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THE ROLE OF ENGLISH SONGS IN ENHANCING SPEAKING SKILL IN AL-KHOIROT ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL

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Abstract

This study explores the role of English song in enhancing speaking skills among santri at Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School. Recognizing that traditional classroom methods often emphasize reading and writing, the research focuses on how music, particularly English songs, can supplement these approaches by improving students' oral communication. Using a descriptive qualitative method, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with five santri who frequently listen to English music. Thematic analysis was applied to identify recurring patterns and insights. The findings reveal that English music plays a significant role in improving students' pronunciation, vocabulary, and speaking fluency. Listening to songs helped learners become more familiar with native pronunciation and natural intonation, while repetition in lyrics supported vocabulary retention. Additionally, the study shows that music enhances students' motivation, reduces learning anxiety, and creates a more engaging environment for language acquisition. Although its effect on listening comprehension was noticeable, it was less pronounced than its impact on speaking skills. Importantly, students emphasized the need for song selection that aligns with Islamic values and is appropriate for their language level. The study concludes that English music, when properly integrated and supported with interactive activities, can serve as a valuable tool to enrich speaking-focused English learning in Islamic boarding school contexts.

Keywords: *English Song, English Language, Language Learning, Music-based Learning, Speaking Skill.*



A. INTRODUCTION

The ability to speak English is a crucial skill that students must possess in today's globalized world. In the context of education, particularly in Islamic boarding schools like Pondok Pesantren Al-Khoirot, proficiency in English plays an important role in preparing students to face international challenges. However, for many students, speaking English is often perceived as a challenging skill to master due to limited opportunities for practical use and the influence of their native language in daily interactions.

One approach that can be used to enhance speaking skills is through songs, especially English-language music. Music has a unique appeal to many people, including students in pesantren, and can serve as an effective tool in language learning. Through song lyrics, students can learn vocabulary, pronunciation, intonation, and sentence structure in English in a fun and engaging way.

English songs can be applied across various subjects, although their effectiveness depends on the students' level and specific needs. In conclusion, incorporating English songs has proven to be an effective method for enhancing students' speaking skills, particularly in the area of pronunciation.(Siki et al., 2024). Utilizing songs to enhance English language skills is an effective approach, as songs are easily accessible in students' daily lives. Additionally, songs are straightforward for students to comprehend and memorize. The integration of songs can support the development of students' listening and pronunciation skills, while also contributing to the expansion of their vocabulary.(Putri, 2024). The utilization of improvised songs as a learning medium can effectively capture students' attention in English lessons and foster greater participation in the learning process(Kusworo & Musfiroh, 2025). It can be concluded that the use of songs as a medium for enhancing English language skills is an effective approach, as songs are readily accessible in students' daily lives and are generally easy for them to comprehend and memorize(Purnama & Wahyudi Karimullah, 2024). The integration of English songs in English language instruction serves to assess their effectiveness in enhancing speaking skills. Utilizing songs provides both in-class and out-of-class entertainment, fostering an enjoyable learning environment. Moreover, songs enable students to improve their vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation effectively. Findings



from a study involving 16 students indicated a positive correlation between the use of English songs and the development of speaking skills (Rizky Amanda et al., 2022). The study concluded that the use of English songs exerts a significant positive effect on students' pronunciation skills, contributing to improved accuracy, clarity, and fluency in spoken English (Elfaizy et al., 2023).

In other study Students' engagement in practicing with their favorite songs enhances their linguistic abilities and fosters greater self-confidence, enabling them to independently address challenges encountered in learning a second language, particularly English. This study highlights an alternative pedagogical method and strategy that educators can adopt to diversify instructional resources, create a more engaging learning environment, and stimulate effective language acquisition practices (Sasmita & Inayah, 2024). Undergraduate students majoring in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) exhibited heightened enthusiasm for acquiring contemporary English and American urban slang vocabulary through exposure to their preferred fast-tempo songs. Irrespective of their occupational backgrounds, the participants reported favorable perceptions of the pedagogical efficacy of urban music, acknowledging that they had progressively assimilated new slang and colloquial expressions from the works of their selected performers (Dokooshkani & Jsllt, 2025).

