

# The Incorporating Impact of Songs and Lyrics in Listening Class on Higher Education Students: A Case Study at Universitas Islam Balitar

**Keyword :**  
Song and Lyrics,  
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Motivation

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**Abstract:** This study aims to investigate the use of songs and lyrics in the classroom to improve higher education students' listening skills, focusing on how music can effectively foster emotional engagement and enhance learning motivation. The research was carried out at Universitas Islam Balitar Blitar, targeting 7th-semester students, totaling 20 students. Data were gathered by interviewing and observation during listening class. The results of analyzing the impact of songs on student's learning motivation show that in learning English, students have both integrative and instrumental motivation. This study shows that students' motivation to learn English through songs and lyrics are increased. In Learning process, Motivation is essential. Given that it has an impact on students' beliefs, perspectives, and academic achievement in many subjects not just English.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Music has an important role in everyday life as a form of entertainment, self-expression, and learning media. Incorporating music-based activities might stimulate emotions and senses (Arleo, 2000). Music has the ability to bring the listener into an intense emotional experience, thereby increasing sensitivity to the surrounding environment and reviving emotional memories. Therefore, the use of music in various approaches not only enriches the individual experience, but also provides an opportunity to build better emotional responses in various situations, such as in education, therapy or social interaction.

It is possible to employ songs to enhance listening comprehension, pronunciation, and vocabulary acquisition. They provide a context for learners to practice language skills in a fun and engaging manner. By integrating music thoughtfully into language learning, educators can create a dynamic and interactive classroom that fosters engagement and enhances language acquisition.

According to Levitin in (Boustani & Al Abdwani, 2023a) Although music replicates certain aspects of language, it also inspires emotional, rewarding, and motivating patterns in the brain, which allows it to function beyond words in terms of stimulating emotions. Given the function of music in shaping children, music has been widely used as a tool in learning, including in language learning. Especially in the process of learning English, listening.

According to Syakur (Abd. Syakur, 2020), The ability to pay attention and understand information that other people are saying is known as listening. It is sometimes referred to as listening comprehension. When we listen to anything, we should be able to grasp the sound in order to understand what we are listening to. (Hayati & Mohmedi, 2011; Nan, 2018).

Songs offer valuable opportunities for repetition and practice, engaging with language through repetition is enjoyable, such as when singing along to choruses or participating in cumulative songs, where each verse builds on the previous one by incorporating its words (Y. Ali, 2020). Furthermore, English music increases student motivation and engagement, making learning enjoyable and encouraging active participation (Afriyuninda & Oktaviani, 2021a). This heightened motivation plays a critical role in the learning process, as students are more likely to invest effort in improving their listening skills when they feel genuinely interested in the content.

Listening to English songs can enhance listening skills because it sparks curiosity about the song's content (Merina, 2022a). As individuals engage with the music, they not only listen but also desire to understand what the song is about. This curiosity motivated them to seek out the meanings of vocabulary words found within the lyrics.

Learning motivation is important in the learning process because with motivation, individuals can have enthusiasm in achieving their goals. Human behavior is determined by motivation, which provides direction, passion and persistence in individuals (J. Santrock, 2008a). Extrinsic motivation, which is something that is done to get something else out of it (J. W. Santrock, 2007).

In addition to extrinsic motivation, there is intrinsic motivation, which is the internal motivation to do something for its own sake. Intrinsic motivation can be strengthened through praise or rewards, but not as a control of individual behavior (J. Santrock, 2008b). Students' motivation to learn can be seen based on several components, namely curiosity owned by students, self-efficacy or beliefs held by individuals that they can master situations and produce positive results, positive attitudes owned, the need to achieve or achieve their goals, competence or ability, and external motivators (Frith & Dolan, 1997).

One of the most challenging parts of teaching and learning English as a second language is acquiring a listening skill (Puspita Sari & Dini Sintia, 2021). Among the difficulties are students' lack of intrinsic motivation and teachers' dependence on strategies. It is the responsibility of teachers to assist their students in improving their English proficiency so that they can interact with others in a global setting.

As a result, teachers must be well-versed in a wide range of interesting teaching techniques, resources, and media. Thus, it is anticipated that the goal of teaching listening will be achieved. (Teppa et al., 2022a). Sekeon, E., Rombepajung, P., & Kumayas, T. (Teppa et al., 2022b) found in their research entitled '*Students' Perception Toward English Song as a Learning Media of Listening Comprehension*'. According to the research, students agreed that songs enhanced their learning process.

