



FROM LYRICS TO LISTENING: A CREATIVE PROGRAM TO IMPROVE THE LISTENING SKILLS OF GRADE 9 STUDENTS AT NURUL JADID JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL THROUGH ENGLISH SONGS

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Abstract

Listening is widely recognized as one of the most challenging skills for junior high school EFL learners, especially when instruction still depends on monotonous, textbook-based audio materials that offer limited authenticity. The From Lyrics to Listening program was designed as a creative instructional model to enhance the listening proficiency of ninth-grade students at Nurul Jadid Junior High School through the integration of English songs. This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach complemented by simple quantitative comparisons to examine students' progress before and after the intervention. During a four-week implementation period, students engaged in structured pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening activities supported by digital platforms such as YouTube and LyricsTraining. The results indicate a notable improvement in students' listening comprehension, particularly in their ability to recognize vocabulary, interpret lyrical meaning, and understand the main ideas of spoken texts. Classroom observations further showed increased enthusiasm, active participation, and learner confidence. Overall, the findings highlight that incorporating English songs into listening instruction is both enjoyable and pedagogically effective, contributing to enhanced motivation and improved listening outcomes.

Keywords: listening comprehension, English songs, EFL learners, song-based instruction, motivation.

Abstrak

Menyimak (listening) secara luas diakui sebagai salah satu keterampilan yang paling menantang bagi peserta didik EFL tingkat sekolah menengah pertama, terutama ketika pembelajaran masih bergantung pada materi audio berbasis buku teks yang monoton dan kurang memberikan keautentikan. Program From Lyrics to Listening dirancang sebagai model pembelajaran kreatif untuk meningkatkan kemampuan menyimak siswa kelas IX di SMP Nurul Jadid melalui integrasi lagu-lagu berbahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif yang dilengkapi dengan perbandingan kuantitatif sederhana untuk mengkaji perkembangan siswa sebelum dan sesudah penerapan program. Selama periode pelaksanaan selama empat minggu, siswa terlibat dalam kegiatan pra-menyimak, saat-menyimak, dan pasca-menyimak yang terstruktur, dengan dukungan platform digital seperti YouTube dan LyricsTraining. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya peningkatan yang signifikan dalam pemahaman menyimak siswa, khususnya dalam kemampuan mengenali kosakata, menafsirkan makna lirik, serta memahami gagasan utama dari teks lisan. Observasi kelas juga menunjukkan peningkatan antusiasme, partisipasi aktif, dan kepercayaan diri siswa. Secara keseluruhan, temuan ini menegaskan bahwa pengintegrasian lagu-lagu berbahasa Inggris dalam pembelajaran menyimak bersifat menyenangkan sekaligus efektif secara pedagogis, serta berkontribusi pada peningkatan motivasi dan hasil belajar menyimak.

Kata kunci: Pawai Hari Santri, Hari Santri Nasional, kearifan lokal, pendidikan karakter.

INTRODUCTION



Listening is widely recognized as a fundamental component of English language proficiency, yet it remains one of the most challenging areas for EFL learners, particularly at the junior high school level. Students often struggle to comprehend spoken English because they have limited exposure to natural speech, encounter unfamiliar pronunciation patterns, and rely heavily on conventional classroom materials that do not represent authentic language use. Recent studies (2020–2025) highlight that listening difficulties among Indonesian learners stem from the dominance of scripted textbook recordings, fast-paced speech, and the inability to decode connected speech (Rahmadani & Fitriani, 2021; Sari & Putra, 2022). As a result, many learners experience frustration, reduced motivation, and anxiety when participating in listening tasks.

Preliminary observations at Nurul Jadid Junior High School align with these findings. Many ninth-grade students reported that listening tasks felt “boring,” “too hard,” and “stressful.” Their difficulties included identifying key words, understanding main ideas, and recognizing vocabulary when spoken at natural speed. These challenges indicate that the instructional materials and teaching strategies commonly used in the classroom may not sufficiently engage learners or provide the authentic exposure necessary for developing listening proficiency. This situation reflects a broader issue in Indonesian EFL settings, where listening instruction has not fully adapted to the needs, interests, and learning habits of Generation Z students.

