

IMPROVING LISTENING ABILITY THROUGH ENGLISH SONGS

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ABSTRAK

Masalah dari penelitian ini adalah bagaimana meningkatkan kemampuan pendengaran menggunakan lagu-lagu berbahasa Inggris, dan bagaimana memotivasi siswa dalam mempelajari skill pendengaran dalam bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini dilatar belakangi oleh konsep kerangka penting pada penggunaan lagu-lagu berbahasa Inggris untuk meningkatkan motivasi mereka untuk melatih pendengaran dalam bahasa Inggris selama proses interaksi komunikasi di kelas. Jenis penelitian ini adalah menggunakan penelitian tindakan kelas (Classroom Action Research). Subyek penelitian ini terdiri atas 20 orang siswa pada kelas VIII, SMP Achmad Yani Puger tahun ajaran 2016-2017. Data penelitian dikumpulkan dengan menggunakan tes listening dalam bentuk cloze test (tes sesudah perlakuan pertama dan tes sesudah perlakuan kedua), pengamatan untuk mendapatkan data pada motivasi siswa pada peningkatan kemampuan pendengaran dengan menggunakan lagu-lagu berbahasa Inggris. Data pada kemampuan pendengaran menggunakan lagu-lagu berbahasa Inggris dianalisa menggunakan urian deskripsi dan statistik untuk melihat peningkatan nilai rata-rata siswa sesudah perlakuan pertama dan perlakuan kedua. Berdasar perlakuan pertama, nilai rata-rata siswa meningkat menjadi 58, 85 and pada perlakuan kedua, nilai rata-rata siswa menjadi 81, 35. Dapat disimpulkan bahwa pengajaran pendengaran melalui lagu-lagu berbahasa Inggris dapat meningkatkan kemampuan pendengaran siswa.

Kata kunci: Students' Listening Ability, English Songs.

ABSTRACT

This present study was aimed at investigating how to increase listening skill using English songs, and how to motivate the student in learning listening. The background of this study was commenced by the important framework concept in using English songs in the interaction process of communication in the classroom. The research used classroom action research. The respondent consists of 20 students at the eighth grade of SMP Achmad Yani Puger in the academic year of 2016-2017. In the data gathering process, the researcher used listening cloze test administered in both cycle I and cycle II. The data analysis of listening ability using English songs using description score, and statistics to see the average of the students score after the first observation have been done, the students score 81,35. It can be concluded that listening teaching process through English songs can increase the students' listening ability.

Key words: students' listening ability, English songs

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INTRODUCTION

Listening is one of the subjects studied in the field of language arts and in the discipline of conversation analysis, especially in English. It is important for everyone to learn how to listen carefully to get the meaning from the speaker in order to avoid misunderstanding.

Listening skill is very important especially for junior high school students. But most of the students in Indonesia consider that listening is difficult to be mastered. It happens to the eighth grade students at SMP Achmad Yani Puger. They do not seem to be able to master English listening skill.

After doing observation and write down what happened in the class, the researcher found the students were not able to understand the meaning. It was proved when teacher asked the students some questions orally in English, most of the students did not give a response, and they just kept silent. It is only 20% of 20 students in the class response the question, but just 10% students answered the question correctly. Besides, in the preliminary study, the students were given a lyric of an English song which there is some missing words inside. The students listened to the song then they fill the spaces in the lyric. The result is, only 29% correct, 34% incorrect, and 37% is empty of all the blanks of the lyric and the mean score of the students is 30, 11.

There are many causes of why the students cannot master English listening skill. It because of lack of vocabulary, seldom listen to English script and conversations, never watching English movies and listen to English songs. But, one thing they never do is practice with native speakers.

In order to overcome those problems, it is better to look for good method in teaching listening. We can use some activities that can stimulate the students to improve their listening skill. The activities such as watching a film, listen to news report, and listen to English songs.

In conducting this research, the writer only focuses on songs as the English teaching media related to the listening skill. Listen to English songs is felt interesting. English songs are a great language package that bundles culture, vocabulary, listening, grammar and a host of other language skills in just a few rhymes. Songs can also provide a relaxed lesson on a hot boring day. It can also form the basis for many lessons. It can be used for a wide variety of English for foreign language learning and teaching activities (Futonge, 2005). Using songs in the classroom is a great way to live up listening activities and make the listening activities more effective.

