

**IMPROVING STUDENTS' LISTENING SKILL  
BY USING ENGLISH SONG**

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**ABSTRACT**

*This reaserch aimed to improve students' listening skill by using English song. The other hand this reaserch aimed to know the students attitudes of using English songs in listening skill. The reason of choosing this topic is based on the problem that faced by the students when learning Listening. The method was a classroom action research that consisted of pre-test, two cycles, and post-test. Each cycle consisted of four steps: planning, action, evaluation, and reflection. The subject was the second year students of SMA Muhammadiyah 09 Kualuh Hulu Kabupaten Labuhanbatu Utara that consisted of 20 students. The instrument was a test and analyzed by mean score formula. The result showed that in pre-test, the students got mean score 43,75 (low). In cycle 1, they got 48,6 (low). In cycle 2, they got 60,5 (moderate). In post-test, they got 75,8 (good). So, it can be concluded that the use of songs improved the second year students' listening skill at SMA Muhammadiyah 09 Kualuh Hulu Kabupaten Labuhanbatu Utara.*

**Keywords: Improving, Listening Skill, English song,**

**INTRODUCTION**

Among the basic four skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing, listening is the most frequently used. Listening accounts for 45%, speaking 30%, reading 16%, while writing 9 %.( Hedge, 2007). The average adult spent far more time in listening than reading, writing and speaking. (Janusik, 2002). For quite a long time, listening was regarded as a passive process, listeners just received information passively.

According to Hidayat (2013: 21), "Listening is considered as an important ability that has to be mastered. How well someone listens has a major impact on the quality of their relationship with others". It means that listening is the ability to understand the messages being expressed by the speaker through the sound.

Shen (2009: 90) argues that using English songs in EFL (English Foreign Language) classrooms can successfully bring about affective learning through providing a harmonious classroom atmosphere, reducing students' anxiety, fostering their interests and motivating them to learn the target language. Students will regard English songs as part of entertainment rather than work and thus find learning English through songs amusing and relaxed. Using songs in the classroom is a great way to live up listening activities. It can be success to the process though to make the listening activities more effective.

As mentioned by Murcia (2001: 84) listening is the language skill used most in life, needs to be a central focus-all day, every day-limited only by the availability of the target language in the school, the community, and the media. According to Kline (1996: 46) "building your vocabulary will improve your conversational skills and your reading skills as well as your listening skills. And the more words you learn, the better listener you will become. So, there are relationship between listening and vocabulary. When you listen, you also know about new word that you hear".

Murcia (2001: 461) says that media help us to motivate students by bringing a slice of real life into the classroom and by presenting language in its more complete communicative context. Media can also provide a density of information and richness of cultural input not otherwise possible in the classroom, they can help student to process information.

Based on the explanation above the writer will try to make the students' more interesting in learning English special in English song. Focusing on the problem faced the students in listening, the study tries to prove the students that English very interting and fun to learn and they increas their English skill specially in Listening.

According to Lynch (2008: 23) "almost everyone loves music. It is a part of our language and life from before birth onwards. As babies, we hear lullabies. As young children we play, sing and dance to a myriad of nursery rhymes. As adolescents, we are consumed by the beat of popular music artists worldwide. As adults, every form of advertising we hear, every special event we experience, is in part, music. Music pervades television, movies, theater, and even the nightly news. When we exercise, when we work, when we play, when we worship and even when we die, music is there to reinforce or alter or every mood and emotion".

Hidayat (2013: 21) argues that listening ability is also important to be mastered for its benefit in building a good communication. In building a good communication with others, individuals have to understand the meaning of the messages conveyed by their partners when they have a conversation. In comprehending the message conveyed by others, listening ability is needed.

Teacher should know what students expect in the teaching and learning process, especially in listening class. Therefore, teacher should be able to determine teaching strategies and methodologies in order to make the learning more successful and enjoyable. So, the teaching learning process by using English songs in listening class of English lesson will be successful if the students pay attention to the material and do their assignment better. Also, teacher should have appropriate and suitable strategies and methodologies in the teaching learning process by using English songs in listening class of English lesson. So the effectiveness of using English songs in listening class of English lesson to increase students listening ability will be granted

## **METHOD**

This research was a classroom action research. It meant that an action research which is conducted in a classroom to increase the quality of learning teaching practices (Arikunto, S., Suhardjono & Supardi, 2008: 2). In other hands, it can be defined that it is an action that is done to solve the problem in the classroom. Therefore, this research purposed to solve the problems in teaching learning listening skill.