Interestingly, despite their struggles in the classroom, most students regularly listen to English songs through digital platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, and Spotify as part of their daily routines. This contrast between school-based listening tasks and students’ personal media habits suggests a missed opportunity. Music—being familiar, enjoyable, and widely accessible—has strong potential to serve as a meaningful bridge between learners’ interests and formal listening instruction. Various researchers argue that English songs can function as authentic listening materials because they contain natural pronunciation, real-world vocabulary, and rhythmical patterns that support comprehension (Pratiwi, 2021; Nurhidayati & Paramita, 2022).

More recent studies (2020–2025) emphasize the affective benefits of using songs in listening instruction. Songs have been found to reduce learners’ anxiety levels, create a more relaxed learning atmosphere, and stimulate emotional engagement—factors that are essential for efficient listening comprehension (Kusumawati, 2023). When students feel emotionally connected to the learning material,

they are more motivated to participate and more capable of processing auditory input. Permana and Dewi (2023) discovered that students who frequently listened to English songs showed greater confidence in decoding pronunciation, stress, and intonation patterns. Additionally, Wulandari et al. (2022) found that the melodic structure of songs supports vocabulary retention and helps students internalize grammatical patterns unconsciously.

Beyond their linguistic and affective benefits, songs offer multimodal learning opportunities, especially when combined with digital media. Platforms such as LyricsTraining, YouTube Lyrics Mode, and Spotify provide multimodal input—audio, written lyrics, visuals, and real-time accompaniment—which has been shown to deepen comprehension and support the cognitive processing of language (Larasati & Widodo, 2022; Setiawan, 2024). Digital-based song activities also align with modern language pedagogy, which emphasizes autonomy, creativity, and student-centered learning. According to Suryani and Nugroho (2021), digital song-based tools support independent practice outside the classroom, encouraging repeated listening and self-regulated learning.

In the context of Indonesian education, song-based instruction also supports the objectives of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum. This curriculum encourages teachers to develop flexible, enjoyable, and contextual learning experiences that empower students to take active roles in the learning process. Integrating English songs into listening lessons aligns with these principles by promoting joyful learning, fostering cultural awareness, and connecting classroom instruction with students’ daily media practices. Several studies published between 2020 and 2025 highlight that when instruction aligns with students’ real-life interests and habits, learning becomes more meaningful and effective (Fitria, 2024; Putra & Handayani, 2024).

Considering these theoretical and empirical insights, the From Lyrics to Listening program was developed as a creative instructional model designed to improve listening comprehension among ninth-grade students at Nurul Jadid Junior High School. The program integrates songs into structured listening tasks—including prediction, lyric completion, vocabulary identification, and meaning interpretation—and incorporates digital platforms to enhance engagement. Through this approach, students interact with authentic listening input in enjoyable and familiar formats while developing essential listening strategies.

The rationale for implementing this program is based on three key assumptions supported by recent



research. First, songs can provide authentic and memorable linguistic input. Second, listening through music reduces affective barriers, enabling students to process spoken English more effectively. Third, digital platforms enhance accessibility, allowing learners to engage with English input repeatedly and autonomously. Together, these principles support a comprehensive approach to improving listening comprehension.

Given the persistent challenges faced by students in traditional listening lessons and the potential benefits of song-based learning, this study aims to examine the implementation and effectiveness of the From Lyrics to Listening program. Specifically, it investigates how the program influences listening comprehension, learner engagement, and motivation. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the growing body of research on song-based instruction and provide practical insights for English teachers seeking creative and effective methods for teaching listening in junior high schools.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Listening Skill in Contemporary EFL Learning

Listening is widely regarded as a foundational skill for acquiring a new language, yet it remains one of the most challenging competencies for EFL learners. Over the past five years, studies have consistently emphasized that listening difficulties among Indonesian students stem from limited exposure to authentic spoken English, unfamiliar pronunciation patterns, and the dominance of traditional textbook-based listening materials (Rahmadani & Fitriani, 2021; Sari & Putra, 2022). Such materials often present scripted and overly articulated speech, which does not accurately reflect natural communication. As a result, learners struggle to decode real-time spoken language that includes connected speech, reduced forms, and variations in intonation.

