The Effectiveness of Listening to English Songs to Improve Listening Skills for Beginner of English Language Learners.

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Abstract

Listening is a fundamental skill in language acquisition and plays a key role in the communication process, particularly in English language learning. This study aims to determine the effectiveness of using popular English songs to improve the listening skills of beginner students. A quasi-experimental method was used with second-semester students at Ma'arif Nahdlatul Ulama University in Kebumen. The sample consisted of 20 students, divided into experimental and control groups. Data were collected through pre-tests and post-tests using a listening cloze test. The results of the paired samples t-test showed a significant improvement in the experimental group, with a significance value of 0.003 ($p < 0.05$). The average listening score in the experimental group increased from 48.5 to 73 after the treatment, while the control group showed no meaningful progress. Furthermore, students exposed to English songs demonstrated increased motivation, enjoyment, and engagement in the learning process. These findings suggest that integrating popular English songs into the classroom is an effective and enjoyable strategy to enhance listening comprehension for beginner learners.

Keywords: : listening skill, english songs, language learning, beginner students

INTRODUCTION

Listening is a fundamental language skill that plays a vital role in communication and language acquisition, particularly in educational contexts. It enables students to comprehend and process spoken information effectively. As highlighted by Brown (2001) and (Ara, 2009), listening involves active attention and interpretation of auditory input.

Listening is very important in second and foreign language study. It is a skill that looks like passive activity but actually it is not. It not only listens what the speaker said but the receiver processes what he/she listens to. In processing the information that listeners listen at least they do five elements inside the process- hearing, attending, understanding, responding, and remembering. If the elements are incomplete, it's only hearing not listening.

One engaging and effective method to enhance listening skills among beginner learners is through the use of English songs. Songs offer authentic language input, including pronunciation, intonation, and everyday vocabulary, which contribute to learners' familiarity with English sound patterns and accents. Moreover, songs can increase students' motivation and reduce anxiety, fostering a more relaxed and receptive learning environment. Experts such as Bricault and Bickerdike advocate the use of songs to develop listening and discourse competencies in a fun and meaningful way. This study explores the effectiveness of English songs as a pedagogical tool to improve the listening skills of beginner-level students.

METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design that aims to determine the effectiveness of using English songs in improving the listening skills of novice students. This design is considered suitable for answering research questions because it allows a controlled comparison between the experimental group and the control group.

The research was conducted at Ma'arif Nahdlatul Ulama University Kebumen, especially 2nd semester students of English study program. The number of participants was 20 students, who were divided into two groups: the experimental group and the control group.

Data collection techniques were carried out using listening cloze tests in two forms, namely pre-test and post-test. This test is given to both groups to measure students' initial and final listening skills. This instrument was developed according to the ability level of second semester students, covering the main aspects of listening such as understanding the content of the conversation, recognizing vocabulary, and capturing specific information from the audio.

The study was carried out in four meetings over four weeks, which provided sufficient time to observe the impact of using songs gradually. The treatment of playing a popular English song was given to the students.

Data analysis techniques include:

- Normality test (Shapiro-Wilk) which showed that the data from both groups were normally distributed.
- Homogeneity test which ensures that both groups have similar initial characteristics.
- Paired sample t-test was used to determine the significant difference between pre-test and post-test results in the experimental group. The test results showed a significance value of 0.003 (<0.05), which means there is a significant effect of the treatment.

In addition to statistical validity, the researcher also considered:

- Internal validity, by ensuring that the difference in results was only caused by the treatment given.

- Construct validity, through the development of test instruments that are in accordance with the competencies and needs of students.

The type of data collected is quantitative data in the form of test scores, which are suitable for describing the measurement of listening skill improvement. Tools and materials in the form of popular English songs.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents data collection of experimental class and controlled class on 2nd Semester of Ma'arif Nahdlatul Ulama Kebumen University where pre-test and post-test given. The researcher chose 10 students as the controlled class and 10 students as the experimental class.