Meanwhile, The teacher indicated that the song was intended for implementation at all stages of English speaking instruction, commencing with the pre-activity phase and concluding with the post-activity phase. Employing an engaging pedagogical approach—such as the integration of familiar songs—serves to accustom learners to English vocabulary and pronunciation, thereby supporting language acquisition across all proficiency levels (Salsabila et al., 2024). The incorporation of songs as an instructional medium constitutes an effective strategy for enhancing English language proficiency, given their accessibility within students' daily lives. Moreover, songs are typically straightforward for learners to comprehend and commit to memory. Their pedagogical application not only fosters the development of listening and pronunciation competencies but also contributes significantly to the enrichment of students' lexical repertoire (Putri, 2024).



This study aims to explore the role of music in improving English speaking skills at Pondok Pesantren Al-Khoirot. By using English-language songs as a teaching aid, it is hoped that students will be able to better understand and master speaking skills while benefiting from this enjoyable and dynamic approach. The focus of this research is to analyze how music can be used as an effective medium for developing speaking abilities and to what extent it impacts skill improvement.

Through this research, it is expected to gain new insights into the use of music in English language teaching within Islamic educational settings and contribute to the development of innovative teaching methods that align with the unique characteristics of the students.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a Descriptive Qualitative method. A qualitative approach aims to present data based on theoretical foundations through empirical evidence. It is used to understand the meaning interpreted from the phenomenon being studied

This method is chosen to explore how English music helps santri at Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School in enhancing their English speaking skills. Data is collected through semi-structured interviews with 25 santri who were purposively selected based on their frequency of listening to English music. This method is common in social sciences, where personal experiences and perceptions are important.

The interviews were conducted casually in the school area using a mix of English and Indonesian, depending on participants' comfort level. Each session was audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and followed up with field notes to capture non-verbal cues, emotional tone, and environmental context during the interview (e.g., facial expressions, pauses, or hesitations). These field notes helped enrich the interpretation of the data and supported triangulation in the analysis process.

The collected data, which includes interview transcriptions and field notes, were analyzed using Thematic Analysis. The process began with the researcher immersing themselves in the data by reading and rereading the transcripts and notes to gain a full understanding. From this familiarity, initial codes were identified by highlighting



keywords, key phrases, and meaningful expressions. These codes were then organized into broader themes that aligned with the focus of the study, such as vocabulary development, pronunciation improvement, listening comprehension, motivation, and speaking confidence. The researcher continually reviewed and refined the emerging themes to ensure they were accurate and consistent with the original data, including field note observations. Finally, the themes were interpreted and connected back to the research objectives to explain how English music contributes to the development of speaking skills. The inclusion of field notes was particularly useful in understanding the emotional tone, non-verbal behavior, and environmental context, which helped provide deeper meaning and richer insight into the students' responses.

This descriptive qualitative method with thematic analysis provides a comprehensive view of how English music affects students' English speaking skills in an Islamic boarding school context. It helps the researcher identify key themes that represent the santri's language development experience and motivational aspects rooted in their musical interaction.

C. FINDING

The The thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews with the santri at Al-Khoirot Islamic Boarding School revealed five key findings. These findings illustrate the multifaceted role of English music in enhancing their speaking skills and overall language learning experience. Each theme is detailed below, supported by participant testimonies.

1. Songs as an Inherent and Routine Source of English Exposure.

One key finding of the study was that students' interaction with English music emerged as a natural, self-motivated activity rather than a compulsory academic task. Participants consistently shared that they incorporated English songs into their daily lives, especially during periods of relaxation, such as before bedtime or during free moments. This voluntary and regular exposure provides a low-pressure, immersive language environment that extends well beyond the confines of formal classroom instruction. By



selecting to engage with the music, students take charge of their own learning process, thereby cultivating a sense of ownership. This informal learning approach is significant as it alleviates the anxiety and pressure typically linked to formal assessments, facilitating what is commonly referred to as "incidental learning," where language acquisition occurs organically and subconsciously.