Recent findings (2020–2025) also reveal that students frequently encounter affective barriers during listening activities. Anxiety, low confidence, and lack of motivation contribute significantly to poor listening performance (Kusumawati, 2023). Tambunan (2023) highlights that junior high school students tend to become disengaged when listening materials do not resonate with their interests or daily experiences. Consequently, the listening classroom often becomes passive, with minimal interaction and reduced comprehension among learners.

Given these concerns, scholars have recommended integrating more engaging, authentic, and student-centered listening resources. According to Lestari and Yusuf (2020), effective listening

instruction should incorporate materials that reflect real-life communication and align with learners' socio-cultural and digital environments. This requires a shift from mechanical listening drills toward meaningful, contextualized tasks that support comprehension, autonomy, and enjoyment.

The Pedagogical Value of Songs in Language Learning

The use of songs as instructional tools has gained strong empirical support in the last five years. Songs combine rhythm, melody, repetition, and authentic language use—all of which enhance comprehension, memory, and language acquisition. Nurhidayati and Paramita (2022) found that students who regularly engaged with English songs demonstrated improved pronunciation, rhythm awareness, and lexical retention. These linguistic benefits arise because songs naturally contain repeated structures, formulaic expressions, cohesive devices, and emotionally engaging content.

Songs also reduce anxiety, a crucial factor in listening comprehension. Affective engagement plays an essential role in facilitating language learning, and music is known to lower affective filters by creating a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere (Kusumawati, 2023). When learners feel comfortable, they are better able to focus on meaning and process auditory input more effectively. The emotional connection that students form with music increases their willingness to participate, improves attentional focus, and encourages repeated exposure (Permana & Dewi, 2023).

Empirical studies in recent years confirm the effectiveness of song-based instruction. Pratiwi (2021) discovered that learners improved their ability to identify keywords, infer meaning, and recognize vocabulary after participating in structured listening tasks using English songs. Similarly, Wulandari et al. (2022) reported that songs enhanced vocabulary retention, as students could more easily recall new words embedded in melodies. These findings align with the perspective that music supports implicit learning, where students unconsciously absorb language features through repeated exposure.

Another advantage of songs is that they offer authentic pronunciation and prosodic features. Songs naturally include contractions, reduced speech forms, and variations in intonation that resemble everyday communication (Iskandar & Putri, 2024). Exposure to these features is crucial for EFL learners who rarely encounter natural English outside the classroom. By listening to songs, learners can become familiar with real-world speech patterns, enabling them to develop



better auditory discrimination and comprehension skills.

Digital-Based Learning and Its Integration with Music

Digital learning has become increasingly central to EFL instruction, especially between 2020 and 2025. The rapid growth of educational technology has transformed how teachers present materials and how students interact with language. Digital platforms such as YouTube, Spotify, and LyricsTraining have emerged as powerful tools for enhancing listening instruction (Arifin & Salsabila, 2020). These platforms provide easily accessible, authentic, and engaging listening input that aligns with students' everyday media consumption habits.

Research shows that digital learning environments can significantly improve listening comprehension by offering multimodal input—audio, text, visuals, and interactive elements (Suryani & Nugroho, 2021). For example, YouTube videos often include subtitles, enabling students to match sounds with written forms. LyricsTraining, a gamified platform, encourages learners to complete lyrics, promoting active listening and repeated exposure. Larasati and Widodo (2022) found that students using LyricsTraining developed stronger recognition of vocabulary and improved accuracy in gap-fill tasks.

Digital-based song activities also support learner autonomy. According to Ramadhani and Utami (2023), digital tools motivate students to practice listening independently outside the classroom. They allow learners to replay songs multiple times, slow down audio, and explore lyrics visually—features that are particularly beneficial for lower-proficiency learners. This flexibility aligns with the self-regulated learning principles emphasized in modern EFL pedagogies.

Moreover, digital song integration fits the behavioral patterns of Generation Z learners, who are accustomed to consuming multimedia content throughout their daily routines. Studies by Fitria (2024) and Wijayanti & Dewantara (2023) highlight that incorporating multimedia content that mirrors students' digital lifestyles improves engagement, participation, and comprehension. When students interact with digital music-based materials, they experience learning that is both enjoyable and culturally relevant.

In the context of Indonesian education, digital platforms also support the goals of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum, which prioritizes creativity, flexibility, and contextual learning. Through digital song-based instruction, teachers can create learning

experiences that are adaptive, multisensory, and student-centered.