Students believe that listening to English music has enhanced their listening abilities, because spending time listening to English songs makes them more familiar with the English word, and also makes it easier to memorize new vocabulary in the lyrics. Another research also conducted by Teppa, R., Rorimpandey, R., & Posumah, J. (Teppa et al., 2022b) in his research entitled '*Improving Students' Listening Skill by Using Songs' Lyrics a Study Conducted at SMAN 1 Melonguane*'. This research was conducted to find out whether the use of songs' lyrics could improve the student's listening skills.

This research used quantitative research through a pre-experimental design with a pretest and posttest. This research found out that the use of songs' lyrics was effective in improving students' listening skills. Abou Ali, A. (2020a) in his research entitled '*Using English Songs to Improve Young Learners' Listening Comprehension*', examines how effectively songs may be used to help young students in elementary school with their listening comprehension. The results demonstrate that Songs were used to assist students improve their listening skills. However, the motivational impact is not explained in this study, so this research will later answer the gap that song and lyric can increase students' listening learning motivation.

Based on previous studies above and the results of preliminary interviews found several problems incorporating song and lyrics in listening learning. So in this study the researcher will

answer the research gap by proposing research questions as follows: 1) How does incorporating songs and lyrics into the classroom improve students' listening skills? and 2) What is the impact of incorporating songs and lyrics into the classroom on students' learning motivation?

In order to learn a language, listening is crucial. However, Demirel (2004 in (Abou Ali, 2020b)) claimed, Among the four language skills, listening skill is the most difficult one to develop. Cameron (Cameron, 2001) defines listening as the receptive use of language, with the objective of understanding the message rather than the language itself. Another expert define Listening as an ability of recognizing and understanding what others have to say (Saricoban, 1999).

According to Lengkoan, F., Andries, F. A., & Tatipang, D. P. (Lengkoan et al., 2022) Poor classroom settings, a lack of visual aids, a vocabulary that is new to the students, a speech pace that is imprecise, uninteresting themes that are exposed to lengthy texts, and phonological aspects that make listening difficult make students feel insecure and lazy when they follow English classes. In the other hand, Listening plays an important role in communication, especially oral communication (Erzad, 2020). According to Teppa, R., Rorimpandey, R., & Posumah, J. (Teppa et al., 2022b) to communicate successfully and develop positive relationships with others, people need to completely comprehend the meaning of the messages that their partners convey during a discussion.

Therefore, this make teaching and learning listening skill is crucial. A song is a collection of words, brief poetry, etc. that are typically sung together with music. (Jamalus, 1988) According to Simanjuntak, M. B., & Lumingkewas, M. S. (2022) Songs are frequently used as a medium to express thoughts, feelings, or ideas.

The song's lyrics provide a way to express the creator's feelings or put ideas into practice. Due to its enjoyable functionality, which keeps students engaged during sessions, music is a very helpful tool for learning. Repetition is important because songs have linguistic patterns that can help with pronunciation and listening comprehension while also creating a playful environment. (Nurhasanah & Suryaman, 2022a). Based on Afriyuninda, E., & Oktaviani, L. (Afriyuninda & Oktaviani, 2021b) Music is an effective stimulant for humans because it strongly connects to our feelings, in addition it let us to perceive them and their impact through using our minds whenever we want.

In the classroom, music has the power to change the atmosphere, engage students, and create a positive connection between enjoyment and education. Motivation may be derived from inside or from outside of a person and is the endeavor to create a particular situation that makes someone want to achieve something. Masruddin, M., & Al Hamdany, M. Z. (2023). According to, Umpung, J. M. D., Liando, N. V., & Andries, F. (2022) Motivation is seen as an important role in the learning and teaching process.

It makes a good influence on the students to boost themselves to learn more. Hamalik (Hamalik, 2003) points out that motivation can affect: a.) students' cognition of their learning goal target, b.) teachers' manner towards their students inside the class can be as intrinsic or extrinsic motivation, c.) predispose from students' group, and d.) class atmosphere.

## II. RESEARCH METHOD

This research applied a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study design to explore how incorporating songs and lyrics in listening classes influences students' motivation and comprehension. The case study design was chosen because it allows the researcher to investigate real-life classroom phenomena in depth and detail. According to Yin (Hollweck, 2015), a case study helped researchers gain a deep understanding of the situation being studied, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not clearly visible. Therefore, this method was considered appropriate to describe students' real experiences and behaviors when learning English through songs and lyrics.

The study was conducted at Universitas Islam Balitar, focusing on seventh-semester students of the English Education Department in the academic year 2024, 20 students

participated in this study. The participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, which means the researcher intentionally chose individuals who were directly involved in listening classes that used songs and lyrics as learning materials.

