

# THE USE OF ENGLISH SONGS TO IMPROVE THE LISTENING COMPREHENSION OF EIGHTH-GRADE STUDENTS AT SMP NEGERI 2 BABAHRIT

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## ABSTRACT

### Keywords:

Listening  
comprehension, song,  
language skill

English is the world's international language of communication. In some countries, English is even a common language or mother tongue. This study aims to determine the effectiveness of using English songs in improving students' listening skills. The population of this study is VIII-grade students at SMP Negeri 2 Babahrot. The study involved two groups: experimental group that learned by using songs and control group that used traditional teaching methods. The experimental group, consisting of 23 students, took a pretest and a posttest to measure the impact of the learning intervention using songs on their listening ability. The comparison between the two groups showed that the experimental group showed greater improvements in English language skills compared to the control group, with a mean pretest score of 60.70 and posttest score of 74.43. The use of English songs significantly improved the listening skills of the grade VIII students. These results support the hypothesis that using songs into English language learning, especially in improving listening skills, can improve students' listen skills. This suggests that songs can be an effective strategy for improving students and used as additional materials to increase students' motivation and engagement in learning.

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## INTRODUCTION

English is the world's international language of communication. In some countries, English is even a common language or mother tongue. Children learn English as a foreign language at school and some use it as a common language of communication while traveling, on business trips, or studying in different countries (Ratminingsih, 2021). English is a language used all over the world as a global language of communication. According to (Fahratyta Widyaishwar, 2014) justified by (Alwasilah, 2001) English should be part of the curriculum because it is a language that supports the development of the Indonesian generation. Because it is obvious that if not, people will not be able to interact fully, requiring a good knowledge of international languages. By learning English, students can communicate with people from different countries and cultures. Many institutions now offer online resources for learning English, so anyone can learn from anywhere (Elmayantie, 2018; Retnomurti et al., 2023).

Comprehension is the process by which readers construct meaning through interaction with the text, combining prior knowledge and experience with the information contained in the text. In addition, listening comprehension includes various processes that contribute to the comprehension and understanding of spoken language. These include recognizing the sounds of an utterance, understanding the meaning of each word, and understanding the syntax of the sentences within it. Listening Comprehension is a standardized test that measures your ability to understand the English language. Usually, you have to respond in English accordingly (Jufri et al., 2023; Sanulita et al., 2024).

Listening comprehension is the ability to understand and comprehend the language heard. It is an important part of learning a foreign language as it allows you to interact with others in everyday situations (Raniadi & Umar, 2023). In today's globalized world, the ability to speak and understand a foreign language is essential in order to speak and work with people of different cultural backgrounds. This makes communication more effective and reduces the risk of misunderstandings (Segarwati & Rakhmaniar, 2020).

There are several ways to improve your listening skills. One of them is to listen to English songs often. English songs can be found in various applications that are mostly related to music, such as YouTube, Spotify, YouTube Music.

A song is a sung text. A song comes from a written work that is performed with musical accompaniment. Anyone who listens to this song can feel sad, happy, excited, and other emotions because the effect of this song is so touching. In addition, songs can provide linguistic resources that are unconsciously stored in the brain's memory. This situation makes the learning process less rigid and conditioned, which in some cases students dislike. Considering these advantages, songs have an advantage in teaching pronunciation and the results are considered more effective. Song is a work of art related to sound and language, such as sound art which includes melody and timbre. From these opinions, it can be concluded that song lyrics are the poet's inner expression about something he sees, hears, or experiences (Pitaloka & Sundari, 2020; Suharyanto, 2017).

Song lyrics have similarities with poetry, but song lyrics also have their own characteristics, because the expression of ideas through song lyrics is reinforced by melodies and types of rhythms that match the lyrics of the song and the color of the singer's voice. Not only are melodies and vocal sounds important, but song lyrics are also full of meaning (Riswandari & Purnomo, 2013; Wantika et al., 2019). Like song lyrics in general, some songs aim to understand the culture of democracy. According to Adriansyah (2017), these songs have the same form and character as mass communication, where in songs communication takes place one-way from the musician to the listener, then to the sender, in this case also in music which involves many subjects in the same institution in the process of production to song distribution (LISNAWAN, 2018; Mahfudhoh, 2022). After the song is distributed, the sender or musician no longer recognizes the communicants or listeners who represent various layers of society. By listening to English songs, people will get used to hearing them so that they can sharpen their hearing. This shows that songs can be a way to improve listening skills.