Based on the issue above, the writer is interested in conducting the research on the topic at the students' listening abilities improvement through English songs at eighth year students of SMP Achmad Yani Puger.

Based on the background of the study above the research problem is formulated as follows: "How can English songs improve listening ability for the eighth year students of junior high school?"

In the line with the research problem, the objective of the research is to improve listening ability through English songs in eighth year of junior high school students.

In order to avoid a more complicated discussion, this research should be limited only on eighth year of SMP Achmad Yani Puger 2016-2017 Academic Year. Listening ability through the use of English songs that will be measured based on class activity. This research only use four English songs which slow and easy to understand. They are Every time by Britney Spears, Yesterday by The Beatles, Butterfly Fly Away by Miley Cyrus and The Best Day by Taylor Swift.

The terms that are necessary to be defined operationally are (1) Listening Ability (2) English Songs. According to Oxford Dictionaries (1995), listening or listen is to make an effort to hear somebody or something. And skill is the ability to do something well. Then, listening skill is the ability to make an effort to hear somebody or something. In this research, listening ability means the test result achieved by the students from an ability measurement of listening by using test. The test results are in form of scores.

A song is a usually short piece of music with words which are sung or a piece of music, usually employing a verbal text, composed for the voice, one intended for performance by a soloist. According to Hornby (1990: 1133), song is a piece of music with words that is sung. Song is also a great language package that bundles culture, vocabulary, listening, grammar and a host of other language skills in just a few rhymes. According to Oxford Dictionaries (1995), song is a piece of music with words that is sung. Song is a musical phrases uttered by some birds, whales, and insects, typically forming a recognizable and repeated sequence and used chiefly for territorial defense or for attracting mates. Songs in this research mean English songs with its English lyric. It has a function as media for teaching listening in order to help the students interpret meaning and understand the task of listening script.

It is expected that the results of the classroom action research will give some advantages to: (1) For English Teachers; The information of this research can be used as an input to develop the teaching of listening by using interesting technique or media to increase students' listening ability. Hopefully, the teachers can improve their methods in teaching English especially for listening skill. (2) For the Students; It is greatly expected that the results of the research will be useful for the students, especially in learning listening skill through experiencing a new learning model. The students are expected to maintain and improve listening comprehension skill by using cooperative learning as well as the active participation in the teaching and learning process in the classroom. (3) For Other Researcher; The results of the research can be used as a reference or a consideration for the future researchers who have similar problems in conducting a further research to improve the listening comprehension skill by applying different research design.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Listening skills are very important in everyday life. One must understand what people are saying and what is happening around them. In order for this to be done effectively, one must be an active listener. This is achieved when the listener is listening for meaning; when the listener checks if the statement has been heard and understood correctly. The goal of this is to improve mutual understanding.

Many people believe that listening skills are taught when in elementary school or during childhood. Truthfully, one can never really learn all the skills and apply them all the time. Many times people will be "listening" to someone talk but in their head he/she will be thinking about something else, or even be distracted by something that is going on around them. If two people are in an argument or debate, many times one person will be thinking about that he/she is going to say next instead of listening to the other person. In this case the listening might miss something and argue about something that isn't very relevant.

Having good listening skills may come in helpful in a variety of situations. For example, during class, while taking notes, during a job interview, while interviewing a person, during counseling, while having a serious conversation with a friend or loved one, or while on the job, especially in a journalistic setting. In groups, listening skills may help attain better information and research or even assist in reaching a compromise or conclusion. Being a good listener has its benefits. By having good listening skills one can avoid having misunderstanding, resolve conflicts, get people to open up, and build trust. There are four elements of good listening:

1. attention--the focused perception of both visual and verbal stimuli
2. hearing--the physiological act of 'opening the gates to your ears'
3. understanding--assigning meaning to the messages received
4. remembering--the storing of meaningful information

(Richard Nordquist tth, <October 17th 2012>)

