

## THE USE OF SONGS IN TEACHING STUDENTS' LISTENING ABILITY

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**Abstract:** This study was aimed at first investigating whether or not the use of songs significantly improves students' listening skill. Second, the difficulties faced by the students in listening comprehension were also investigated. This quasi experimental research involved two classes of students of a public junior high school in Sumedang. The data were collected through pretest, posttest and questionnaires. In analyzing the collected data, quantitative research method was employed. Furthermore, the data taken from questionnaires were also investigated to find out the difficulties faced by the students listening comprehensions through songs. The study found that the use of songs likely improves students' listening comprehension skills. It was evidenced by tobt (6.542) that greater than tcrit. As the result of the study, the null hypothesis of this research was rejected; the use of songs is likely to improve the students' listening comprehension skill.

**Keywords:** *Songs, Listening Comprehension, Independent Sample t-test, Paired Sample t-test*

### Introduction

Listening is considered as an important ability that has to be mastered. How well someone listens has a major impact on the quality of their relationship with others. Listening ability is also important to be mastered for its benefit in building a good communication. In building a good communication with others, individuals have to understand the meaning of the messages conveyed by their partners when they have a conversation. In comprehending the message conveyed by others, listening ability is needed. Kirwan (2009) quotes Laurent's statement (2000) that 'It is impossible not to communicate'. Without listening ability, communication is impossible. This statement is in line with Burnard's (1992) cited in Kirwan (2009), he states that

listening and attending are cited as the two most important elements of communication.

Listening activities also required in academic context, where the students have to deal with listening comprehension in the class. In EFL class, the students face difficulties in communication. These problems are not only because of their ability, but also from the teachers. It is essential for language teachers to help their students become effective listeners (Schwart, 1998). Snell (1999) states that the common problem for EFL teachers in traditional classroom is dealing with passive class where the students being unresponsive and avoid interaction with the teacher. To overcome this problem, developing such an interactive way to teach listening is recommended. Considering learning styles also necessary when creating lessons, presenting material, and eliciting effective listening (Beall et al, 2008). Particular listening strategy is needed not only to overcome the students' difficulties, but also to improve their listening abilities. The importance of finding listening strategy also suggested by Wallace et al. (2004), he states that experience with a variety of reading, writing and speaking activities in school can help learners acquire the skills they need to be successful.

Murphey (1990) suggests that many English teachers have long recognized that song and music work well in language classes. The statement shows that teachers can use song as a media to overcome the students difficulties in listening and improve their listening ability. Creative teacher can also use songs to teach English through songs since they provide a break from the textbook and work book. It is new and interesting for them. Therefore, with this situation, they will be motivated especially in learning listening.

Therefore, the present study is aimed to investigate the use of songs in teaching students' listening ability. Furthermore, the researcher expects that this research will give contribution to the practice of listening teaching and learning in the future.

## Methodology

- Sample

For the purpose of the study and in an attempt to answer the hypothesis, 60 students of second grade in a Junior High School in Sumedang were selected as the sample of the research. Two classes were chosen for this research by applying purposive sampling. Each class consist of thirty students. Furthermore, both classes were tested by pre and posttest. During the experiment, the experimental group was given several treatments in period of six meetings.

- Instrumentation

The following instruments were used in this study:

1. TOEFL based listening test: this test was used to evaluate the students' mastery in listening comprehension. It comprised 50 question items which given to the students as pilot test. The validity of the instrument is valid in level of  $r = 0.790$  which has minimum value 0.393. As an addition for this research, the reliability of the test was also analyzed. The valid and reliable items then used as pre-test and post-test and become the next research instrument.
2. A researcher-made questionnaire to seek the difficulties faced by the students in listening comprehension using songs as the media. It included 8 questions concerning on the students' difficulties in the teaching and learning process using songs.

- Design and Procedure

This research was conducted based on quantitative method. The research used quasi experimental design. The sample is divided into two classes; experimental class and control class. Both classes were tested by pre-test and post-test. Before giving the post-test, songs were given to the experimental class as the treatment. Besides, the control class was taught by conventional methods; the researcher taught listening by

explaining through TOEFL based test and speaking in front of the. Afterwards, the data which are taken from experimental class and control class were compared and analyzed to find out its significance. The data were analyzed by using t test formula to determine the means score of two classes so that the effectiveness of the use of songs could be sought.

