

APPRECIATIVE LISTENING USING SONGS FOR ENHANCING LEARNERS' COMPREHENSIBILITY OF ENGLISH EXPRESSION

^{1,2}Sharon Maria Magdalena Purba, ¹Leil Badrah Zaki

¹English Teacher, Faculty of Education, University International Batam, Indonesia

²Corresponding Author Email: leil@uib.ac.id

Article Info	Abstract
Article History Received: March 2022 Revised: April 2022 Published: April 2022	<i>This study explores the impact of the implementation of appreciative listening using English songs on the development of students' knowledge of various expressions in English. In collecting data, 23 students from various majors and different universities were involved as participants. In this qualitative study, they were interviewed about their experiences in discovering the various uses of expressions in English songs and how their knowledge developed as they tried to explore the meaning of the expressions. They testified that through this learning method, their knowledge of the various units in the language increased and they even promoted this way of learning for other learners. The results showed that the concept of appreciative listening using songs helps learners increase their knowledge of English expressions. The involvement of songs in English courses was also proven to give a positive impact on the learning atmosphere and it also promotes autonomous learning. The results obtained from this study are in line with what researchers have found in the past; this method should be implemented in English learning for the wider community.</i>
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INTRODUCTION

The use of language helps different individuals in expressing their opinions, feeling, and emotions to one another. Dewi et al. (2020) mentioned that there would be no possibility for communication to take place without the use of language. Amongst so many languages in the world, English is notably considered the most frequently used language-be by first, second, or foreign language users. English is used as an international language. For that reason, it is very important to learn the language properly for people from cross countries to communicate easily. Reading, writing, listening, and speaking are the four skills that must be mastered in English language learning. All these skills correlate to each other and must be learned properly to achieve high proficiency in the language (Listiyarningsih, 2017). Amongst these skills, listening skills are widely known to be very crucial in language learning and must be comprehended properly. There are so many ways of improving this particular skill found by previous researchers. This part will be discussed further in the latter part of this research.

Hoque (2017) mentioned that the process of English language learning done by non-natives is considered to be part of second language acquisition and second language learning. Second language acquisition refers to the process of learning new languages as an addition to the learner's native language, which is also known as the first language. As an example, students in Indonesia usually start learning English when they go to school. In this case, they acquire English as their second language, whereas their first language is Indonesian, which they acquired back home with their family or surroundings. Hoque (2017) also mentioned the difference between the two terms. Second language learning describes as the formal learning

process of a language in the classroom or similar English courses, while acquisition refers to when the learners are exposed to new languages with minimum or no formal training process.

Various tools have been found and proven to be supportive for English language learners; one of them is the electric dictionary. Dewi et al. (2020) stated that some students learned by listening to audio files provided in electronic dictionaries to have better pronunciation. They can listen to the correct pronunciation voiced by natives in the recordings. Ahmadi & Reza (2018) mentioned that Bull and Ma (2001) have proven that technology presents unlimited resources learners can use to study. He also re-explained a statement shared by both Tomlinson (2009) and İlter (2015), that computer-based activity enables learners to have various appropriate materials and information with a less delayed timeline. Materials from the internet are also tools to help the learners keep being motivated to explore more. Games, fictional stories (such as novels and web-comics) have also taken part in exposing the learners to a more enjoyable learning process, and so as with the songs. Dewi et al. (2020) next mentioned that songs are also considered as convenient tools in learning, as almost all learners know English songs well (especially the popular ones). Along with its music, songs can be used in learning English, since it consists of several units of the language that the students need to learn.

Amin and Soh (2020) defined music as an excellent package of varying culture, lexical, grammatical structures, listening, as well as in accommodating other units in language through its rhymes. Singing songs, particularly, does not only advocates students to remember important information contained in its lyrics but also has been proven to present a livelier studying environment for English language learners even before the 2000s, as mentioned by Amin and Soh (2020). It is also mentioned that involving songs in such classes is a great way of exposing learners to the targeted language as well as facilitating the learning process. For lots of non-native speakers, song lyrics are their first exposure to the English language. Music and its lyrics help people in expressing their feelings, thoughts, and ideas in a better and much easier way.