In conducting this research, the researcher asked an English teacher of SMA Muhammadiyah 09 Kualuh Hulu Kabupaten Labuhanbatu Utara. As mentioned in Arikunto, S., Suhardjono & Supardi (2008: 22), it is suggested for the beginner researcher to make collaboration in conducting an action research. The teacher helps the researcher in planning, action, observation, and reflection. Moreover, it is also possible for the researcher to ask much suggestion from her in conducting of the research.

Subject of the research was the second year students of SMA Muhammadiyah 09 Kualuh Hulu Kabupaten Labuhanbatu Utara in academic year 2016/2017 that was consisted of 20 students, 8 males and 12 females. Most of the students are from some villages. In their some junior high schools in villages, usually there is no language lab to train their listening skills. So, listening activities are not common for the students.

According to Arikunto, S., Suhardjono & Supardi (2008: 20), there are four steps in action research: planning, actions, observation, and reflection. Clearly, can be seen below:

1. Pre-test, to know the score of students' listening skill before treatments.
2. Treatments, the effort to improve students' motivation in learning listening. There will be two cycles in this step:

a. Cycle 1

- 1) Planning, making a plan what is needed and what will be done in action, and making a lesson plan.
- 2) Actions, applying of songs activity in teaching listening based on the lesson plan.
- 3) Observation, observing and writing the situation and condition during the action.
- 4) Reflection, analyzing to know the effect of action and fixing the planning for the next circle

b. Cycle 2

- 1) Planning, identifying the problem from action 1 and deciding the problem solving.
  - 2) Actions, doing the program of action 2.
  - 3) Observation, collecting data in action 2.
  - 4) Reflection, evaluation of action 2.
3. Post-test, to know the score of students' listening skill after giving the treatments.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **A. Result**

For the first step, the students were given pre-test to know their ability in listening skill before doing the treatment. The second, the researcher did the treatment in two cycles as the effort to improve the students' listening skill. Each cycles consisted of 4 stages; planning, action, observation, and reflection. The last, the students were given a post-test to know students' listening skill after giving the treatment.

The result of this research described that students had improved their listening skill. In pre-test, they got a mean score 43,75 and in post-test they got 75,8. It means that there is a significant difference between pre-test and post-test. Beside of that, the treatment in two cycles showed the students' improvement in their motivation. They were very enthusiast during learning listening by song. For detail, it will be explained below.

#### 1. Pre-test

A pre-test was given before doing the treatment. The pre-test was to know students' ability in listening skill. It consisted of 30 items; 15 items of filling in the missing words and 15 items choosing the correct words in bold. In this test, a piece of song was played on a laptop and the students have to answer the question while listening the song. The test given was the same with the post-test. The result of pre-test can be seen in the table below:

Tabel 1. The score distribution in pre-test

<b>Students' Number</b>	<b>True</b>	<b>Answer Total of</b>	<b>Items Score</b>	<b>Note</b>
1	13	30	43	Low
2	12	30	40	Low
3	14	30	46	Low
4	13	30	43	Low
5	14	30	46	Low
6	10	30	33	Fail
7	14	30	46	Low
8	12	30	40	Low
9	20	30	66	Moderate
10	13	30	43	Low
11	17	30	56	Low
12	10	30	33	Fail
13	11	30	36	Fail
14	17	30	56	Low

15	11	30	36	Fail
16	12	30	40	Low
17	17	30	56	Low
18	12	30	40	Low
19	14	30	46	Low
20	10	30	33	Fail

TOTAL 875

MEAN SCORE 43,75 Low

From the table above, it's known that the students' mean score was 43,75. It means that the students' listening skill was still low. Most of them got score under 60. Only one student got moderate score, five students were failure, and the others got low score.

During pre-test, the researcher also observed students' attitude in answer the question. They enjoyed the test given but they were still confused in identifying the missing words in the questions.

