

THE IMPACT OF SONGS ON LISTENING PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING AT SMP SWASTA KATOLIK BUDI MURNI 2 MEDAN

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of songs on students' listening proficiency in English language learning, focusing on eighth-grade students at SMP Swasta Katolik Budi Murni 2 Medan. Using a quantitative approach with quasi-experimental design, the research involved an experimental group that received song-based listening instruction and a control group taught through traditional methods. Pre-test and post-test results were analyzed using paired samples t-test, revealing a significant improvement in the experimental group's listening proficiency. The findings confirm that songs serve as an effective learning tool, enhancing students' comprehension, pronunciation, and engagement. This study highlights the importance of integrating music into English language instruction to create a more interactive and enjoyable learning environment, providing valuable insights for educators and curriculum developers.

Keywords

Songs; Listening Proficiency; English Language Learning; Quasi-Experimental Design

Introduction

Listening is a crucial skill in learning English, serving as the foundation for effective communication. It helps students understand spoken language, acquire vocabulary, improve pronunciation, and grasp grammar in context. Since listening is the most frequently used language skill, regular practice is necessary to develop fluency and comprehension. Many students struggle with listening due to factors such as fast speech, unfamiliar accents, and connected words. Limited vocabulary, idioms, background noise, and anxiety further hinder comprehension. Overcoming these challenges requires targeted practice, exposure to different language contexts, and gradual training in difficult listening environments.

Songs provide an accessible and engaging way to practice listening skills. They introduce new vocabulary and sentence structures in an enjoyable manner, making language learning more interactive. Compared to other media like films and podcasts, songs are widely preferred as they cater to all age groups, reinforce vocabulary, and keep learners motivated. Listening to songs helps learners become familiar with various accents, idiomatic expressions, and natural intonation patterns. The repetitive nature of lyrics reinforces language retention, while exposure to English songs trains the ear for better comprehension. Students who regularly listen to English songs often find it easier to understand spoken language in class.

Listening plays a key role in improving speaking, reading, and writing skills. Songs enhance pronunciation, rhythm, and expression, making language learning more engaging. Teachers should carefully select appropriate songs and create activities that encourage active participation, ensuring that music effectively supports students' listening proficiency in English.

This research focuses on English language learners in formal educational settings, specifically targeting the development of listening proficiency. It utilizes pop songs as the primary medium, incorporating activities such as singing along, lyric analysis, and comprehension exercises. To measure the effectiveness of song-based learning, the study employs quantitative methods, including pre-tests and post-tests, to assess improvements in listening skills. This research aims to assess the impact of songs on various aspects of listening proficiency, including vocabulary comprehension, pronunciation, and rhythm in English. It also explores learners' perceptions of the effectiveness of songs in enhancing their listening skills and engagement with the language. Additionally, the study identifies challenges faced by both teachers and students when using songs in listening activities and suggests strategies to maximize the effectiveness of song-based learning.

Methods

The research design for this study is a quantitative, specifically quasi-experimental design with a pre-test and post-test approach. This quantitative design is chosen to measure the impact of using songs as a teaching tool on students' listening proficiency by comparing their performance before and after the intervention. The quasi-experimental method is appropriate for this research because it allows for practical implementation in a real classroom setting without requiring random assignment of participants, which is often challenging in educational contexts.

This research conducted at SMP Swasta Katolik Budi Murni 2 Medan, located at Jalan Kapitan Purba II No. 18, Mangga, Medan Tuntungan District, Medan City, North Sumatra. The selection of this school as the research location is based on two factors. First, based on a literature review, no research has been found that analyzes the influence of songs on students' listening proficiency at this school. Second, the strong learning culture, particularly the habit of interactive learning, at this school strongly supports this research. This research is conducted in January 2025 within 4 days.

To determine the impact of songs on students' listening proficiency, the population of this study comprises 31 students in a class of grade VIII at SMP Swasta Katolik Budi Murni 2 Medan during the 2024/2025 academic year. These students are divided into experimental and control groups, each consisting of 15 and 16 students. This research uses a quasi-experimental design with a control group; thus, the researcher selected a class and divided the class into two groups as sample. The sample taken in this research is class VIII-6, consisting of 31 students.

This research utilizes several quantitative instruments to systematically and objectively measure students' listening proficiency. The primary tool is listening proficiency tests, including pre-tests and post-tests, which assess students' vocabulary recognition, understanding of main ideas, comprehension of specific details, and ability to follow spoken instructions. The pre-test establishes a baseline for students' listening skills, while the post-test evaluates their progress after the song-based intervention. Comparing these results helps determine the effectiveness of integrating songs into listening instruction.