Table 1. Students Scores in Controlled Class

Students No.	Pre Test	Post Test	Gained Score
1	90	95	+5
2	95	90	-5
3	95	95	0
4	60	60	0
5	90	100	+10
6	85	95	+10
7	65	55	-10
8	85	80	-5
9	95	85	-10
10	75	70	-10
∑	**865**	**855**	**-15**
Average	**86,5**	**85,5**	**-1,5**

Table 2. Students Scores in Experimentall Class

Students No.	Pre Test	Post Test	Gained Score
1	60	75	+15
2	50	70	+20
3	60	80	+20
4	90	90	0

5	45	70	+25
6	60	85	+25
7	55	95	+40
8	15	85	+70
9	55	70	+15
10	25	40	+15
∑	**485**	**730**	**245**
Average	**48,5**	**73**	**15**

The results of this study indicate that the use of popular English songs has a significant impact on improving students' listening skills. Based on the data from the experimental group, the average score increased from 48.5 (pre-test) to 73 (post-test), with a total gain of 245 points. In contrast, the control group experienced a slight decrease in performance, from an average of 86.5 to 85.5, with a total decrease of 15 points.

Table 3. Normality of Pre Test

Tests of Normality

PreTest Class	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Conrolled	.247	10	.085	.846	10	.052
Experimental	.240	10	.109	.915	10	.317

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 4. Normality of Post Test

Tests of Normality

PreTest Class	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Conrolled	.247	10	.085	.846	10	.052
Experimental	.240	10	.109	.915	10	.317

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

To validate the data, several statistical tests were conducted. First, the normality test using the Shapiro-Wilk method showed that both the experimental and control groups had normally distributed data:

- Pre-test significance values: Experimental = 0.317, Control = 0.052
- Post-test significance values: Experimental = 0.130, Control = 0.147

Since all values were above α = 0.05, the null hypothesis (H0) for normality was accepted.

Table 5. Homogeneity Test of Pre Test

Test of Homogeneity of Variances

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
PreTestScore	Based on Mean	.682	1	18	.420
	Based on Median	.512	1	18	.483
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.512	1	14.456	.486
	Based on trimmed mean	.764	1	18	.394

Table 6. Homogeneity Test of Post Test

Test of Homogeneity of Variances

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
PostTestScore	Based on Mean	.240	1	18	.630
	Based on Median	.106	1	18	.748
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.106	1	18.000	.748
	Based on trimmed mean	.208	1	18	.654

Next, the homogeneity test results indicated that both groups were statistically homogeneous:

- Pre-test homogeneity significance = 0.420
- Post-test homogeneity significance = 0.630

Both values exceeded 0.05, which confirms the similarity of variance between the two groups, and thus H0 was accepted.

Table 7. Paired Sample T Test

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pre Test - Post Test	-24.50000	18.92236	5.98377	-38.03624	-10.96376	-4.094	9	.003

The most critical analysis, the paired sample t-test, was applied to determine the effectiveness of the treatment in the experimental group. The significance value obtained was 0.003, which is lower than α = 0.05, leading to the acceptance of H0 in the context of this study, which states:

- H0: The method of listening to songs has an effect on the experimental class.
- H1: The method of listening to songs does not have an effect on the experimental class.

Thus, the null hypothesis was accepted, confirming that listening to popular English songs positively influences listening skills.

Beyond quantitative findings, qualitative classroom observations revealed that students in the experimental group were more engaged, motivated, and enthusiastic during the learning process. Their interest in each session increased, and they actively participated in classroom tasks. The integration of familiar and enjoyable content (songs) helped create a relaxed environment that enhanced their comprehension and retention of English listening material. These results support previous research and suggest that the use of English songs is not only statistically effective but also pedagogically beneficial in fostering learner engagement and language development.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study show that the use of popular English songs significantly improves the listening skills of second semester students at Ma'arif Nahdlatul Ulama University Kebumen. The paired sample test showed a significance value of 0.003 ($p < 0.05$), which indicated a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test results in the experimental group. The average score in the experimental group increased from 48.5 to 73, while the control group showed minimal change, because the control group did not get any treatment at all.

Beyond the statistical improvement, qualitative observations showed that popular songs also increased student motivation and engagement. Students showed greater enthusiasm during the lessons, greater curiosity towards the songs presented, and participated more actively. The familiar and fun nature of the songs created a positive learning environment, making it easier for students to absorb the new language content. Thus, integrating music into English lessons can be considered an effective and enjoyable strategy to support language learning.

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