Previous researchers have found evidence for the benefits of having songs involved in English language learning classes. Batluk (2015) mentioned in the discussion part of his study that providing the students with songs they liked in English classes increased their will of learning the context of the songs' lyrics. As a result of their high level of curiosity related to their increasing intrinsic motivations, the students improved their academic performance. Ranggen (2016) found out that his participants gained lots of benefits from using songs as one of their learning sources. He examined the effect of English songs on the students' language skills in their classes. He revealed that the language aspects found in songs can support the students' listening skills, speaking skills, pronunciation, vocabulary and understanding of grammar developed. Aguirre et al. (2016) testified how students in their study were more engaged with the course and showed more interest in the topic discussed when songs are involved. Their rate of participation also increased as they were all seen working out on their tasks with more energy and enthusiasm. It was mentioned in the conclusion of their research that there is a great correlation between songs and the student's motivation. In 2017, Shin found that using songs in English courses that she taught brought an authentic experience of the language that mirrors real-life speaking and listening skills to the classroom. The students who are exposed to songs have a much greater motivation to be in contact with the world through the cultural aspects contained in the lyrics.

Listening skills are very important for learners to obtain because they must first hear what other people have to say to understand and provide the appropriate output, as mentioned by Harrifqi & Hidayat (2017). They also mentioned that listening is frequently acknowledged as the most difficult skill in English, but at the same time is crucial. This skill is necessary for learning to help the learners get insights and information that they need and enable them to

communicate with one another. Therefore, good listening skills are needed to support the English learning process properly. Hadijah & Shalawati (2016) defined good listening skills as having the proper competence of comprehending information while listening or converting the messages into written texts or spoken speech. Having good ability in listening is very important in language learning because it relates firmly to the process of communicating.

Researchers in the past have found numerous methods in learning to help improve English learners' listening skills. Listiyaningsih (2017) mentioned one of them, which is through the involvement of English songs. When English language learners listen to songs, specifically English songs, they unconsciously learn to listen comprehensively. People who often listen to English songs unintentionally learned how to comprehend the messages contained in its lyrics. This type of listening is also known as appreciative listening. Nadhira & Warni (2021) referred to appreciative listening happens when the listeners listen to something to acquire pleasure, not something dangerous or that puts pressure on the listeners. Their example of the type of listening is when people visit the music corner. Yemenici & Güzel (2021) gave the illustration that this type of listening includes activities such as listening to the radio, listening to music from a preferred musician, watching movies and theatre, and even listening to someone whose style of speaking they liked. It was also mentioned that when someone listens to a certain genre of music willingly and is pleased with what is being heard, they carried out appreciative listening.

Although there have been many researchers that have studied the use of music in the midst of learning English in the past, there is a gap that does not link the discussion of appreciative listening in the process. The linguistic topics that were issued in the English learning classes were also very broad. For example, lots of studies searched on how to improve speaking skills or the effect of using a teaching method on the English language skills of a group of learners. This study discussed one of the appreciative listening activities, which is listening to English songs, and how it affects the learners' understanding of various expressions in English. Researches focusing on learners' understanding of English expressions and their use are still minimal, especially in recent years. This deficiency is expected to be filled through this research so that future researchers who planned to study the related topics will be helped by the reference they need. To be able to complete the shortcomings that have been mentioned, the current research sought to find out how the concept of appreciative listening using English songs is implemented among learners. This research determines how the learners see the development of their knowledge of English expressions while listening to English songs. In addition, this research also discussed how the students witnessed the involvement of songs in their English learning classes in the past, and how they saw its development in the present.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This research implemented a qualitative method, which Sutton & Austin (2015) stated as a method that attempts to channel people's thoughts and feelings towards certain behavior. The qualitative data was compiled through semi-structured interviews with a list of open-ended questions adopted from previous research done by Ranggen (2016), which then researched on what are students' perceptions on English songs supporting their English skills' advancement, to retrieve as much information needed for the research.

Research Object

Respondents to this research were 23 students from several universities and different majors who are used to listening to English songs. The number of selected participants was referenced in a previous study done by Vasileiou et al. (2018), which investigated the

characterization and justification of sufficient sample sizes in interview-based studies. The study involved 214 eligible articles and stated that the number of 15-25 participants involved in qualitative researches are proven to be sufficient and fulfills the need of data to be further analyzed on the next stages, although there were several other studies that they found to have even bigger number of participants, such as more than 40. The qualified students were involved in semi-structured interviews about the application of appreciative listening through music, especially English songs.