In addition to proficiency tests, song-based listening exercises are employed to measure students' comprehension of specific language elements. These activities include lyric completion tasks, where students fill in missing words while listening, and word-matching exercises that require students to pair heard words with their meanings or synonyms. To ensure accurate evaluation, a standardized scoring rubric is used to grade students' performance consistently. Finally, statistical analysis tools, such as SPSS and Excel, help process and interpret the collected data. These tools allow researchers to identify trends, measure improvement, and determine significant differences between the experimental and control groups.

The research follows a quasi-experimental design with pre-test and post-test procedures to measure the impact of songs on listening proficiency. Participants are divided into two groups: the experimental group, which engages in song-based listening activities, and the control group, which follows traditional listening exercises. Before the intervention, both groups take a pre-test to assess their initial listening skills. The experimental group then participates in activities such as listening to songs, filling in missing lyrics, and discussing vocabulary, while the control group continues with conventional textbook-based listening tasks.

After the intervention period, both groups take a post-test to evaluate any improvements in their listening proficiency. The pre-test and post-test results are compared within and between groups to assess the effectiveness of the song-based approach. Statistical analysis is conducted on the test scores to measure progress, and qualitative feedback from students and teachers may be collected to gain further insights into their learning experiences.

This research employs the T-Test as the primary data analysis technique to determine significant differences between pre-test and post-test scores, as well as between the experimental and control groups. The T-Test is particularly useful in evaluating the effectiveness of song-based learning in improving listening proficiency, ensuring that any observed differences in student performance are statistically significant rather than due to random variation.

A Paired Samples T-Test is used in this study to compare the pre-test and post-test scores within the experimental group, measuring improvements in listening proficiency after the intervention. This statistical approach aligns with the research objectives by providing a clear and objective assessment of the impact of songs on students' listening skills. Given its widespread use in educational research, the T-Test is a reliable and credible method for analyzing the effectiveness of the intervention.

The T-Test assumes a normal distribution of data and equal variances between groups, though minor deviations from these assumptions are unlikely to affect the results, especially with balanced sample sizes. By utilizing this method, the study ensures a systematic and accurate evaluation of the impact of songs on listening proficiency, supporting the validity of its findings.

In this study, ensuring the validity and reliability of research instruments is essential to maintaining the accuracy and consistency of the findings. Validity refers to how well the instruments measure what they are intended to assess, while reliability ensures that the results remain consistent over time. To establish validity, the pre-tests and post-tests are carefully designed to align with the research objectives, ensuring they comprehensively evaluate

listening skills. Reliability is assessed using statistical methods, to measure internal consistency, ensuring that test items collectively contribute to evaluating listening proficiency.

Furthermore, to ensure the appropriateness of statistical analysis, tests of normality and homogeneity are conducted on pre-test and post-test data. The normality test checks whether the data follows a normal distribution, which is necessary for accurate T-Test analysis, while the homogeneity test examines whether variances between groups are equal, ensuring fair comparisons. These measures strengthen the credibility of the study and validate the impact of songs on listening proficiency.

Results

The first finding was the students' score in pre-test of control group which has been done at the first meeting of this research, the total score of 15 students was 130 and the average score was 8.67 points. Then, the students' score in pre-test of experimental group also has been done, the total score of 16 students was 133 and the average score was 8.31 points. The next finding was the students' score in post-test of control group, the total score of 15 students was 148 and the average score was 9.87 points. The final finding was the students' score in post-test of experimental group which has been done at the last meeting of this research, the total score of 16 students was 218 and the average score was 13.63 points.

The normality data of pre-test and post-test were conducted to find whether the data of the scores show the normal distribution. The data that described by using IBM SPSS Statistics 27 version software, has shown that the Sig. value (p) of the Shapiro-Wilk Test is greater than 0.05, thus the data distribution is considered normal and hypothesis testing can be done with parametric test using t-test.

The homogeneity tests of pre-test and post-test were conducted to show that two or more groups of sample data come from populations having the same variance. Interpretation is done by choosing one of the statistics, namely the statistic that is based on the average. The data that described by using IBM SPSS Statistics 27 version software, has shown that probability (Sig.) for pre-test and post-test are greater than 0.05. It can be concluded that both of the data variance for listening proficiency's scores of pre-test and post-test are identical or homogeneous.