- Data Analysis

The data were analyzed based on the following analysis:

The validity and reliability of the instrument was firstly drawn. Based on the calculation, the instrument is valid with  $r = 0.790$ . Furthermore the reliability of the instruments was also analyzed, from the calculation, it is shown that the reliability value  $r_{11}$  is 0.304. From the calculation, it can be concluded that the instrument is reliable since the minimum value of the reliability of the instrument is 0.257

After knowing the validity and reliability of the instrument, then paired sample t-test formula was conducted to know the effect of the use of songs. Before doing so, it is necessary to compute the pre-test score of each group which consisted of normality distribution test, variance homogeneity test and t-test computation.

Table 1

*The Result of t test Computation of Control and Experimental Group on Posttest*

**Independent Samples Test**

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
								Lower	Upper	
Posttest	4.627	.036	6.542	58	.000	16.800	2.568	11.660	21.940	
			6.542	48.760	.000	16.800	2.568	11.639	21.961	

Based on the critical value of t distribution at 0.05 level,  $t_{crit}$  for  $df = 58$  is 2.021. It means that  $t_{obt}$  is higher  $t_{crit}$  ( $6.542 > 2.021$ ), it implies that the null hypothesis is rejected; the two samples are from the same population and there is a significant difference between the two groups before and after receiving treatment. This result implies that the experimental and control group are different in terms of their ability after treatment.

### **Data Presentation and Discussion**

Considering the obtained value of t ( $t_{obt} = 6.542$ ) is higher than the value of t critical ( $t_{crit} = 2.021$ ). Thus the null hypothesis was rejected and the use of songs as the media of teaching listening is likely improve the students' listening ability. This finding supports the research hypothesis that the use of song is effective in improving students' listening ability. Hence, it can be concluded that result the pre-test and post-test scores of experimental are different and there was an improvement in the students' listening ability.

However, to answer the second question of the research about the difficulties faced by the students towards songs as the media in teaching listening comprehension, the data taken from questionnaire were analyzed. It can be seen that the students thought that listening comprehension is difficult. From 33 students, most of the students agreed that listening comprehension is difficult. How the teacher explains the material is not a problem for the students. It was evidenced by the amount of students who agreed with that statement. Besides, the real situation in the classroom observed by the researcher had proven the statement that the teacher's way of teaching is not become the difficulties for the students. Since the learning activities held in the classroom, the difficulties may be faced by students in listening comprehension using song is dealing with noisy classroom. It shows that the noisy classroom become one of the difficulties faced by the students. In this research, the treatment given to the experimental group takes place in an ordinary class. As the result, the noises from other classes disrupt the classroom activities. Finding a way to

overcome this situation also becomes challenge for the teacher when using song for the media of teaching listening. The use of language laboratory would be necessary when the teacher wants to use songs as the media of teaching listening.

The data gained from the questionnaire also showed that fast paced songs become another difficulties faced by the students. The teacher's creativity in developing the material, in this case song, is needed. The teacher may follow the principles criteria when they choose song as media of teaching listening. As it stated by Coromina, (2000) and Lynch, (2005), songs must have clear and understandable lyric. The teacher is suggested to choose songs which are understandable; not too fast in term of rhythm so that the students could follow the material based on what they hear from the songs. Furthermore, the different accent of the singer became one of the difficulties faced by the students in listening comprehension using songs.

For that reason, it is important for the teacher to select appropriate songs which can help the students learn the language and gain learning objectives. To overcome this problem, the teacher should find the song which is not too fast and understandable. The finding was in line with Coromina, (2000) and Lynch (2005), who stated that songs must have clear and understandable lyric and they suggested avoiding those kind of song in teaching listening ability through song. The researcher also believed that replaying the songs could overcome this difficulty.

## **Conclusion**

The media of teaching and learning process, in this case songs, not only help the teacher to teach listening but also provide and interesting way for the students to achieve the learning goals. The media has contributed a lot in making the students understand well the delivered lesson. The content of the songs may become one of influential factors which may determine the improvement of the students' listening ability. The use of songs also should consider students' need so that it will help students to learn and achieve the learning objective. The teacher ability in selecting teaching material will also influence the use of songs in improving the students' listening ability.

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