Instruments

During the implementation, research instruments were used to collect data and also to figure out the results of the analysis. The candidates were first asked to confirm their behaviour of listening to English songs. This step can also be addressed as purposive sampling, which is generally done in research with the qualitative method, where the members of sampling are selected according to the purpose of the research (Bhardwaj, 2019). This type of sampling is also commonly named as deliberate sampling, or judgmental sampling. Then, the participants who comply with the research's provisions then participated in semi-structured interviews where they were asked questions about their perspectives regarding the topic: listening to English songs and their knowledge towards various expressions, such as their frequency of finding various expressions used in songs, their ways of getting true knowledge of those expressions, times when they applied the understanding, opinions towards the using of songs in English classes, etc. During the interview, the researcher delved to understand the students' perceptions and experiences dealing with various expressions they had ever found in English songs. 10 questions were listed as the main structure but several other new questions were asked according to their responses throughout the interview. This research's interview was structured with the questions adapted from previous research done by Ranggen (2016).

Stuckey (2013) as mentioned in Adhabi & Anozie (2017) stated that being in the same way as how structured interview has the frame of topics and questions prepared before the implementation, semi-structured interviews differ by having no fixed regulations. The implementation depends on the response of the participants and although a set of guiding questions have been designed, the researchers are able to flexibly throw more enhanced questions according to the participants' reactions. These types of interviews can also be done in groups or individuals. Group interviews are also considered ideal because they provide the researcher a more effective time tabling in exploring the topic issues (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006 as stated in Adhabi & Anozie, 2017).

Data Analysis

After all data is collected, it is analyzed through the following process:

1. Data presentation and categorization
Data obtained from the qualitative method implementation were compiled in this step, modified into a simpler display for better presentation and the answers were categorized based on its classification.
2. Interpretation of the findings
Each categorization was then brought to be interpreted to whether they promote or oppose the proposed topic: appreciative listening using song promoting better comprehension of English expressions.
3. Answering the research questions
The represented responses in the previous steps were afterwards taken to find answers to the three research questions that have been mentioned at the beginning of the research.
4. Making generalization of the findings

This step summarizes all answers, analysis, and procedures that have been carried out, as well as concluding the results of the research. Presenting a conclusion of whether the results obtained promote or not at all deal with the topic of the problem posed.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

Students' opinions of using songs in English language learning

Throughout the interview, participants testified that they had ever experienced the involvement of English songs in their previous years of learning the language, both inside and outside the classroom. Some also mentioned simple activities that they were involved in within the language learning process. Student N emphasized how she felt that the existence of music in English language learning is totally beneficial for the learners, especially in the terms of pronunciation. There are differences between pronunciations that appear in textbooks and in songs. English songs present a more varied and realistic pronunciation for the listeners so that they are not only familiar with the concrete or one specific pronunciation method written in textbooks but also have extensive knowledge and reasoning about the types of pronunciation in English itself. This opinion was then supported by student K's statement where she stated her agreement in the collaboration between English songs and English classes. She also added that such activities help students to enjoy the learning process.

"There are students who really like listening to songs, so learning English through these songs really helps them. Therefore, I really agree if there are teachers or lecturers who play songs for listening activities in English classes. It really does support, especially for us Indonesians." (Student K)

Student A specified that in cases such as her experience in learning English, English songs were the ones that greatly supported her growth in the language learning process. She even considered such songs as her very first "teacher" to the language. Student B then added her interview partner's response by saying that she agrees that the involvement of English songs in English courses-it does help the learners. Learning materials will certainly stick for a long time (in the learners' memory). Just as how rhythms often resonated in memory, so is what is learned through the songs. Both students agreed English songs are great to help learners in English courses.

Student O also shared his point of view on this matter, by first noting how the outcomes of song writings and expressions in songs need to be perfect. This will support learners in properly learning the language.

"Because of the perfect output, it could contribute to being the 'role model' or as an example of how, for example, this is how a sentence should be, this is how we use these phrases. I think this is where songs come to be perfectly placed in the learning process." (Student O)

Although some admitted that they only experienced it rarely, they reckon that during those classes where they had English songs embroiled in their learning process, those were pleasant times. The presence of English songs in the learning process helped them and their classmates to feel relaxed during times when they felt stressed and even burdened by having to understand certain topics discussed in a language that is not their first. All participants agreed that involving English songs in English language learning activities are supportive towards the learners' language skills improvement, but, there is an important statement

mentioned by Student H regarding this matter. She stated that such involvement is surely possible but should only be considered to be appropriate under certain circumstances.

"The combination is great when the materials are relevant to the discussed topic. It isn't appropriate when these English songs are suddenly included in just any subject. It depends on the topics and related materials, but overall it's great." (Student H)

This statement was also expressed by several other students so that they could be involved in the conclusion for this discussion topic. These students expressed the same opinion, which is to support the involvement of English songs in the English learning process, both in helping them to absorb the learning materials and by providing a pleasant learning atmosphere. Such combination is recommended while learning English with related materials.