Empirical Evidence on Song-Based Listening Instruction (2020–2025)

Studies from 2020 to 2025 consistently show that incorporating songs into listening lessons has measurable positive effects on students' performance. For example, Prasetyo (2020) demonstrated that junior high school students experienced significant gains in identifying main ideas and specific information after a four-week song-based intervention. Similarly, Syafitri and Ramlan (2021) reported improvements in vocabulary recognition, pronunciation awareness, and listening accuracy.

More recent research provides even stronger evidence. Dewi and Marlina (2023) found that the use of contemporary English songs increased learner motivation, classroom participation, and listening comprehension scores. Students were more enthusiastic, more willing to discuss meanings, and better able to decode pronunciation when exposed to familiar music. Putra and Handayani (2024) also revealed that structured song-based activities—such as lyric prediction, gap-fill exercises, and theme interpretation—enhanced students' decoding and inferencing skills.

Digital song-based platforms have also shown promising results. Oktaviani and Mulyani (2023) investigated the effects of LyricsTraining on junior high school students and discovered that learners became more attentive and more accurate in completing listening tasks. The platform's interactive nature provided immediate feedback and stimulated learners' competitive spirit, resulting in improved comprehension.

Across multiple studies, the integration of songs consistently leads to improvements in the following areas:

- vocabulary retention
- recognition of high-frequency words
- comprehension of main ideas and details
- pronunciation awareness
- motivation and emotional engagement
- active participation in classroom activities

These findings reinforce the idea that songs are not merely entertainment tools, but powerful instructional resources that enhance both linguistic and affective components of listening.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual foundation of the *From Lyrics to Listening* program is based on three interconnected principles:



a. Songs Provide Authentic and Memorable Input

Songs contain natural pronunciation, discourse patterns, and vocabulary that support real-world listening comprehension. Their melodic and repetitive nature helps students internalize language unconsciously.

b. Music Reduces Affective Barriers

By lowering anxiety and boosting engagement, songs create emotional conditions that are favorable for listening comprehension. Students become more confident and motivated.

c. Digital Integration Enhances Exposure and Autonomy

Digital platforms encourage repeated listening, multimodal processing, and independent learning—all of which are essential for mastering listening skills.

These principles collectively guide the development of the program and support its aim to improve comprehension, motivation, and participation

METHODS

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design supported by simple quantitative measures to examine the effectiveness of the From Lyrics to Listening program in improving the listening comprehension of ninth-grade EFL learners. A descriptive qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to capture students' learning behaviors, engagement, and responses toward song-based instructional activities in a natural classroom setting. In addition, the use of pre-test and post-test scores provided measurable evidence of students' improvement, enabling the study to combine rich descriptive insights with objective performance data.

Recent methodological literature published between 2020 and 2025 emphasizes that qualitative approaches are particularly effective for investigating instructional innovations, as they offer in-depth understanding of learners' experiences and allow flexible data collection methods (Amanda & Kusumawati, 2022; Laili & Sari, 2024). Furthermore, the integration of simple descriptive statistics serves as complementary evidence that helps triangulate qualitative findings and enhances the credibility and trustworthiness of the research results.

Setting and Participants

The study was conducted at Nurul Jadid Junior High School, Paiton–Probolinggo, during the 2024/2025 academic year. This school was selected due to its diverse student population and the availability of English classes that already integrate digital media into daily learning activities. A total of

30 ninth-grade students participated in the From Lyrics to Listening program.

Participants were selected through purposive sampling, a technique commonly used in qualitative research to choose individuals who are most relevant to the research objectives (Yuliani & Prasetyo, 2023). The selected students demonstrated low to moderate English proficiency, experienced difficulties with traditional listening tasks, and showed interest in music or song-based learning activities. In addition, most participants had limited exposure to authentic English outside the classroom, making them appropriate subjects for examining the effectiveness of song-based listening instruction.

Instruments

To obtain comprehensive data, this study employed three main research instruments commonly used in contemporary EFL research. The first instrument was listening tests administered as a pre-test and a post-test to measure changes in students' listening comprehension. Each test consisted of 20 items, including gap-fill tasks, vocabulary recognition, main idea identification, and short comprehension questions. The test items were adapted from digital learning platforms and simplified to match the students' lower-intermediate proficiency level. Prior to implementation, the tests were reviewed to ensure clarity and alignment with the learning objectives.

