the subsequent exploration of the accompanying video and lyrics. This enables the exposure to unfamiliar vocabulary words and stimulates my interest in seeking their meanings. Supplementing this process with note-taking of additional vocabulary words can also enhance memorization capabilities.	More than 10 times	This enables me to enhance my English vocabulary acquisition, engage in vocabulary learning, and apply them in practical contexts.



Table 2 demonstrates the results of the analysis on vocabulary learning techniques through listening to English songs as follows:

P1 is pleased with the song "Don't Start Now" due to its familiarity and favorite status, while finding "Circles" challenging due to the singer's pronunciation. The listening technique involves using English subtitles to aid vocabulary learning and understanding. P1 searches for unfamiliar words in the dictionary and listens to the song at least 7 times to enhance vocabulary and listening skills. P1 considered listening to English songs is a crucial starting point for expanding vocabulary knowledge.

P2 highly enjoys "Don't Start Now" for its ease of listening and familiarity but is dissatisfied with "Blinding Lights" due to its fast tempo and challenging vocabulary. P2's listening technique involves initial focused listening, subsequent sessions with lyrics no fewer than 10 times, and incorporating the songs into the regular playlist. P2 confirmed that listening to English songs, especially "Don't Start Now," significantly improves P2's knowledge of both familiar and new vocabulary.

P3 finds satisfaction in the slow-paced song "Circles" with interesting vocabulary but is dissatisfied with the fast-paced "Blinding Lights." P3's listening technique involves repeated listening with subtitles, noting new words in the mobile phone's notes. P3 listens to the song over 5 times per day. P3 asserted that listening to English songs can enhance his/her knowledge of English vocabulary from songs and allows them to apply these words in his/her studies and daily life.

P4 expresses satisfaction in the easy-to-listen-to song "Circles" with familiar vocabulary, but is dissatisfied with the challenging pronunciation and fast tempo of "Blinding Lights." The listening technique involves identifying keywords without subtitles initially, then incorporating subtitles, music video, and printed lyrics in subsequent sessions. P4 listens to the songs over 6 times daily, confirming that this practice significantly enhances he/she English vocabulary knowledge.

P5 enjoys the easy-to-listen-to nature and clear enunciation of "Circles," sparking interest despite unfamiliar vocabulary. However, P5 dissatisfies with "Blinding Lights" which arises from its fast tempo. Additionally, there is a need to pause the song multiple times to memorize unfamiliar vocabulary. The listening technique employed involves repeated listening sessions to establish familiarity. P5 listens to the songs over 10 times, confirming that this practice enhances English vocabulary acquisition and allows for practical application in various contexts.



## Discussion

The results of the research, can be discussed as follows:

The study examined the pre- and post-test results of using English songs to enhance English vocabulary knowledge. The test scores after the learning process were found significantly higher than the scores before the learning process, with an average difference of 4.96. The statistical significance level was observed at 0.05, indicating that participants demonstrated improved efficacy in vocabulary development through listening to English songs. This was in accordance with the study conducted by Promsit, et al. (2021) on effectiveness of English music activities on learning and retention of vocabulary and speaking ability of Prathomsuksa 5. They found that the students' test scores immediately increased after the learning process, with statistical significance at the .01 level. In addition, Kasuwan (2013) proposed that learning behavior through song activities is positively correlated with academic performance. The use of song activities allows learners to develop their knowledge and endurance in vocabulary. This is consistent with the research conducted by Eiamwat (2017) on the use of the English song activity set "Every Conversation" with second-year vocational certificate students. It was found that students' English language performance significantly improved after learning through the song activity, with statistical significance at the 0.01 level. Furthermore, the students expressed the highest level of satisfaction towards the learning management activity.

Regarding vocabulary learning strategies through listening to English songs, it was found that three participants expressed satisfaction with the song "Circles," while two participants expressed satisfaction with the song "Don't Start Now." On the other hand, four participants had dissatisfaction with the song "Blinding Lights," and one had dissatisfaction with the song "Circles." Additionally, everyone listened to songs for an average of at least five times. The listening strategy employed was to open English subtitles while watching the music videos (MV) in conjunction with listening to the songs. The most common practice was to jot down new vocabulary and look up their meanings in the dictionary. These findings align with Griffee's (1992) notions, indicating that songs create an enjoyable, relaxed classroom atmosphere and serve as effective tools for various aspects of language learning, culture, conversation teaching, vocabulary instruction, grammar revision, pronunciation teaching, and memory retention improvement.



## Conclusion

The study examined the achievement of using English songs for enhancing English vocabulary knowledge and listening strategies used by the EFL second-year students majoring in English for Communication at a public university in the lower southern region of Thailand. The findings are as follows:

Comparing the test results using the same test before learning (pretest) and after learning (posttest), it was found that the posttest mean score was significantly higher than the pretest mean score at a statistical significance level of 0.05. The research results indicated that the use of English songs to promote English vocabulary learning development still contribute to favorable learning outcomes, though there are many new technologies, such as various applications and stimulations also used for enhancing vocabulary learning in the classroom.

Regarding students' listening strategies, they primarily employ vocabulary learning strategies through listening to English songs. Initially, they listen without lyrics or videos, then incorporate these in subsequent sessions. Most students favor "Circles" for its ease, while finding "Blinding Lights" challenging due to its pace. Listening over five times enhances comfort and vocabulary learning. This approach, supported by scholars, proves effective in applying acquired vocabulary in academic and daily life, fostering enthusiasm for learning English beyond the classroom (Finocchiaro, 1973; McDonald, 1984; Quest, 1999).

## Recommendations for Applying the Research Results

The study's findings offer empirical evidence that integrating English songs remains an effective strategy for strengthening vocabulary acquisition. Implementation in the classroom requires teachers to select songs relevant to lesson vocabulary, considering both popularity and student interest to capture attention.

## Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the results from the study, the following suggestions should be taken into an account:

1. In-depth focus group discussions after learning vocabulary through English songs to obtain more accurate data should be prioritized.
2. It is also recommended to study the comparative use of songs and



applications in developing English vocabulary memorization skills.

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