From the observation and the students' score in pre-test, it indicated that listening by using song could create the students' motivation. It was a successful effort, but it still needed the treatment of suitable song activity in order to get the higher score.

## 2. Cycle 1

### a. Planning

The data from pre-test was taken to arrange a plan in cycle 1. In this stage, the researcher discussed with an English teacher of SMA Muhammadiyah 09 Kualuh Hulu Kabupaten Labuhanbatu Utara about what should be done in action 1. After identifying the problems in pre-test, the song "Let her go" by Passenger was chosen for the material in action 1. The reason of choosing this song was based on the criteria of song selection; the song was popular enough with the students, it had clear and understandable lyric, and it was suitable level difficulty.

### b. Action

The action was divided into 3 steps; pre-listening, while-listening, and post listening.

#### 1. Pre-listening

- a) The research warmed the students up by asking them questions; what they know about English songs and who artist they like. They were also asked to compare English songs with Indonesian songs.
- b) The researcher explained about the procedure of listening activity.
- c) The papers materials were given to the students.
- d) The students were given several minutes to read the material and guess the answer.

#### 2. While-listening

- a) After listening, the answers were gone over with class.
- b) Replayed the part where students had trouble understanding the words.
- c) Went over grammar points, the use simple past tense.
- d) The researcher leaded discussion of the synonym, antonym, and diphthong.
- e) Making a summary about the moral values/theme of the song.
- f) The song was played again and students sang along.

#### 3. Post-listening

- a) Students listened to the song and answered the question.
- b) The song was played once, and asked the students whether they need to listen to the song again or not. If they do, the song was played one more time.

### c. Observation

During the action, the researcher observed the students' activity when they were learning listening. The researcher found the students enjoyed the material given. Some of them asked some and answer the questions. But the other students were still confused to follow the activity, and they were talking with their next.

d. Reflection

To know how far the students' achievement in cycle 1, the researcher did an evaluation by giving the students a test. The test was summary from material in action 1. It consisted of 11 items. The result of the test is shown in the table below.

Tabel 2. The score distribution in cycle 1

Students' Number	True	Answer Total of	Items Score	Note
1	5	11	45	Low
2	5	11	45	Low
3	6	11	54	Low
4	6	11	54	Low
5	6	11	54	Low
6	3	11	27	Fail
7	7	11	63	Moderate
8	5	11	45	Low
9	8	11	72	Good
10	6	11	54	Low
11	6	11	54	Low
12	0	11	0	Fail
13	4	11	36	Fail
14	7	11	63	Moderate
15	5	11	45	Low
16	5	11	45	Low
17	8	11	72	Good
18	5	11	45	Low
19	5	11	45	Low
20	6	11	54	Low

TOTAL 972

MEAN SCORE 48,6 = Low

It's known that mean score of the students was still low, only 48,6. However, it had improved from the pre-test. The failure students were decreased from five students became three students. Even though, the next cycle was still needed to get a better result.

3. Cycle 2

a. Planning

Like planning in cycle 1, the data in cycle 2 was taken from reflection of the last action. From cycle 1, the researcher discussed about what the weakness of action 1. The problem such as there were some students still did not focus, and difficult to identifying the missing words. So, the researcher prepared song "And I Love Her" by The Beatles. The material was adopted from the same source with the material in action 1.

b. Action

1. Pre-listening
  - a) Warmed up activity to motivate the students
  - b) The researcher explained the listening procedure
2. While-listening
  - a) The students listened the song and answered the question
  - b) The researcher leaded the discussion about homophone
3. Post-listening
  - a) Summarizing of the material
  - b) The song was played once more and every student sang it together.
- c. Observation

From the action 2, the researcher found that all of students were enthusiast in learning listening. They were also being active listeners. If they had problem, they asked directly. They were not talking with their friend during the lesson. They were full attention and enjoyed the materials.

d. Reflecting

The data by observation above was shown that students have higher motivation than before. It indicated that students interest and enthusiast to the material. However, it is still needed the quantitative data to know students' improvement in listening skill. So, the next evaluation was given again to the students. The test was summary from material in action 2. It consisted of 10 items. The result of the test is shown in the table below.