The second instrument was an observation checklist used throughout the four-week program to document students' learning behaviors, participation levels, and engagement during listening activities. The checklist focused on indicators such as attentiveness, willingness to participate, collaboration with peers, and emotional responses including enthusiasm, anxiety, or passiveness. Observation was employed because it enables researchers to capture authentic classroom behaviors that cannot be fully revealed through test results alone (Sumarni & Nugroho, 2020).

The third instrument was a student perception questionnaire consisting of ten Likert-scale items designed to gather students' views on the use of English songs in listening activities. The questionnaire explored students' perceptions of usefulness, enjoyment, motivation, challenges, and confidence. This instrument reflects the increasing emphasis in recent EFL research (2020–2025) on examining learners' affective responses to instructional interventions (Nurjanah & Kurniawan, 2023).

Procedures

The From Lyrics to Listening program was implemented over a four-week period and consisted of four main stages: planning, implementation, practice,



and evaluation. During the planning stage, the researchers collaborated with the English teacher to select suitable English songs, prepare lesson plans based on listening comprehension frameworks, and design worksheets for prediction, lyric completion, vocabulary development, and interpretation activities. Song selection followed criteria identified in recent studies, including clear pronunciation, moderate tempo, relatable themes, and educational value. Based on these criteria, songs by Ed Sheeran, Taylor Swift, and Shawn Mendes were chosen.

During the implementation stage, each meeting followed a structured listening cycle consisting of pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening activities. In the pre-listening stage, students were encouraged to predict meanings from song titles, discuss possible themes or keywords, and activate prior knowledge. This stage aligns with research highlighting the importance of schema activation in enhancing listening comprehension (Dewantara & Widiyanti, 2022).

In the while-listening stage, students listened to the songs through classroom speakers or YouTube videos and completed tasks such as lyric gap-filling, vocabulary identification, keyword recognition, and pronunciation awareness. These activities were designed to promote active listening by encouraging students to focus simultaneously on sound patterns and meaning. Following this, the post-listening stage involved activities such as interpreting song meanings, discussing moral messages, identifying difficult words, and writing short reflective responses. These tasks aimed to develop higher-order comprehension skills and critical thinking.

The practice stage emphasized independent learning by assigning light listening tasks using digital platforms such as LyricsTraining, YouTube Lyrics Mode, and Spotify Lyrics. This stage was intended to encourage repeated exposure to authentic English input and foster learner autonomy. Previous studies have shown that repeated digital exposure can improve listening fluency and retention (Wijayanti & Dewantara, 2023).

In the final evaluation stage, students completed the post-test, filled out the perception questionnaire, and participated in a reflection session. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected at this stage to support comprehensive analysis.

Data Analysis

This study applied both qualitative and quantitative data analysis techniques. Qualitative data obtained from observations, reflections, and narrative responses were analyzed through a systematic process of data reduction, categorization, theme identification,

and interpretation. This approach is consistent with the qualitative analysis framework proposed by Miles and Huberman and widely adapted by EFL researchers after 2020.

Quantitative data were analyzed using basic descriptive statistics, including the calculation of pre-test and post-test mean scores and the percentage distribution of questionnaire responses. These quantitative findings were used to support and triangulate qualitative results, thereby strengthening the overall trustworthiness of the study.

Trustworthiness

To ensure the rigor and credibility of the qualitative findings, four trustworthiness criteria were applied. Credibility was achieved through data triangulation involving listening tests, classroom observations, and student questionnaires (Amanda & Kusumawati, 2022). Transferability was addressed by providing detailed descriptions of the research setting and participants, enabling readers to assess the applicability of the findings to similar EFL contexts. Dependability was ensured through systematic documentation of research procedures, allowing consistency and potential replication. Finally, confirmability was maintained by grounding all interpretations in empirical evidence derived from student behaviors, test results, and questionnaire data, thereby minimizing researcher bias.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were strictly observed throughout the study. Student participation was voluntary, and anonymity as well as confidentiality were guaranteed. All collected data were used exclusively for academic purposes, and parental permission was obtained prior to the implementation of the research program.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the From Lyrics to Listening program demonstrate a clear improvement in students' listening comprehension, classroom engagement, and learning motivation. Based on the comparison between pre-test and post-test results, students showed substantial progress after four weeks of song-based instruction. The mean listening score increased from 54.3 in the pre-test to 78.6 in the post-test, indicating a gain of 24.3 points. This improvement reflects the effectiveness of integrating English songs into listening instruction, particularly for junior high school EFL learners. The score distribution further confirms this trend, as the majority of students experienced improvement, with no participant showing a decline in performance. Most students



moved from the lower-mid score range to higher achievement levels, suggesting that the program successfully enhanced overall listening ability.