In addition to the four elements, there are also four levels of listening: acknowledging, sympathizing, paraphrasing and empathizing. The four levels of listening range from passive to interactive when considered separately. However, the most effective listeners are able to project all four levels at the same time. That is, they demonstrate that they are paying attention and making an effort to understand and evaluate what it is they are hearing, and they complete the process by demonstrating through their responses their level of comprehension and interest in what the speaker is saying." (Marvin Gottlieb 2003, <October 17th 2012>. Some Genres of Listening Event

- a. Face-to-face: Conversation Obtaining and giving information Negotiation
- b. Distant, but two-way: Phone conversations taking a message
- c. External to listener: Announcements Instructions, Answer phone messages
- d. Listening for pleasure: Drama excerpts Film clips Jokes, Extended anecdotes Songs

- e. Informative: News headlines News items Documentaries Interviews Discussions Sports commentaries
- f. Instructional: English lessons English-medium lessons Lectures
- g. Persuasive: TV ads

Source: *John Field, Listening in the Language Classroom*, (2009:63)

In music, a song is a composition for voice or voices, performed by singing. A choral or vocal song may be accompanied by musical instruments, or it may be unaccompanied, as in the case of a cappella songs. The lyrics (words) of songs are typically of a poetic, rhyming nature, though they may be religious verses or free prose. Its basic objective is to entertain the listener.

Oxford English Dictionary (OED) defines the word to mean "that which is sung" or "a musical composition suggestive of song." The OED also defines the word to mean "a poem" or "the musical phrases uttered by some birds, whales, and insects, typically forming a recognizable and repeated sequence and used chiefly for territorial defense or for attracting mates.

A song may be for a solo singer, a duet, trio, or larger ensemble involving more voices. Songs with more than one voice to a part are considered choral works. Songs can be broadly divided into many different forms, depending on the criteria used. One division is between "art songs", "pop songs", and "folk songs". Art songs are songs created for performance in their own right, usually with piano accompaniment, although they can also have other types of accompaniment such as an orchestra or string quartet, and are always notated. Generally they have an identified author and composer and require voice training for acceptable performance. Art songs may be more formally complicated than popular or folk songs. The lyrics are often written by a poet or lyricist and the music separately by a poet or lyricist and the music separately by a composer. Art songs may be more formally complicated than popular or folk songs. They are often important to national identity. Folk songs are songs of often anonymous origin (or are public domain) that are transmitted orally. They are frequently a major aspect of national or cultural identity. Art songs often approach the status of folk songs when people forget who the author was. Folk songs are also frequently transmitted non-orally (that is, as sheet music), especially in the modern era. Folk songs exist in almost every culture. Modern popular songs are typically distributed as recordings and are played on the radio, though all other mass media that have audio capabilities are involved. Their relative popularity is inferred from commercially significant sales of recordings, ratings of stations and networks that play them, and ticket sales for concerts by the recording artists. A popular song can become a modern folk song when members of the public who learn to sing it from the recorded version teach their version to others. Songs that are popular may be called pop songs for short, although pop songs or pop music may instead be considered a more commercially popular genre of popular music as a whole.

Song is a piece of music with words that is sung. Song in this research is English song. It is a song with English lyric or poetry. It can be used as a media for

teaching listening to the students. By using an English song, the students would not feel bored in the class.

Most of children enjoy listening to song and this is one reason why they have become an important part of teaching English for young learners. "Apart of these effective reasons for using songs, though, a number of cognitive and linguistic benefits have also been identified in support of their use." (Schoepp, in Zaenul Fattah, 2001:6). (Orlova, in Zaenul Fattah, 2010:6) indentified some additional benefits of songs in language learning; "First they can encourage learners to use English, in a non-English environment, so finally song can stimulate a positive emotions attitude to language learning".

According to Schoepp, (in Zaenul Fattah, 2001:6), in other "Words songs can help the development of automatically the ability to language naturally and without unconscious effort". "Through songs children can also repeat words and phrases spontaneously even if they do not initially understand them". (Slattery & Willis, 2001:6)

Based on widely discussion above song in language teaching can stimulate the students in positive emotional attitude to the language learning, and use song for language learning is easy to apply in class, as especially in Indonesia. Most of students in Indonesia state that English is a foreign language.