Tabel 3. The score distribution in cycle 2

Students' Number	True	Answer Total of	Items Score	Note
1	5	10	50	Low
2	5	10	50	Low
3	5	10	50	Low
4	6	10	60	Moderate
5	5	10	50	Low
6	5	10	50	Low
7	6	10	60	Moderate
8	8	10	80	Good
9	8	10	80	Good
10	6	10	60	Moderate
11	9	10	90	Very Good
12	5	10	50	Low
13	5	10	50	Low
14	6	10	60	Moderate
15	6	10	60	Moderate
16	6	10	60	Moderate
17	7	10	70	Moderate
18	5	10	50	Low
19	7	10	70	Moderate
20	6	10	60	Moderate

TOTAL 1.210

MEAN SCORE 60.5 = Moderate

It was a good result; there was no a failure student in this cycle. There was also one student got very good score and two students got good score. The next cycle wouldn't be done because the moderate score was enough to do a post-test.

4. Post-test

A post-test was given to know students' achievement during the treatment. It consisted of 30 items; 15 items of filling in the missing words and 15 items choosing the correct words in bold. The test given was the same with the pre-test. The result of post-test can be seen in the table below:

Tabel 4. The score distribution in post-test

Students' Number	True	Answer Total of	Items Score	Note
1	20	30	66	Moderate
2	23	30	76	Good
3	23	30	76	Good
4	22	30	73	Moderate
5	21	30	70	Moderate
6	21	30	70	Moderate
7	23	30	76	Good
8	24	30	80	Good
9	27	30	90	Very Good
10	21	30	70	Moderate
11	27	30	90	Very Good
12	19	30	63	Moderate
13	21	30	70	Moderate
14	25	30	83	Good
15	23	30	76	Good
16	23	30	76	Good
17	26	30	86	Very Good
18	20	30	66	Moderate
19	25	30	83	Good
20	23	30	76	Moderate

TOTAL 1.516

MEAN SCORE 75,8 = Good

From the table above, the students were got mean score 75,8 (good). So, there was a significant different between the score of students' listening skill in pre-test and post-test.

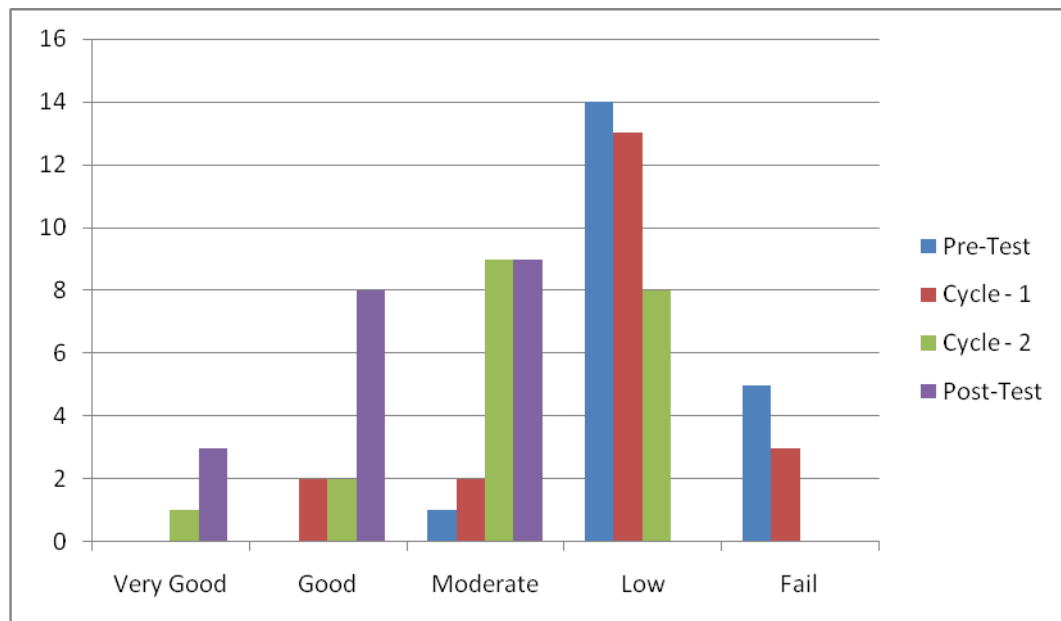
### B. Discussion

Based on the score from pre-test, two cycles and post-test, the researcher could analyze them to look for the result of this research. First, the researcher analyzed the students' scores categories from the five scales interval. See below:

Table 5. The students' score categories

	Pre-Test	Cycle - 1	Cycle - 2	Post-Test
<b>Very Good</b>	0	0	1	3
<b>Good</b>	0	2	2	8
<b>Moderate</b>	1	2	9	9
<b>Low</b>	14	13	8	0
<b>Fail</b>	5	3	0	0

From the table above, most of students got low score in pre-test, cycle 1, and cycle 2. Even though, the number of students who got low score decreased. The students' score were better from the last. Clearly, it could be seen in the chart below.