Therefore, SMP Negeri 2 Babahrot is one of the public schools located at Jl. Blangpidie-Meulaboh KM 36, Ie Mirah, Kec. Babahrot, Kab. Aceh Barat Daya. This school is one of the schools that has been established since 1999. Currently, SMP Negeri 2 Babahrot uses the government learning curriculum guide, namely SMP 2013. The quality of learning in this school is very good, especially in the social sciences and also in the field of sports. This school has an English subject which is taught by three English teachers who teach in their respective classes. The researcher chose English songs as learning media because with this teaching media can create a new learning atmosphere for students at SMP Negeri 2 Babahrot. With the best accreditation, the researcher believes that by using English songs and interesting learning students can improve students' auditory comprehension.

Some researchers have shown the effectiveness of English songs, one of which is Indra Purnawan Panjaitan (2018) entitled "Improving Students' Listening Skill By Using English Song". The results of this study show that students' listening skills have improved. For this, they got an average score of 43.75 and 75.8 after the test. This means that there is a big significant difference between the pretest and posttest. In addition, the treatment in two stages shows that students can improve their motivation. They were very active during the song listening learning session. This shows that students' listening skills improved in each test and cycle, it means that the use of songs can improve students' listening skills.

The last previous research was conducted by Dadang Solihat and Prita Lusiana Utami (2014) entitled "Improving Students' Listening Skill By Using English Song". The results of this study showed that students improved their listening skills during both tasks. Two groups were examined in this study. In this study, students' listening skills were improved by using English songs according to their scores. It indicates that English songs is effective in listening skill.

This research focuses on the effect of listening to English songs in improving listening skills, which is very important in listening lessons. Listening is very important because it is one of the skills that must be mastered to learn English. If one masters listening, then one will become fluent in English. Through this research, people who want to learn English, especially those who want to improve their listening skills by listening to songs. English songs can be a good way to learn listening skills because people generally like to listen to songs. According to Listyaningsih (2017), one way to improve listening skills is to listen to English songs. Listening to English songs can increase students' knowledge (Listyaningsih, 2017). There are so many benefits of songs that can help students improve their English skills. The purpose of this study is to determine the effectiveness of using songs in improving students' English language skills. Based on the results of this study, it is expected that there are benefits that show that learning English through songs will be better.

Therefore, based on what has been described above, the researcher intends to conduct a study entitled: "The Use of English Songs to Improve the Listening Comprehension of eighth-grade Students at SMP Negeri 2 Babahrot.

This study aims to explore the effectiveness of the use of United Kingdom songs in improving the listening comprehension ability of eighth grade students at SMP Negeri 2 Babahrot. By focusing on relevant and fun materials, this research is expected to find more interesting and effective teaching methods, so as to be able to improve students' listening skills in United Kingdom. The benefits of this research include two main aspects, namely practical and academic benefits. Practically, this research is expected to provide alternative learning methods that are more fun and effective for teachers in teaching United Kingdom listening skills, especially for secondary students. Academically, the results of this research are expected to enrich the literature on United Kingdom language teaching, especially in the development of listening skills through song media, as well as contribute to the development of a more creative and contextual United Kingdom language education curriculum.

## **METHOD**

This research uses quantitative methods. this research design is experimental. According to Sugiyono (2019), experimental research methods are research methods carried out by means of experiments, quantitative methods are used to look for the effect of independent variables (treatment) on the dependent variable (outcome) under controlled conditions. This study aims to determine the use of English songs in improving listening comprehension skills and to determine student responses to English songs in improving listening comprehension skills. In this study, researcher chose two classes to conduct experiments where English songs were use to improve students' comprehension skills and to find out how students' listening skills were related to English songs.

The population of this study is VIII-grade students at SMPN 2 Babahrot. In this study, the class is divides into two groups the experimental class and the control class. The sample of this study is class VIII 1 totaling 23 students as the experimental group and class VIII2 with 24 students as the control group. Therefore, the sample taken is divid into two classes consisting of 47 students.

To get the data need, research instruments play an important role in collecting data in a study. The instrument in this study is a listening test. To collect data, this study uses pretest, treatment, posttest, and interview. The first step taken is to divide the test into two categories, namely; pre-test and post-test for the experimental group and control group. the pre-test is given before students are given treatment. This aims to find out what students' listening skills are like before using the song technique. the second step is treatment, which is the treatment given to the respondent group as the experimental group. The experimental group will be given treatment using English songs, while the control group, will not while the control group, will not be given treatment using English songs. the post-test is given after the treatment is given. the last is an interview, to find out the students' answers about their experiences in using English songs to learn English. the researcher uses two tests, namely the pre -test and post-test. the form of listening pretest and post-test is to write the missing words in the song text. This study uses several media in listening learning for example: laptop, sounds system, and English song. When collecting data, data is taken using photo.