Based on the results of paired samples statistics of control group, where 15 students experienced two types of tests which are pre-test and post-test, has resulted mean score of pre-test 8.67, standard deviation 3.697, and standard error mean 0.955. While the post-test resulted mean score 9.87, standard deviation 2.748, and standard error mean 0.710. These results showed that the listening proficiency average scores of control group between pre-test and post-test do not have a significant difference.

For the results of paired samples statistics of experimental group, where 16 students experienced two types of tests which are pre-test and post-test, has resulted mean score of pre-test 8.31, standard deviation 4.143, and standard error mean 1.036. While the post-test resulted mean score 13.63, standard deviation 4.631, and standard error mean 1.158. These results showed that the listening proficiency average scores of experimental group from pre-test to post-test has significantly increased. It means that when experimental group get treatment using by song, the post-test result is higher than the pre-test result.

Discussion

A paired samples t-test was conducted to evaluate the effect of using songs on students' listening proficiency, comparing the pre-test scores (before the treatment) and post-test scores (after the treatment) within the experimental group. Based on the results, the paired samples statistics indicate that the pre-test mean score ($M = 8.31$, $SD = 4.143$) significantly increased after the treatment, as reflected in the post-test mean score ($M = 13.63$, $SD = 4.631$).

Table 1: Paired Samples Correlations of Experimental Group

Experimental Group		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Pre-test & Post-test	16	.972	.000

Furthermore, Table 1 presents the paired samples correlation, showing a strong and statistically significant relationship between pre-test and post-test scores ($r = 0.972$, $p < 0.001$). This high correlation highlights the consistency in listening proficiency scores among students in the experimental group before and after the intervention.

Table 2: Paired Samples Test on Listening Proficiency of Experimental Group

Experimental Group		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	-5.312	1.138	.285	-5.919	-4.706	-18.667	15	.000

The paired samples test results from Table 2 confirm a statistically significant mean difference in listening proficiency scores between the pre-test and post-test ($M = -5.312$, $SD = 1.138$, 95% CI $[-5.919, -4.706]$, $t(15) = -18.667$, $p = 0.001$). These findings provide strong evidence that students' listening proficiency improved significantly after using songs as a learning tool. The results support the rejection of the null hypothesis, confirming that the alternative hypothesis—stating that songs have a significant impact on listening proficiency—is accepted. This validates the effectiveness of using songs to enhance listening skills among eighth-grade students at SMP Swasta Katolik Budi Murni 2 Medan during the 2024/2025 academic year.

This research provides valuable insights into the use of songs as an effective tool for improving listening proficiency. By exploring the impact of songs in language learning, it contributes to the development of more engaging and dynamic teaching methods in English language education. The research can serve as a model for integrating music into other language skills, such as speaking, reading, and writing, contributing to the overall development of comprehensive language programs. Additionally, the findings could inform future studies on using music and other non-traditional methods in language learning.

Further studies can explore the long-term effects of using songs in language learning, particularly in different educational settings and age groups. Future research could also examine how specific musical elements, such as rhythm, tempo, and genre, influence listening comprehension and pronunciation development. Additionally, integrating qualitative

methods—such as student feedback and classroom observations—can provide deeper insights into how songs impact learning motivation and engagement.

Conclusion

Based on the data analysis conducted in the discussion, this study concludes that the use of songs as a learning tool has a significant impact on enhancing the English listening proficiency of eighth-grade students at SMP Swasta Katolik Budi Murni 2 Medan during the 2025/2026 academic year. The findings demonstrate that students who were taught using songs showed substantial improvement in their listening skills compared to those who received traditional instruction. This result confirms the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (H_a), indicating that songs play an effective role in developing students' listening abilities.

This significant influence is reflected in various aspects of the statistical analysis. The paired samples t-test results revealed a notable increase in students' listening proficiency scores after the implementation of songs in the learning process. These findings highlight how exposure to songs enhances students' ability to recognize words, comprehend spoken English more effectively, and adapt to intonation and rhythm in a natural context.

Teachers should consider incorporating songs as a teaching tool in English language lessons, particularly for improving listening proficiency. Songs can make the learning process more engaging, interactive, and enjoyable, helping students develop better comprehension of pronunciation, intonation, and rhythm. Teachers should carefully select songs that contain clear lyrics and appropriate vocabulary, ensuring they match students' proficiency levels and learning objectives. Additionally, combining songs with listening exercises, discussions, and pronunciation drills can maximize their effectiveness in language learning.

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