

## THE USE OF SONG TO INCREASE STUDENTS' INTEREST IN LISTENING CLASS

Yusuf Yuliyanto  
yusufyuliyanto901@gmail.com  
Tidar University  
Indonesia

### Abstract

There are a lot of factors that influence student's interest in listening class. One of them is the use of the song during the listening class. This study's goal is to explain whether or not the use of song in listening class is able to increase students' interest. The participants of the study are the third semester students of the English Department at Tidar University. The result of study indicates that the use of song in listening class will make students more likely for having high interest in listening class

**Keywords:** song, student's interest, listening class

### Introduction

The idea of students' interest during the learning process is important because it will determine the ambience and also the result of a learning process, moreover, in listening class that be considered to be one of the challenging classes for most of the students. There are a lot of factors that influence student's interest in listening class. One of them is the use of the song during the listening class. Shen (2009) defines song as a combination of music and lyrics that possesses many intrinsic benefits, for example a kaleidoscope of culture, expressiveness, reciting ability and therapeutic functions, which render it an invaluable source for language teaching (p. 88). Harmer (2009, pp. 319) argues, if the music is "a powerful stimulus" for language learning. **He classifies songs as one of the tools for teaching listening and indicates that songs are versatile techniques, as they equip the teacher to present the words graphically (printed song lyrics), verbally (listening to the song) and contextually (song lyrics) at the same time.**

Concerning the impact of songs and music to teach English in the classroom, several studies indicate the significant impact of using songs on creating the learning experience more effective and enjoyable. For instance, Caicedo and Lojano (2013) conclude that the use of songs stimulates the students' interest to learn and encourages them to engage more during the learning process because these motivating activities increase the students' confidence, learning abilities and skills. Their study reveals an improvement on the students' pronunciation and even vocabulary learning.

In another study, Oanh (2011) investigates the use of English songs as an extracurricular activity in teaching listening skill to EFL learners of Vietnam. Qualitative and quantitative methods are used in this study through survey questionnaires, interview, and observation. The collected data helped the researcher to find the teachers and students' attitudes towards using songs in teaching listening skill. The results of descriptive statistics indicate that both students

and teachers considered listening as a difficult skill before using songs. However, after applying an experimental lesson, they had positive opinions about listening and felt they liked listening much more than before.

**Rivers (1978) argues, if listening is a creative skill which means that we comprehend the sound falling on our ears, and take the raw material of words, arrangements of words, and the rise and fall the voice, and from this material we create significance. He also states that listening skill is listening with comprehension, attention and appreciation. Then, listening activity needs to integrate the skills of language, such as pronunciation, vocabulary mastery, writing, speaking, and reading.**

However, during the process of learning those language skills are not integrated properly because some difficulties that be found. **Underwood (1990) explains one of those difficulties in listening that directly related to the students themselves is based on the fact that students have created learning habits in the sense that they have been encouraged to comprehend everything by listening properly to teachers who may talk slowly and clearly, so when they fail to comprehend every word while listening, they stop listening and lose the thread, which seems to be the reason for them to be panic and worried before and during the listening process.**

**In relation to those problems, it can be concluded that** students' interest is really important because it will affect the process and the result of learning. Considering such as an issue, this study aims at describing the students' interest toward the use of song in listening class. The study is guided by a research question; could song be used to increase students' interest in listening class?

### *Methodology*

Qualitative research is used in this research. Patton and Cochran (2002) explain qualitative research is characterized by its aims, which relate to understanding some aspect of social life, and its methods which (in general) generate words, rather than numbers, as data for analysis.

Twenty students of third semester of English Department at Tidar University (within the age range of 19-23) are the participants of this study. The data are collected by giving questionnaires to participants. The questionnaire consists of five questions that cover the purpose of the study. The data collection procedures of this study were as follows.

Creating the questionnaire questions and giving it to the participants

Asking the participants to fill in the questionnaire.

Compiling the questionnaire that had been answered.

After the data collection procedures had been completed, the data were analyzed in order to answer the research question.

## Findings and Discussion

In order to collect the data needed, the researcher makes five questions of questionnaire as can be seen below:

Do you like to use song in listening class? (Y/N)

Why : \_\_\_\_\_

Do you agree if the use of song can increase your interest in listening class? (Y/N)

Why : \_\_\_\_\_

Do you think that using song is able to improve your skill in listening better? (Y/N)

Why : \_\_\_\_\_

Do you prefer to use song in listening class or others?

Why : \_\_\_\_\_

In listening class, do you prefer listening slow rhythm song to listening fast rhythm song?

Why : \_\_\_\_\_

Then, the researcher gives the questionnaire to the participants and the results are as follows.

Table 1. The Result of Questionnaire

| Questionnaire number | YES                    | NO                    |
|----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1                    | 19 participants (95 %) | 1 participants (5 %)  |
| 2                    | 19 participants (95 %) | 1 participants (5 %)  |
| 3                    | 18 participants (90 %) | 2 participants (10 %) |
| 4                    | 18 participants (90 %) | 2 participants (10 %) |
| 5                    | 15 participants (75 %) | 5 participants (25 %) |

After collecting and analyzing the questionnaire result, some conclusions can be made as follows:

Students like to use song in listening class

The review of the answers from question number 2: Student A: Yes, because indirectly we can practice our listening skill; then Student B: No, because I only like listening to a certain genre of music; and Student C: Yes, because it can prevent students to feel bored. In this question, only one student that disagrees. His reason is he did not like a certain genre of music. That problem can be solved by using different genres of song every appointment so that every student can enjoy the kind of song that he likes. Meanwhile the rest of the participants do agree if they like for using song in listening class. By listening song, it makes the students enjoy the learning process and it is also able to improve their listening ability at the same time.