Data analysis is an important part of research because researchers can draw research conclusions using this method. In this study, the development of students' listening skills by using English songs is seeing from the test results. To find out the answers to research questions. The data calculate using paired t-test in SPSS Version 29.0.2.0 (20) to find out whether the use of English songs can improve students' listening skills which is uses to determine whether the means before and after the test are significant or insignificant.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Based on the research that had conducted, the results of statistical analysis were obtained to assess the effectiveness of using English songs in improving the listening skills of class VIII students at SMP Negeri 2 Babahrot. This study involved two groups; experimental group that used songs as learning media and the control group that used conventional teaching methods. The results were analyzed based on the pretest and posttest data conducted on both groups. To assess the significant difference between pretest and posttest scores, paired t-test was used. This analysis aims to evaluate whether there is a significant improvement in students' listening ability after the learning intervention using songs. To determine whether the pre-test and post-test data in the table are normally distributed, researchers need to conduct a normality test first. This test was carried out to ensure whether the pre-test and post-test data were normally distributed. This is important for determining the appropriate statistical test.

**Table 1. Tests of Normality Experimental Group**

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pretest	.113	23	.200*	.953	23	.331
Posttest	.119	23	.200*	.981	23	.915

\*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Based on this table the pretest data were considered normally distributed based on both Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests, because both p-values were greater than 0.05. Posttest data has different results depending on the test used. Kolmogorov-Smirnov showed abnormal data ( $p < 0.05$ ), while Shapiro-Wilk showed normal data ( $p > 0.05$ ). Because Shapiro-Wilk is more sensitive for small sample sizes (under 50), these results are more reliable for this data. Therefore, these results mean that the experimental group could be test using paired t-test sample.

**Table 2. Tests of Normality Control Group**

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pretest	.125	24	.200*	.928	24	.090
Posttest	.186	24	.031	.933	24	.116

\*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

The normality test on control group shows that the pretest data is normally distributed because the Sig. (p-value) for both tests is greater than 0.05, the Sig. (p-value) that shows in the table for Pretest score is 0.200 on the Komogorov-Smirnov test, meanwhile the posttest score is 0.03. The results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test showed that the posttest data was not normally distributed because of the score is less than 0.05. However, the results of the Shapiro-Wilk test showed that the data was normally distributed for both pretest and posttest, because the score is higher than 0.05 which are 0.09 for pretest and 0.116 for posttest. In this study, the Shapiro-Wilk test is generally considered more reliable for small sample sizes and it indicates that the data is approximately normally distributed. This result means that control group also could be test by paired t-test sample.

**Table 3. Paired Samples Statistics Experimental Group**

Pair 1		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
		Pretest	60.6957	23	10.66189
	Posttest	74.4348	23	8.11187	1.69144

The experimental group, consisting of 23 students, took a pretest and a posttest to measure the impact of using English songs on their listening skills. The results of the paired t-test analysis are summarized in Table 1, which shows that the pretest score was 60.70, while the mean posttest score increased to 74.43. This indicates a mean difference of 13.74 points, a significant improvement in listening proficiency after the intervention. Std. Deviation (Standard Deviation) for the pretest as shown on table is 10.66 and the Posttest is 8.11. The lower score Standard Deviation on the posttest indicates that the score distribution is more centered around the mean after the intervention, it indicating smaller variations and more consistent results.

**Table 4. Paired Samples Statistics Control Group**

Pair 1		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
		Pretest	59.3333	24	9.86283
	Posttest	68.7083	24	4.73175	.96587

The control group, consisting of 24 students, followed the conventional teaching method without using songs. In this part, researcher only used a normal conversation dialogue. Their results are presented in Table 2. It was found that the average pretest score was 59.33, which increased to 68.71 in the posttest. This shows the mean difference of control group is 9.38 points. Table 3 and Table 4 show paired sample statistics for the experimental group and control group in this study. These tables present the means, standard deviations, and standard errors of the mean for pretest and posttest scores. The comparison between the two groups showed that the experimental group, which received the intervention with songs, showed greater improvements in English language skills compared to the control group.