In pre-test there was no student who got very good and good score, but in post-test there were 3 students who got very good score and 8 students got good score. Furthermore, there were 14 students got low score, 5 students were failure and 1 student got Moderate in pre-test. Meanwhile, in post-test they increased the score until there was no student who got the low score and failure.

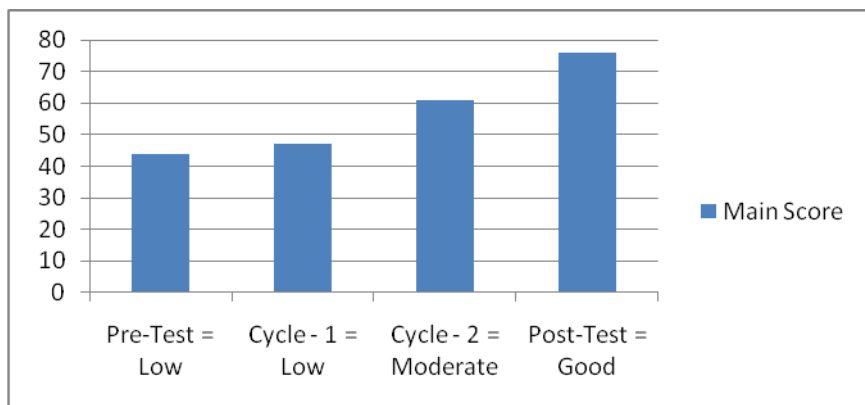
In additional, the result could be seen by analyzing the score of each test. We could compare them to know whether the score was increasing or not.

Table 6. The comparing score

	<b>Main Score</b>	<b>Note</b>
<b>Pre-Test</b>	43,75	Low
<b>Cycle - 1</b>	48,6	Low
<b>Cycle - 2</b>	60,5	Moderate
<b>Post-Test</b>	75,8	Good

The table above shows that the mean score was increasing in each test. In pre-test they got low score, in cycle 1 they were still low, in cycle 2 they got moderate, and in post-test they got good score. The students' improving could be seen in the chart below.





From chart above, it is shown the students always had improvement in listening skill, from low score to good score. The score indicates that the use of song can improve the students' listening skill. Furthermore from the observation in two cycles, the students looked enjoy the material, they were enthusiast, and it made them motivated in learning listening.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

### **A. CONCLUSION**

Based on the data analysis, we can conclude that the use of song in the classroom motivates the students to attend lessons and pay attention in class. Concept of the use authentic listening material such song embodied in the lyrics of popular songs sung by their favorite artists that they idolize are espousing the same values and the same principle that are taught in the authentic material, things like commitment, responsibility, love and compassion. Getting the message through the lyrics of the songs is much more hip and cool. Songs are also easily available, songs present new vocabulary and expression in context, through songs students become familiar with the pronunciation of native speaker, songs provide topics for discussion, and finally most students enjoy listening and analyzing song.

The effectiveness of using song can also be seen from pre-test, two cycles, and post-test. In pre-test, the students got mean score 43,75, in cycle 1 they got 48,6, in cycle 2 they got 60,5, and the last in post-test they got 75,8. It shows that the students' listening skill have improved in each test and cycle. In other hand, the use of songs could improve the students' listening skill.

### **B. SUGGESTION**

Based on the conclusion above, the researcher would like to propose some suggestions as bellow:

1. Because of limited of the time, so it is better to the other researchers to continue this research in order to get more accurate data, and can create the suitable activity in listening skill by using song.
2. From the result of this research, it is better for the teacher to use songs in teaching listening skill, because songs have much value of language and can create students' motivation.

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