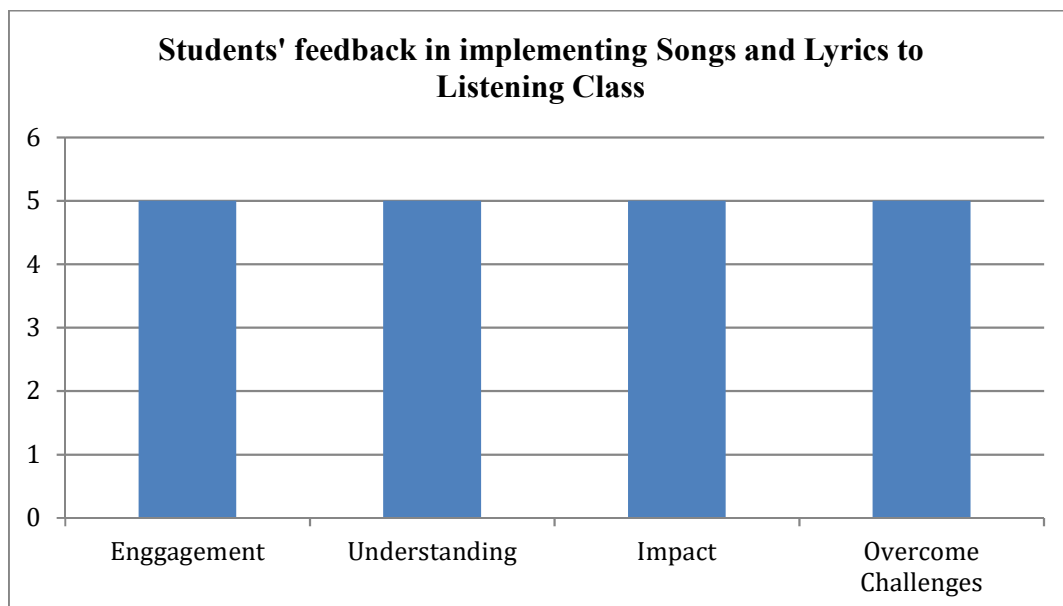
To collect the data, the researcher used two main instruments, namely interviews and observations. The interviews were conducted to obtain deeper insights into the students' experiences, opinions, and feelings about learning English through songs and lyrics. These interviews were semi-structured, which allowed the researcher to ask guiding questions while also giving participants freedom to share their perspectives openly. Meanwhile, the observations were carried out during listening classes to capture how songs and lyrics were implemented, how students engaged with the activities, and how they responded during the learning process. Through these two techniques, the researcher was able to gather comprehensive information that reflected both the students' perceptions and their actual behavior in class.

After the data were collected, they were analyzed using Thematic Analysis, following the procedures suggested by (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The researcher first became familiar with the data by reading and re-reading all observation notes and interview transcripts. Then, significant statements were coded and categorized according to their meanings and relevance to the research focus. Similar codes were grouped into broader categories, which later developed into main themes that described the students' experiences, challenges, and motivational changes while learning through songs and lyrics. Finally, the themes were interpreted and connected with relevant theories and previous studies to form a meaningful conclusion about the phenomenon.

To maintain the trustworthiness and credibility of the findings, the researcher used data triangulation by comparing the results of interviews and observations. This process helped ensure that the interpretations were accurate, consistent, and based on reliable evidence from multiple sources. Overall, this method allowed the researcher to describe in detail how the integration of songs and lyrics contributed to enhancing students' listening comprehension and motivation in the English learning process.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The level of students' enthusiasm reaches 100%. The students find that incorporating songs and lyrics are enjoyable and fun. The results of the interview are explained below



1. How do you feel about the use of songs and lyrics in your listening classes?
  - a. St1

I find the use of songs and lyrics in listening classes very enjoyable and engaging. They make the learning process more interactive and help in breaking the monotony of traditional lessons.

b. St2

I feel songs can make the ambience more enjoyable, and the learning process is less tense.

c. St3

In my opinion, the use of songs and lyrics in the listening class can make learning fun especially when we are freed to listen to songs that we like. Learning like this can make us more quickly accept learning material.

d. St4

I think the use of song lyrics in listening practice is very helpful because we can learn pronunciation and expand our vocabulary in a fun way.

e. St5

I feel the class feels enjoyable when using songs in listening classes.

The students all said that using songs and lyrics in listening class is enjoyable and fun. The students said that using songs and lyrics to learn make learning process more fun and less tense. They also said that learning English through Songs and Lyrics is very helpful to expand our vocabulary and easier to learn pronunciation, not only that they also can understand the material better. Thus also inline in Ali (2020) that Songs offer valuable opportunities for repetition and practice, engaging with language through repetition is enjoyable.