Students' reflection on their experience of using English songs in improving their knowledge of English expressions

Discovering the use of various expressions in English songs is no longer a new thing for the students involved in this research. They often find the use in songs and recognized that those are expressions, which conveys another message and cannot be interpreted literally, rather than just being a group of words put between the song lyrics. Student B testified that she often found the use of expressions in English songs. Though she couldn't precisely recalled what the expressions or sayings are but she's sure to have found a lot of the use and recognized them as expressions-not just common words put together. In almost all songs she heard, student T said that there's at least 1 use of expression, and usually it comes in the form of phrases (rather than a single word).

When it comes to finding out the meaning of the expressions, the participants' responses came vary. They're divided into groups that always tried to understand the use by searching around the internet, other people, or other sources until they could confirm that they completely understand the use of expressions found in certain song. Student Q stated that he's sure about so many attempts he did in finding out the correct meaning of songs he listened to.

".. I do try to understand the meaning that I haven't known of. I try to understand it fully. Like, where does this come from (the story behind the lyrics)? In example of Justin Bieber's songs, suddenly I found that this song is about this (a certain) thing. He made this song through having this story (or a certain point in his life)." (Student Q)

A small group of students didn't really find the urge of understanding the whole meaning of the mentioned expressions and had chosen to only enjoy the aspects of music they found.

"I personally prefer to hear the songs more than trying to discover the meanings. So I don't really like to find out the actual meanings, or even like being curious of what they actually tell about. As long as the songs' great, that's all." (Student J)

There was also a group of people who admitted that they searched for the meanings only several times. Student X confessed that there were times when he tried finding out the meaning that is contained in songs, such as in the ones released by his favorite bands, but several other times he didn't. In this group of participants, the reason for times when the

students decided not to find out anything about the songs was that they didn't feel those songs attractive enough to generate their further interest.

".. depends on the song. If the song somehow catches my attention then I would try to find out, but if the song doesn't really leave any impression on me, I don't think I would bother trying to find out." (Student O)

Looking back to the times in the past when they gained new knowledge of the expressions contained in English songs, the students revealed that this helped them improve their knowledge of one of the units in the language. As mentioned above, the students experienced several events where they found out the meaning of the expressions contained in the songs they heard, they also then got a new understanding of its uses and even finally could apply this knowledge in daily life. Student H, as an example, confessed that she had ever mistaken the meaning of a certain expression and then came to have the correct one after exploring the comment section in a YouTube video where a song was posted. She spotted a few people discussing the meaning of an expression used in the song and at the end of the day she managed to have a new-proper understanding of that expression. She also gave a rating of 7/10 on how frequent she used her knowledge of various expressions in daily life.

The effects of appreciative listening using English songs on the students' proper understanding of various expressions

The interviewees have already described their experiences dealing with unknown English expressions found in songs in the past. Most of them stated that in such cases they always tried to find out the correct interpretation of the expressions so that they could freely deal with them in daily life with no obstacle. Student I, as an example, revealed that she has always been curious about the meaning of songs that she listened to. She also admitted that in times when she couldn't manage to discover the meanings by herself properly, she decided to reach out to her friends and discussed the matter with them. When it comes to terms of the application, she mentioned that it's more often for her to make use of the expressions with her friends.

"I usually did that (the application) when I'm with my friends-I could suddenly mention any certain expression out of the blue without realizing it. Just because I have already had the proper understanding."

Although several other students admitted that there were times when they decided not to properly learn the meaning of expressions found in the English songs they listened to, they stated that whenever they did, their understanding of the expressions increased. When they experienced a misunderstanding of the true meaning of an expression, as in their confession, they were then exposed to its true meaning. They also experienced the learning process when they discuss it with other individuals, as well as when exploring it on their own. This learning process takes place outside the classroom or other formal courses and, as previously explained, is included as an appreciative listening activity that involves English songs. As with the other types of appreciative listening activities, these English learners are involved in this type of listening activity without any pressure, such as having to answer several questions or being obligated to understand certain information as required in other listening methods. In this method, the learners subconsciously experienced the process of learning English, especially in identifying various expressions, through their habits in listening to songs in the language.