Songs can help young learners improve their listening skills and pronunciation, therefore potentially helping them to improve their speaking skills (Murphey, in Millington, 1992:134). Songs can also be useful tools in the learning of vocabulary, sentence structures, and sentence patterns, not to mention their reflectivity of mother tongue culture (Murphey, in Millington, 1992:134). Perhaps the greatest benefit to using songs in the classroom is that they can be fun. Pleasure is an important part of learning language, and song can add interest to the classroom routine and potentially improve students' motivation. Most children enjoy singing and usually respond well to using songs in the classroom. Songs can help increase student interest and motivate them to learn the target language. Students often think of songs as entertainment rather than study and therefore find learning English through songs fun and enjoyable.

Songs can also help to improve listening skills because they provide students with practice listening to different forms of intonation and rhythm. Murphey (in Millington, 1992:135) believes that music has the power to engrave itself into our brains, stating that "songs work on our short- and long-term memory" and is therefore adequate tools for using in the language classroom.

There are some reasons for choosing song in language teaching, (Natalia Orlova, in Zaenul Fattah, 2010:7):

1. Song can effectively contribute to the aesthetic development of prospective teacher.
2. Songs can be used as incentive for speaking in class.
3. Song can motivate a positive emotional approach to language learning.
4. Song can introduce students to the music and culture and particular interest to them.

Based on Leah Williams (2010:7) there are many effects to introducing music in English lessons: Fun, Better Retention, Teaching Culture, and Motivation. Songs allow learners to repeat and to memorize chunks of language. This contributes to vocabulary learning too. "Songs can thus be an effective method of helping children learn lexical patterns that will be stored in their minds and can be naturally recalled during oral communication". (Murphey, 2010:7). In other words, song can help the development of automaticity ability to use language naturally and without conscious effort. Finally, it can be said that songs give large opportunities to learn language they are rhythmical, universal, playful, memorable, motivating, and reinforcing to learn language, moreover, when the children are performing songs in choral form, they do enjoy them.

The curriculum target in this research means the competency standards and the basic competence from English curriculum which has been established by the education government. The competency standard for listening skill is; Understanding the functional meaning of the spoken text and simple short monologue form of narrative and recount to interact with their surroundings.

The basic competences are; Responding to the meaning contained in simple short functional spoken text accurately, fluently, and thankful to interact with their surroundings, and Responding to the meaning contained in simple short monologue accurately, fluently, and thankful to interact with their surroundings in the form of a narrative and recount.

RESEARCH METHOD

The method used in this research was classroom action research (CAR) focused on improving listening ability using English songs. The subject of the research consisted of 20 students of the eighth grade of SMP Achmad Yani Puger in the academic year 2016-2017.

In this research, the researcher will carry out the actions in the form of cycles that consists of four stages of activities they are planning, acting, observing and reflecting, and analysis of the action. This classroom action research will be conducted in two cycles which are taken into account only after knowing the result of the evaluation and reflection.

This research used instruments, such as; test, field note for observation and interview. The test was listening test. The students were asked to listen to the song and fill the spaces in the lyric. Field note was used to observe the students' enthusiasm, seriousness, and motivation. The field note was served in table form. The goal of the Interview was to know the students' response.

The success criteria were decided by the English teacher which was based on the students' listening score, students' positive attitude among the teaching learning process, and the students' response. The criteria of success are that $\geq 70\%$ of students achieved the minimum mean score requirement that is 70 and all of the students were facilitated with the song and the lyric in their learning process. The students' listening test result was analyzed manually based on the scoring rubric. Firstly, the researcher checked the words in the spaces of the

students' result listening test. Next, the value of each aspect was calculated. Then, the collection data was statistically analyzed using the following formula:

$$E = \frac{n}{N} \times 100 \%$$

E : The percentage of students who got score ≥ 70
 n : The total number of the students who get the targeted score of ≥ 70
 N : The total number of the students.