## 2. How do you describe the way a song or lyric helped you understand a concept better?

a. St1

Songs often use real-life language and expressions, which help me understand how certain phrases or words are used in context. The rhythm and melody also make it easier to remember vocabulary or grammar patterns.

b. St2

While I enjoy the songs, I can improve the listening skills and understand the songs meaning without any tension, it's more helpful to understand the concept.

c. St3

The use of songs in the listening classroom engages learners' emotions, and can also make it easier for learners to understand and remember a concept because lyrics often use simple words to explain difficult ideas.

d. St4

Songs often contain new vocabulary, you know, modern slang, and grammar structures. They can also improve pronunciation since we tend to sing along frequently.

e. St5

When we listen to music we don't force ourselves to memorize it, we enjoy it with the melody to understand.

In the term of understanding the content, students said that using Songs and Lyrics help them understand English better. Song use real-life language and expression, such as slang, that help them understand the certain phrases or words are used in context. Learning through rhythm and melody was easier to remember vocabulary and grammar pattern. When learning through song, the class engage learner emotions. Students tend to be remember more when they feel related to something, and songs is one of the effective method to do so.

## 3. How has music impacted your learning process when used in language learning?

a. St1



Music has positively impacted my learning by improving my listening skills, pronunciation, and even cultural understanding. It helps me stay motivated and makes language learning feel less like a task and more like a hobby.

b. St2

Music is not only improve my listening skills, but also enrich the vocabulary, try to deep focus on the learning process, and increase the memory recall.

c. St3

Music makes me learn new vocabulary in a fun way. through music, I can also learn the correct pronunciation and intonation of vocabulary.

d. St4

In language learning, music is an enjoyable method for me. However, in other learning contexts, I cannot use music as a learning aid because it divides my focus.

e. St5

Music makes my pronunciation better.

Learning through Songs and Lyrics has positive impact to students, such as improving listening skills, enrich vocabulary, pronunciation, and cultural understanding. In learning language, Songs and Lyrics did impact the students various ability, especially students listening comprehension.

#### 4. How do you overcome challenges when learning through songs?

a. St1

When I struggle with understanding lyrics due to speed or accent, I try to listen repeatedly, read the lyrics, and look up unfamiliar words. Sometimes, I also choose slower songs or those with clear pronunciation to make it easier to follow.

b. St2

I try to focus what the real lyrics when I do not know what the song is, or guess what the lyrics is. It helps me to overcome the problem when the learning process.

c. St3

in songs usually use metaphors that are rarely used in everyday conversation which if interpreted into our language will not match the actual meaning to overcome this, I first understand the context of the sentence or find out the meaning of the vocabulary by googling while learning new vocabulary in addition, learning to listen through songs often only focuses on the music, not learning to overcome this, I separate the learning and enjoying sessions.

d. St4

To overcome challenges such as unfamiliar vocabulary or fast-paced lyrics, I use strategies like pausing and replaying certain parts, looking up the lyrics, and using online translation tools.

e. St5

To overcome the challenges when learning through music like what the singer says in the song, we can replay the song or look at the lyrics.

Even if Songs and Lyrics has a lot of positive inpact that was already been explain above, there are some challenge that students must to overcome. The students often struggle on speed and accent, the use of metaphors that rarely used in everyday conversation that what not match with the actual meaning, and unfamiliar vocabulary. Even if it's can be seen as a challenge, those are necessary for students to learn and understand. Thus why, students have to over come it.

Student use several way to overcome their challeges, such as repeating the song, pick a slower song, looking for the actual meaning of the metaphore and vocaulary, and looking for the learing and use translation tools. Repetition is important because songs have linguistic patterns that can help with pronunciation and listening comprehension while also

creating a playful environment. (Nurhasanah & Suryaman, 2022b). Another problem that faced by the student is students are often to focus more on the melody, than the song itself.

This can be a problem because the students focus are not in the right goal. This often lead the students to remember the note, but not the lyrics. However, this challenge can be overcome by deviding the learn through song session and listening to a song for fun. Another interview was conducted with the lecturer of Universitas Islam Balitar. Incorporating Songs and Lyrics indeed makes learning enjoyable and engaging for students.

It's in line with students' answers, that songs and lyrics indeed improve their listening comprehension and introduce them to vocabulary, idioms, and pronunciation in a natural concept. By using Songs and Lyrcs students' ability in listening and language acquisition are improved. It improves their ability to identify sounds, and understand different accents, and Songs also enhance vocabulary retention, listening fluency, and cultural understanding. Students tend to remember new words and expressions better.