"Setiap hari saya pasti dengar lagu-lagu Inggris, kadang waktu mau tidur atau pas santai. Itu sudah jadi kebiasaan saya." (Aji)

(Every day I definitely listen to English songs, sometimes when I'm about to sleep or just relaxing. It has become a habit for me.)

2. Notable Enhancement in Speaking Abilities, Especially in Pronunciation and Fluency

The most significant discovery was the direct and measurable influence of English music on students' speaking abilities. Participants described a process of active imitation, where they would mimic the pronunciation, rhythm, and intonation of the singers. This practice plays a crucial role in developing a more native-like accent, as it introduces learners to the subtleties of connected speech (such as liaisons and contractions) that are often missing in traditional textbook learning. Additionally, singing along, particularly with songs that have a faster tempo, acts as a natural fluency exercise. It forces students to articulate words and phrases more rapidly and fluidly, improving their speech pace and reducing pauses. This approach fosters the development of "muscle memory" for spoken English in an enjoyable context, enhancing their confidence in engaging in real-life conversations. "Waktu saya nyanyi lagu Inggris, saya coba tiru cara penyanyinya ngomong. Lama-lama saya bisa ucapkan kata-katanya lebih jelas dan cepat." (Ilham)

(When I sing English songs, I try to imitate the way the singer speaks. Over time, I can pronounce the words more clearly and quickly.

3. Improved Vocabulary Acquisition Through Contextual Understanding and Repetition.

Listening to English music proved to be an exceptionally effective method for



vocabulary development. Unlike memorizing words from lists, learning through songs offers rich contextual cues. The lyrics integrate new vocabulary into a narrative or emotional context, making the words more significant and, therefore, easier to retain. The natural repetition in music, particularly in choruses and repeated verses, functions as an organic spaced-repetition system, reinforcing new words and phrases with each listen. Participants also highlighted that they acquired more colloquialisms and idiomatic expressions, which expanded their vocabulary beyond formal academic English and facilitated the transition to authentic, everyday language use. This active engagement was evident as students mentioned jotting down unfamiliar words to look up their meanings, transforming passive listening into an intentional learning process.

"Saya sering dapat kata baru dari lirik lagu, terus saya catat dan cari artinya. Karena sering denger, kata-katanya jadi nempel di kepala." (Deni)

(I often find new words from the song lyrics, then I write them down and look up their meaning. Because I hear them often, the words stick in my head.)

4. Significant Enhancement in Listening Comprehension.

While the primary benefit was seen In addition to improvements in speaking, students also reported considerable progress in their listening skills. Music exposes learners to a wide range of authentic auditory experiences, including various accents (such as American, British, etc.), vocal qualities, and speech tempos. This varied exposure helps train the ear to become more adaptable and proficient at understanding spoken English in diverse real-world situations, which contrasts with the often slow and carefully enunciated audio materials typically used in classrooms. Through repeated listening, students enhance their ability to recognize words even when they are sung rapidly or accompanied by background music, a skill that directly improves comprehension in noisy environments or fast-paced conversations. They also learn to grasp the overall message or emotional tone, even when they do not fully understand every word.

"Dulu saya bingung kalau denger orang ngomong Inggris cepat, tapi sekarang lebih paham karena sudah terbiasa denger lagu dengan gaya bicara yang beda-beda." (Hafidz)

(I used to be confused when I heard people speak English fast, but now I



understand better because I'm used to hearing songs with different speaking styles.)

5. Enhanced Motivation and Decreased Learning Anxiety.

A final key finding was the significant emotional impact of using music as a learning tool. Participants consistently reported that the experience was more enjoyable, engaging, and less stressful compared to traditional methods. Music helps to lower the "affective filter," which refers to the emotional barrier of anxiety and self-consciousness that can hinder language acquisition. By presenting the learning process as a form of entertainment, students feel more relaxed and receptive to absorbing the language. This intrinsic motivation—learning for enjoyment—serves as a strong motivator for sustained effort. The personal connection students develop with songs they enjoy fosters a genuine desire to understand the lyrics, further enhancing their motivation to learn. This positive reinforcement creates a lasting interest in the English language that extends beyond mere academic requirements.