**Table 5. Paired Samples Test Experimental Group**

		Paired Differences					Significance			
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	One-Sided p	Two-Sided p
					Lower	Upper				
Pair 1	Pretest - Posttest	-13.73913	14.87285	3.10120	-20.17063	-7.30763	-4.430	22	<.001	<.001

Table 5 shows the paired samples test for experimental group. In this table the average difference between the pretest and posttest scores in experimental class is -13.74. This negative value indicates an increase in scores from pretest to posttest because the posttest scores are higher. The 95% confidence interval for this difference is between -20.17 and -7.307. Statistically, this shows that there is a significant decrease in scores from pretest to posttest. The negative t-statistic value (-4.430) indicates that the difference between the pretest and posttest is statistically significant. The two-sided p-value is less than 0.001, indicating that the increase in posttest scores compared to pretest scores is statistically significant. This means we can reject the null hypothesis that there is no difference in scores with high confidence.

**Table 6. Paired Samples Test Control Group**

		Paired Differences					Significance			
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	One-Sided p	Two-Sided p
					Lower	Upper				
Pair 1	Pretest - Posttest	-9.37500	9.11192	1.85996	-13.22263	-5.52737	-5.040	23	<.001	<.001

This shows that the average difference between the pretest and posttest scores is -9.375. The 95% confidence interval for this difference is between -13.22 and -5.52. Statistically, this also shows that there is a significant decrease in scores from pretest to posttest in control group. The negative t-statistic value -5.040 indicates the difference between the pretest and posttest is very statistically significant. The low significance value (p-value) (<0.001) indicates that the possibility of this difference occurring by chance is very small.

#### *Analysis of the Experimental Group*

In the experimental group researcher use an English song as the learning media. The use of English songs significantly improves students' listening abilities, the experimental group showed a significant increase in mean scores from pretest to posttest, with a mean pretest score of 60.70 and a posttest score of 74.43. Before the intervention, the average pretest score was 60.70 with a standard deviation of 10.66, while after the intervention, the average posttest score increased to 74.43 with a standard deviation of 8.11. This indicates an increase in the average score of 13.73 points after the intervention, which is statistically significant with the relevant t-statistic value not provided. The songs used in the lesson provided an interesting and various listening experience, which helped students understand the context and English vocabulary better.

#### *Control Group Analysis*

In the control group, the researcher conducted a more conventional method of learning by using the audio dialogues of two people or more. The researcher asked students to listen to the dialogues and answer all the test based on the dialogues. The control group also showed a significant increase from an average pretest score of 59.33 to 68.71 on the posttest, with an average increase of 9.38 points. The lower standard deviation in the posttest score is 4.73, it indicates that conventional teaching methods also provide more consistent results in improving students' listening abilities.

#### *Comparison and Interpretation*

Both groups showed significant improvement in listening skills. However, the experimental group that used English songs as part of the learning process showed more consistent improvement compared to the control group. These results support the hypothesis that using songs into English language learning, especially in improving listening skills, can improve students' listening abilities. The use of songs as a learning tool is proven to be effective in improving students' listening skills. The greater improvement and higher consistency suggest that the songs used can help students understand and internalize vocabulary and language structures better, students also feel motivated and enthusiast on learning English. Meanwhile, conventional methods are also effective but may not have as much impact as the use of songs in improving students' listening skills.

*The Use of English Songs to Improve the Listening Comprehension of Eighth-Grade Students At SMP Negeri 2 Babahrot*

This study found that the use of English songs significantly improved the listening skills of grade VIII students at SMP Negeri 2 Babahrot. The use of songs in listening learning is one of the strategies in improving students' listening skills, songs can make lessons feel more fun (Yuliarini, 2022). The experimental group showed a greater increase in posttest scores compared to the control group, that can be seen on the increasing of the average posttest score in experimental group by 13.73 points, meanwhile the control group is only 9.38 points. These results support the hypothesis that the use of songs as a learning tool can improve students' listening skills. The improvement in listening skills was due to the interactive and engaging nature of the use of songs, which assisted students in associating words and phrases with a more real and meaningful context. This finding is consistent with a study by Smith (2018) which showed that audio-visual media can improve language skills. The significant increase in the experimental group shows that this approach is effective compared to conventional methods.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study found that the use of English songs significantly improved the listening skills of the grade VIII students in SMP Negeri 2 Babahrot. The experimental group who learned by using songs showed more consistent and significant improvement compared to the control group who used traditional teaching methods. It can be seen on the increasing of the average posttest score in experimental group which are 13.73 points and the control group are 9.38 points. This suggests that songs can be an effective strategy for improving students' listening skills and used as additional materials to increase students' motivation and engagement in learning. This learning with song method can provide an interesting and effective alternative for English language learning in schools.

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