Discussion

The current study found out that song involvement in English courses brought up positive impacts on the learners throughout the process. Razak & Yunus (2016) reviewed many studies in the past and found out that lots of them mentioned the involvement of songs to be supportive in the terms of increasing students' motivation in language learning classes. Several studies mentioned are such by Brewster, Ellis and Girard (2002) who mentioned that songs support concentration development, coordination, and aid memory. Research by Schmitt (2008) was also mentioned as it identifies that one of the most important requirements for foreign language learners to stay motivated is to design interesting activities, such as using songs in several activities. It was also mentioned that songs support the learning process by boosting the learners' motivation and focus to the materials being discussed. This furthermore brings more lively and student-centered learning as they are allowed to concentrate more on the course and become active learners.

In the data that has been obtained through interviews and as described in the previous section, the independent English learning method that applies the concept of appreciative listening by using English songs to increase their knowledge of expressions in English has a positive impact. In a part of the interview, the participants were asked about their knowledge about the involvement of English songs in the English learning class. They stated that it was very common. Many also witnessed that they had experienced such a learning process. These participants thought that this kind of learning model was very helpful for learners because they got much less pressure from the use of various materials and a more fun learning atmosphere.

The participants involved in this study also explained how the process of searching for the true meaning of the various expressions contained in the English songs they heard helped them in gaining more knowledge of one of these linguistic units. When they found expressions with an unknown meaning, they try to find out by searching the internet, or by asking the people around them. With the more types of expressions they learned the meaning of; their linguistic understanding correspondingly increases along with the confidence in using them in daily activities. Several participants stated that they had used expressions that they already knew correctly when talking directly to other people, when making stories, building captions to be posted on their social media, etc.

Pavia et al. (2019) shared a similar statement in their research, that learners can obtain more English vocabulary by listening to songs containing the language. Their participants learned English as their second language and even though they had a very minimum size of vocabulary, the learning process occurred successfully. The participants showed that they gained more vocabulary knowledge at the end of their posttest in experimental groups. They became more familiar with the new vocabularies through listening to songs and their ability to learn new words incidentally through the activity improved. They also added to the conclusion that repeating the activity of listening to songs several times affects the learners positively in the aspects of their vocabulary knowledge.

After conducting an experimental group, Almagrabi (2021) found similar aftermath that the learning of vocabulary can be incidentally done by listening to the target language. It can occur when the learner hears the target words from stories, songs, and movies, such are the written activities involved in the experiment. Looking at the results they obtained, it can be concluded that listening to simple stories and authentic songs and movies performs incidental learning for more than one-third of the targeted words and this is considered to be a good amount of learning. The concept of incidental learning is involved in appreciative listening, as such been described previously, as it is used in foreign language learning around the world.

Participants of the current study testified to the positive effects they encountered through having songs involved in their English language learning courses in the past. It was also mentioned that not only do these songs support them in grasping more of the discussed

materials, but as well as providing them with a more enjoyable learning situation. Songs help learners to feel more at ease while learning. Previous researchers also had proven that involving songs in English courses sparks the curiosity of learners to explore more of the language and its culture. This study focuses more on finding a better way for learners to acknowledge various expressions in English through the implementation of appreciative listening using English songs. It was found that the concept of appreciative listening is a better approach to the topic from the point of view of the learners. The proposed method presents the idea of learners being introduced to various expressions while listening to songs they preferred without the pressure of having to understand its use in a short allotted time. Learners are led by curiosity to find out the meaning and use of these expressions independently, in a way that suits them. This method also makes it easier for educators to introduce learners to autonomous learning so that learning targets can be achieved even more quickly and effectively. Therefore, the language learning process can be carried out both inside and outside the formal classroom.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the discussion obtained from the previous section, the following conclusions can be drawn. First, the concept of appreciative listening is familiar among English learners; many of them have also claimed to have been involved in its implementation. This study seeks to find out the effect of implementing the learning concept for English language learners, especially when it involves the use of English songs in helping them understand more about various expressions contained in the language. The participants who were involved in the interviews testified that they were very familiar with the involvement of English songs in the English learning process, both when the learning activities took place inside and outside the room.

Second, the participants witnessed that on many parts in the interview they have found the use of expressions in the English songs they heard, and not infrequently they did not immediately understand correctly the meaning contained therein. Through this nescience, their curiosity leads them to learn the true meaning through independent searches from various sources on the internet, as well as through discussions with the people around them. In the end, through this process, their knowledge of various expressions in English and their use broadened. Several of them stated that they could even use the knowledge in everyday life without difficulty, for example in communicating with others, when building short texts to be posted on social media, and so on. Finally, they strongly agree and even promote this method for other English learners, because they feel that this way of learning is needed by many people, which does not stress the learners and even feels challenged to continue to have more knowledge of the English language.

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