The use of song can increase students' interest in listening class

The review of the answers from question number 2: Student A: No, because it does not work for me; then Student B: Yes, because if I like to do something, it will be easier to do it; and Student C: Yes, because I will not only listen to some songs but I also can enjoy the songs. Only one student disagrees with this question. His reason is because the use of song is not

able to increase his interest in listening class. The solution for this problem is the use of song should be more various in terms of duration, method, and the genre of music that be used. The rest of the participants agree if the use of song because they can enjoy the melody of songs and by enjoying the activities it will be more likely easier for students to master the material needed.

Using song is able to improve students' listening skill to be better

The review of the answers from question number 2: Student A: No, because lyric of the song does not use appropriate grammar; then Student B: Yes, because we can enjoy and understand it really easy, especially when we always hearing a certain of the song for a certain period; and Student C: Yes, because we can master new vocabulary. Two students disagree with this question because they believe that the lyric of songs do not have good grammatical. The researcher believes that what is meant by them is the use of slang words in some songs, not wrong in literal. Even, in reality teacher can also use song for increasing students' interest in learning grammar such as the use of "You can call me Al" by Paul Simon and "If I were a boy" by Beyonce to teach the students the use of conditional sentences. Meanwhile, the rest of participants do agree if the use of song can improve their skill in listening because it is increase the students' vocabulary and also easier to understand moreover if the students listen for a certain song longer.

Students prefer to use song in listening class compared to other methods

The review of the answers from question number 2: Student A: No, I prefer for doing the taskof listening workbooks; then Student B: Yes, very interesting and easy to understand; and Student C: Yes, because a song can make us enjoy the class. On this question, only two students disagree. One of their reasons is he prefers for doing the taskof listening workbooks. The teachers can combine doing the task on workbooks and the use of song to afford the demand of every student. Meanwhile, there are 18 participants prefer for using song in listening class to using other method because they believe it will be much easier, interesting and joyful for them. By enjoying the learning activities, the students will give their best ability during the learning process and the result of course will be much better compared to activities that they do not enjoy.

Students prefer listening slow rhythm song to listening fast rhythm song

Students prefer listening slow rhythm song to listening fast rhythm song The review of the answers from question number 5: Student A: I will not choose any of them. However, if I had to choose from using song in listening class, I prefer the slow one; then Student B: Because when I hear some words I have not heard before it will be very difficult to understand those words, so I choose the song with slow rhythm because I will be able to understand the words much better; and Student C: I choose the fast one because when we hear a song with a slow rhythm surely the lyric will be really clear. However, it will be really different if we hear a song with fast rhythm, there will be some words that difficult to understand, but it will be the way I improve my listening ability. So often when we hear a song with fast rhythm, surely song with slow rhythm will not be a problem.

In this question, only 5 participants choose the fast rhythm song. One of the reasons is because he believes by using the fast rhythm song, it will be more difficult to understand the words but the improvement is worth it with the difficulties. This kind of learner chooses to use the more challenging way in order to get improvement faster. The teacher can

accommodate this way of learning by adjusting the kind of song every appointment. Then, there are 15 participants do agree for using the slow rhythm song because they believe it will be much easier to understand the lyric. Another participant explains more that it will be much better for using slow rhythm song, but the level of difficulty should be increased every appointment. By doing so, the interest of students will be increased because they will thrill to overcome the challenges. Thus, after overcoming the challenges the students' listening ability will be significantly better.

### Conclusions

The researcher concludes that the use of song in listening class could be implemented to increase student's interest during the learning process. The students like to use song to improve their interest in listening class because it indirectly trains the students' skill, they can enjoy the activities, and it makes them do not feel bored also easier to understand the material. The use of the song also be chosen to improve students' ability compared to other methods because it will make them earn a lot of new vocabulary through learning activities in a fun way.

Some suggestions for teachers are in the beginning, it will be much better for using slow rhythm song especially for listener in beginning level and the use of the song should be more various in terms of duration, method, and the genre of music that be used to accommodate every student learning style so that they will achieve the maximum learning result.

### References

- Harmer, J. (2009).** The practice of English language teaching (4<sup>th</sup> edition). Harlow: Pearson Longman.
- Jimbo Caicedo, P. E., & Lojano Lojano, V. S. (2013).** Songs and Games as A Tool to Foster English Learning to Children at The Fifth Level of Basic Education: Class validation at José Rafael Arizaga Elementary School. Retrieved from <http://dspace.ucuenca.edu.ec/bitstream/123456789/4329/1/THESIS.pdf>
- Oanh, T. T. (2011).** The Use of Songs to Improve Listening Skills for Students at ITC Foreign Language Centre in Hai Duong. (Unpublished master's thesis). Vietnam: University of International Studies. Retrieved from <http://dl.vnu.edu.vn/bitstream/11126/444/1/04051000587.pdf>
- Patton, M. Q., & Cochran, M. (2002). A Guide to Using Qualitative Research. 1-36.
- Rivers, W.M. (1978). A Practical Guide to the Teaching of English as A Second or Foreign Language. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Rost, Michael. 1994.** Listening in Language Learning. Michigan University: Longman
- Shen, Ch. (2009).** Using English songs: An Enjoyable and Effective Approach to ELT. English Language Teaching, 2 (1), 88-94.
- Underwood, M. (1990).** Teaching Listening. London: Longman