

Improving Listening Skills in Seventh Grade Students Through English Songs

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Received: September, 9, 2024

Revised: September, 17, 2024

Accepted: October, 30, 2024

ABSTRACT

The aim of this journal is to explore the role of music in enhancing listening skills, which is one of the core competencies in English language learning, alongside speaking, reading, and writing. These essential skills are categorized into productive (speaking and writing) and receptive (listening and reading) abilities. Music and songs play a critical role in both educational and developmental contexts. Incorporating music into classroom settings offers numerous advantages. While there are differing opinions on the use of songs for teaching foreign languages, employing music during listening exercises is widely recognized as an effective strategy for improving listening skills. English songs, in particular, can be quite captivating, fostering student engagement and improving performance in listening activities. However, there are limitations to using music for this purpose, such as the potential inaccuracy of lyrics in popular songs and the challenge of poor sound systems in classrooms, which can hinder the effectiveness of music-based listening exercises).

Keywords: *English Songs, Listening Skills, Improving*

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Introduction

Effective communication through language is essential for social interaction. Learning foreign languages, particularly English, is vital for the younger generation in Indonesia to thrive in a globalized environment. English is the predominant language for international communication, making its proficiency fundamental for global success. Young people can develop their English skills through various means such as schools, extracurricular activities, and daily interactions.

The process of acquiring English involves mastering four key skills: reading, speaking, writing, and listening. These skills are critical for a comprehensive understanding of the language, which is used internationally across multiple domains such as politics, science, and the arts. Effective communication globally requires proficiency in all four areas. Listening is the initial step in language acquisition, mirroring the way infants learn by listening to the conversations around them. This observation leads to mimicking sounds and eventually speaking. Reading and writing follow as additional language skills. Listening and reading are categorized as receptive skills, focusing primarily on understanding rather

than producing language. Listening can be challenging for many, especially students, as it involves grasping spoken English, which can be more difficult than written text. Unlike reading, where one can revisit text, listening usually offers a single opportunity to understand the message.

Despite common misconceptions, effective speaking does not solely constitute good communication; listening is equally important. Poor experiences in listening can lead to frustration and demotivation among students. An engaging method to enhance listening skills is through music and songs, which not only make learning enjoyable but also encourage repetition and pronunciation practice. Songs engage students, encouraging them to listen repeatedly and emulate their favorite singers. English teachers recognize the value of incorporating songs and music in language learning due to their emotional impact and the ability to facilitate emotional comprehension. Music enriches the learning environment, blending enjoyment with education. Songs possess qualities like expressiveness and therapeutic effects, making them effective for language instruction. They help reinforce language patterns through their memorable melodies and repetitive lyrics. Songs offer numerous educational benefits, enhancing learning through their relatability and the repetition they provide, aiding in vocabulary retention. Listening to music can evoke a spectrum of emotions, from happiness to sadness, and the convenience of smartphones allows this generation to access music easily, enjoying it anytime and anywhere

Literature Review

There are many different definitions of listening that may be found in educational materials and online references. According to Howatt and Dakin (1974), listening is the capacity to hear and understand what others are saying. The accent, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and general meaning of the spoken language must all be understood. Listening is seen as a sophisticated process in language learning that helps us to understand spoken language. It involves more than just hearing sounds; it also entails understanding the words' intended meanings and how sentences work in everyday speech (Carter, 2001: 7). Due to the fact that listening is a receptive talent rather than a productive one, language is absorbed and understood rather than produced. According to Mukmiatun (2009), hearing is an invisible mental process, making it difficult to express precisely. Listeners must be able to differentiate between sounds, understand language and grammar, and assess the utterance's sociocultural context—both in the local context and the larger social milieu.