(Adapted from Ali, 1987:187)

The following is the formula to find mean score:

$$\text{The mean score} = \frac{\text{the total of } x}{N}$$

x : The score of the student
 N : The total number of the students.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The action in Cycle 1 was conducted in three meetings including the listening test. The first meeting was conducted on 17th September 2013, the second one was conducted on 19th September 2016, and the test was conducted on 24th September 2016. It was done by the researcher. It was done in four stages that were planning of the action, implementation of the action, observation and evaluation, and reflection.

The result of the listening test showed that the percentage of the students who got score ≥ 70 in cycle 1 was 45% and the mean score of the students was 58, 85. Meanwhile, the result of the observation in cycle 1 had not been satisfied. It showed that the result had not been reached the success criteria yet.

The action in cycle 2 was conducted in three meetings including the listening test. The first meeting was conducted on 1st October 2016, the second meeting was conducted on 3rd October 2016, and the test was conducted on 8th October 2016.

The result of observation in cycle 2 had been satisfied that the students were facilitated with English songs as media in teaching and learning process of listening. Meanwhile, the result of the students' listening test improved from the previous cycle. It showed that the result could achieve 80% or 16 of 20 students got score ≥ 70 and the mean score was 81, 35. This result showed that the research had reached the success criteria.

Based on the reflection done in each cycle, it showed that the students' listening achievement had improved from cycle 1 to cycle 2. In the first cycle the

percentage of students who got score ≥ 70 increased from 45% to 80% in the second cycle, and the mean score of the students increased from 58, 85 to 81, 35. It proved that English songs work really effective as a media in teaching listening. According to Murphey, in Millington, (1992:134) Songs can help young learners improve their listening skills and pronunciation, therefore potentially helping them to improve their speaking skills. The students' improvement achievement could be seen in the table 4. and chart 4.

Table 4. The Improvement of The Students' Mean Score

Cycles	Preliminary Test	Cycle 1 Test	Cycle 2 Test
Score	30, 11	58, 85	81, 35

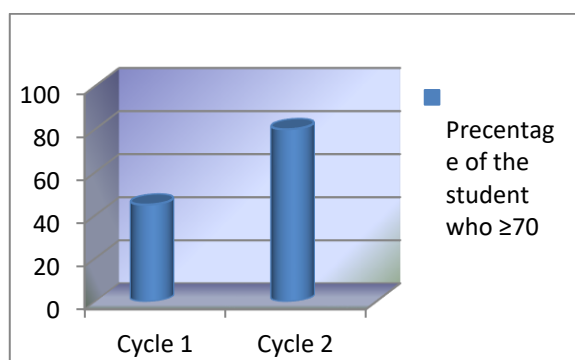


Chart 4. The Improvement of the Students' Listening in Cycle 1 to Cycle 2

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

a. Conclusion

Based on the result of the data analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that teaching listening by using English songs can improve the eighth year students' listening ability at SMP Achmad Yani Puger in the academic year 2016- 2017. The improvement of the students' listening could be seen from the percentage of the students who got score ≥ 70 increased from 45% in the first cycle to 80% in the second cycle. It was higher than the percentage required in this research that was 70%. Moreover, the mean score of the students also increased from 58, 85 in the first cycle to 81, 35 in the second cycle. Therefore, the success criteria required of this research had been fulfilled. In other words, the result had achieved the criteria of success targeted in this research.

Furthermore, the use of English songs as media in teaching can also facilitate the students learning process of listening activities of the eighth year students at SMP Achmad Yani Puger in the academic year 2016-2017. It can be seen that teaching listening through English songs can help the students increase their ability in listening and pronunciation.

b. Suggestion

After knowing the result of the use of English songs as media in teaching listening could improve the students' listening ability, there are some suggestions intended for the following people:

c. The English Teacher

The English teacher are suggested to use English songs as alternative in teaching listening to improve the students' listening skills and develop the quality of teaching listening and make the process of teaching and learning run more interesting.

d. The Students

The students should be learn more active in listening activities and suggested to listen to English song as much with the lyric. So, their ears could have become accustomed to words or sentences spoken in English and they could improve their pronunciation and potentially helping them improve their speaking skill.

e. Future Researchers

The future researchers who have similar problem in teaching listening are encourage using this research result as information and reference for a further research in similar area of study.

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