"Belajar pakai lagu itu seru banget. Saya jadi nggak bosan belajar Inggris, malah suka nyari lagu baru buat dipelajari." (Deni)

(Learning with songs is really fun. I don't get bored of learning English; in fact, I enjoy looking for new songs to learn from.)

D. DISCUSSION

The study found that English music played a significant role in enhancing students' language skills, particularly their speaking, listening, and vocabulary acquisition. Students reported that listening to English songs became a natural, self-motivated habit, with many incorporating them into their daily routines during moments of relaxation. This voluntary engagement created a low-pressure, immersive environment that encouraged incidental learning. Students also experienced notable improvements in speaking, particularly in pronunciation and fluency, by actively imitating singers' pronunciation, rhythm, and intonation. Additionally, singing along with faster-paced songs acted as a natural fluency drill, helping students articulate words more quickly and confidently. The process also facilitated vocabulary acquisition, as students learned new



words and idiomatic expressions in a contextual setting, which made them easier to remember.

Moreover, students reported significant progress in their listening comprehension, as music exposed them to a variety of accents, speech tempos, and vocal styles. This diverse auditory input helped students adapt to real-world English, improving their ability to understand fast speech and noisy environments. The emotional impact of using music for learning also contributed to increased motivation and decreased anxiety, as students found the process more enjoyable and less stressful than traditional methods. This intrinsic motivation, fueled by a personal connection to the songs, encouraged sustained effort and fostered a lasting interest in learning English, beyond academic requirements.

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Previous research also supports the positive impact of music in language learning. Learning through songs can be recommended as an effective strategy to enhance students' English proficiency. Based on the students' responses, songs have a significant impact on the development of English pronunciation. When learning takes place in a monotonous manner, it becomes challenging to accurately imitate pronunciation. However, when pronunciation practice is accompanied by music with melody and rhythm, the learning process becomes more engaging and facilitates easier acquisition (Situmeang & Panjaitan, 2024). Another study stated that The utilization of song-based activities has been found to more effectively enhance the speaking skills of second-semester B students in the English Department, Faculty of Teacher Training, at Lancang Kuning University (Dahler, 2014). Enhancing students' speaking skills can help address their difficulties in oral communication and foster greater participation. This form of collaborative learning is also effective in promoting mutual cooperation and cultivating a sense of care and concern among peers (Syahdini et al., 2024).

The study reveals that English music greatly supports the improvement of students' speaking, listening, and vocabulary skills. Regular, self-motivated listening during leisure time creates a relaxed, immersive environment that encourages incidental learning. Mimicking singers' pronunciation, rhythm, and intonation enhances accuracy and fluency, while singing faster songs serves as a natural drill for quicker, more confident speech.

E. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that English music substantially contributes to the development of students' language competencies, particularly in the areas of speaking, listening, and vocabulary acquisition. The practice of independently and consistently listening to songs during leisure time fosters a relaxed, immersive, and low-pressure learning environment, thereby facilitating incidental language acquisition. Through the imitation of singers' pronunciation, rhythm, and intonation, students demonstrated marked improvements in pronunciation accuracy and speaking fluency, while singing along to faster-paced songs served as an effective means of enhancing



articulation speed and confidence. Furthermore, the contextual depth of song lyrics supported the retention of new vocabulary and idiomatic expressions, and exposure to diverse accents, speech tempos, and vocal styles strengthened students' listening comprehension in authentic communicative contexts.

These results are consistent with prior research suggesting that the integration of songs into language learning serves as an effective pedagogical approach for improving English proficiency. Song-based learning activities have been shown to address challenges in oral communication, increase learner engagement, and promote collaboration and mutual empathy among students. Moreover, music reduces affective barriers and enhances intrinsic motivation, rendering the learning process both more enjoyable and sustainable. Consequently, incorporating songs into English language instruction not only advances linguistic proficiency but also supports the social and emotional growth of learners.



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