In a similar vein, Nunan (1970) emphasizes the importance of listening as one of the core language abilities by defining it as the capacity to recognize and comprehend what others are saying. In essence, listening requires sophisticated cognitive processes that let people understand spoken language and have productive conversations. In the past, reading and writing have received more attention than listening when it comes to the learning process (Qiu, 2006; Cook, 2001; Rost, 2005). The development of speaking and writing skills, however, depends heavily on listening, which is a fundamental language ability. Students may struggle in their writing and speaking without good listening intake since these output abilities are more difficult. Establishing the foundation for speaking and writing begins with listening. Students can enhance their pronunciation and pick up useful words, phrases, and sentences by actively listening. Real-world listening is different from listening you do every day. Therefore, listening exercises in the classroom must be created to prepare students for circumstances they may encounter outside of it. This highlights how crucial it is to emphasize listening as a fundamental ability for children to succeed in real-world situations. To do this, teachers can integrate engaging activities that help students apply what they learn in the classroom about listening to effectively communicate in everyday settings by utilizing the right words and sentences. In conclusion, listening is the act of receiving and understanding information, whether it comes through radio, television, or newspapers. To fully understand the speaker's essential points, you need to hear well and pay close attention. As a vital

component of language acquisition and the basis for speaking and writing abilities, mastering listening is necessary for acquiring fluency in English.

Methods

Classroom action research was conducted at MTS Ibadurahman in April 2024. Classroom action research is practical research intended to improve learning in the classroom. This research is one of the efforts of teachers or practitioners in various forms of activities carried out to improve and increase enthusiasm in learning English as the quality of learning in the classroom. The population sample taken was 50 students in one class in 7.2 MTS Ibadurahman. The subjects of this study were students of the English language study program in semester 4 of the 2023/2024 academic year carried out in order to examine how the conditions and development of students in learning English. The object of this research includes all subjects both researchers and people who are being studied. This research object aims to find out where the students' English language skills are by using the English Songs method.

In collecting data, researchers make direct observations. The observation method is an activity towards a process by directly observing the conditions and problems to be solved, especially when learning English. Researchers try to observe with the Listening songs method. At the end of learning, students are tested one by one about how much they master vocabulary. Vocabulary mastery ability tests are used for data sources. After collecting data, researchers analyzed the data. The data analysis technique used by researchers is the class action research data analysis technique, where PTK data is obtained from the results of observations or observations during the learning process.

Result and Discussion

The findings demonstrated that integrating English songs in second language learning activities can positively affect young learners' listening comprehension if the tasks set are in line with their skill level. When compared to the results of the experimental groups and the control groups, the use of songs definitely had a significant role in the development of young learners' listening ability. The experimental groups, which listened to English music, performed considerably better on the post-tests than the control groups, which followed the standard listening curriculum.

This finding is consistent with Cameron's (2001) viewpoint, which emphasizes the value of employing songs and rhymes to help early language learners. This idea is supported by the current study, which emphasizes the many benefits of song instruction for young language learners in the first stages of language learning. Songs also foster an inclusive environment, which encourages hesitant students to join in class activities, according to Djigunovich and Vilke (2000). Considering students' high affinity for music in the language classroom, Cullen (1999) also supports the use of songs as important teaching resources for ESL/EFL.

No	Indicator	Percentase
1	Vocabullary	41,6 %
2	Pronouncation	37,4 %

3	Reading	49,92 %
4	Memorization	43,68 %

In the first cycle at meetings one and two they still felt unfamiliar with the method we made so their level of understanding was a little low for some students.

No	Indicator	Percentase
1	Vocabullary	54,08 %
2	Pronouncation	49,92 %
3	Reading	56,16 %
4	Memorization	54,08 %

In this second cycle at meetings three and four with the same method they felt familiar with the English songs method there was a pretty good improvement.

Conclusion

The results of this study were concentrated on how English songs affected listening. It was found that MTs Babussalam pupils can learn new vocabulary and enhance their listening skills by listening to English music. They found it simpler to recall how to pronounce words by singing a song. The purpose of this study was to determine how much listening skills can be enhanced by English songs for kids. The results show that the music has a beneficial effect on language abilities, notably listening capacity.

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