Based on the lecturer, to overcome the challenges the lecturer selects songs that are age-appropriate and match their proficiency level and incorporating group-based work. These bellows are the interview result, of incorporating Songs and Lyrics in Listening Class on Higher Education Students.

1. Why are you motivated in incorporating songs and lyrics into your listening classes?

I am motivated to use songs and lyrics because they make learning more enjoyable and engaging for students. Songs provide authentic language exposure, improve listening comprehension, and introduce students to vocabulary, idioms, and pronunciation in a natural context. Additionally, they help students stay motivated and focused during lessons, especially when the songs match their interests.

2. How are your strategies in implementing song and lyrics in learning process?

Pre-listening activities: Introducing the topic, discussing key vocabulary, or asking predictive questions about the song.

While-listening tasks: Assigning activities such as filling in the blanks, matching lyrics with pictures, or identifying specific words, phrases, or sounds. Post-listening activities: Encouraging discussions about the song's message, practicing singing to improve pronunciation, or creating writing tasks based on the lyrics, such as summarizing the theme or writing a continuation of the story.

3. How are the effect of using song to your students' listening skills and language acquisition?

Using songs has a positive impact on students' listening skills and language acquisition. It improves their ability to identify sounds, understand different accents, and Songs also enhance vocabulary retention, listening fluency, and cultural understanding. Students tend to remember new words and expressions better

4. How do you overcome your ss challenges in incorporating Song and Lyrics in learning process?

I select songs that are age-appropriate and match their proficiency level and I encourage group work, so smarter students can support their peers in understanding challenging parts of the song.

Based on the interview results above, it shows that the use of songs and lyrics in listening lessons has a positive impact on student motivation and ability. Songs create a fun and interactive learning atmosphere, help expand vocabulary, understand everyday expressions, and improve pronunciation and grammar understanding. This supports (Afriyunda & Oktaviani, 2021b) theory on the ability of music to create a positive atmosphere in learning, as well as (A. A. Ali, 2020) which states that repetition in songs makes it easier for students to understand linguistic patterns.

In addition, (Merina, 2022b) theory is also in line with this finding, where curiosity about songs motivates students to understand the meaning of the vocabulary and expressions used. However, challenges such as difficult accents, uncommon metaphors, and new vocabulary often arise. To overcome these, students use strategies such as re-listening to the song, reading the lyrics, and using translation tools, which is relevant to (Nurhasanah & Suryaman, 2022b) findings on the importance of repetition.

From the lecturer's side, the songs were selected according to the students' ability level and integrated in group work to encourage collaboration, supporting (Hamalik, 2003) theory that motivation plays an important role in encouraging students to achieve learning goals. This approach is also in line with Levitin in (Boustani & Al Abdwani, 2023b), who highlighted the role of emotions in creating meaningful learning through music.

The final result model of this research shows that the integration of songs and lyrics in listening learning can improve students' language skills and learning motivation. The learning process consists of three main stages. The pre-listening stage is carried out by introducing the topic of the song, discussing key vocabulary, and encouraging prediction of song content to provoke student curiosity.

In the listening stage, students are given tasks such as completing lyrics, recognizing specific words/phrases, and identifying intonation or pronunciation. The post-listening stage involves discussion about the meaning of the song, exploration of idioms or figures of speech, pronunciation practice by singing, and writing assignments based on the theme of the song. In order for learning to run optimally, lecturers use supporting strategies such as choosing songs that match students' abilities and interests, utilizing technology such as translation tools and audio players, and implementing group work to overcome common challenges.

The result of this model is an improvement in students' listening skills, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar, along with increased intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Songs also helped to make learning more engaging, less stressful, and reinforced cultural understanding through the context of the lyrics. Evaluation through observations and interviews were used as feedback to refine this learning method.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The incorporation of songs and lyrics in listening classes has proven to be an effective and enjoyable method for enhancing students' language skills. Songs make learning interactive and less stressful while introducing vocabulary, idioms, and pronunciation in a natural context. Through rhythm and melody, students can easily retain new words and grammar patterns. Moreover, songs engage emotions, improve listening fluency, and enhance cultural understanding. Despite challenges such as unfamiliar vocabulary, fast-paced lyrics, or metaphorical expressions, these can be addressed by replaying songs, reading lyrics, and using translation tools. With proper strategies, such as age-appropriate song selection and group work, songs significantly boost students' listening comprehension and language acquisition, making the process more engaging and impactful.

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