A more detailed analysis of test items revealed that students improved notably in vocabulary recognition, keyword identification, and meaning interpretation. Through repeated exposure to lyrics, learners became more familiar with frequently used words and expressions, allowing them to identify key information more accurately during listening tasks. The rhythmic and repetitive nature of songs also contributed to better pronunciation awareness, helping students distinguish sounds, stress patterns, and intonation. These findings support previous studies indicating that song-based learning provides meaningful and memorable input that facilitates listening comprehension.

Classroom observations conducted throughout the program indicated positive changes in students' learning behaviors and engagement. During the initial sessions, many students appeared hesitant and passive, showing limited participation in listening activities and discussions. However, as the program progressed, students became increasingly active and enthusiastic. By the third meeting, learners began responding more confidently during prediction and post-listening tasks, and by the final week, most students participated voluntarily in lyric analysis and vocabulary identification. The use of familiar songs from students' daily lives contributed significantly to this increased engagement, as learners showed excitement and curiosity when interacting with the listening materials.

In addition to increased participation, a noticeable reduction in listening anxiety was observed. At the beginning of the program, students often avoided eye contact, remained silent, or relied heavily on peers when completing tasks. Over time, these behaviors diminished as students became more comfortable with the listening activities. The predictable rhythm and enjoyable nature of songs created a relaxed learning environment, making listening tasks feel less intimidating. This emotional shift supports the idea that music can lower affective barriers in language learning, allowing students to process auditory input more effectively.

Collaborative learning also emerged as a positive outcome of the program. Song-based tasks encouraged students to work together during gap-fill exercises and group discussions. Stronger learners often assisted their peers by repeating lyrics, explaining unfamiliar vocabulary, or sharing interpretations of meaning. This peer interaction fostered a supportive classroom atmosphere and promoted cooperative learning, which

further enhanced students' confidence and willingness to participate.

Students' perceptions of the program, as reflected in questionnaire responses, strongly support the observational and test findings. Most students reported that songs made listening activities easier and more enjoyable, increased their motivation to learn English, and helped them expand their vocabulary. A high percentage of learners also indicated that songs improved their understanding of pronunciation and boosted their confidence in listening. The most positive responses were related to the use of digital tools, with students expressing strong agreement that platforms such as YouTube and LyricsTraining made listening practice more engaging and fun. These responses highlight the compatibility of digital, multimedia-based learning with the preferences of Generation Z learners.

Open-ended feedback further revealed that students felt English became easier to understand through songs and that learning was more enjoyable when music was incorporated into lessons. Many learners emphasized that lyrics helped them catch words they previously could not recognize and allowed them to guess meaning from context more confidently. These perceptions indicate that song-based instruction not only supports cognitive development but also enhances students' emotional connection to the learning process.

The discussion of these findings confirms that the From Lyrics to Listening program effectively improved listening comprehension by combining authentic language input, structured listening tasks, and affective support. The significant increase in test scores aligns with recent research highlighting the benefits of song-based learning in EFL contexts. Songs provide authentic yet accessible input, and their melodic structure helps learners retain vocabulary and internalize language patterns more naturally. The use of active listening tasks encouraged students to engage deeply with the audio, fostering inferencing skills and comprehension accuracy.

Motivation and emotional engagement played a crucial role in the program's success. The reduced anxiety and increased confidence observed among students reflect the impact of a relaxed and enjoyable learning environment. When learners feel emotionally connected to the material, they are more willing to participate and persist in challenging tasks. This finding reinforces the theoretical view that lowering the affective filter is essential for effective language acquisition.

The integration of digital platforms further strengthened the program's impact by providing multimodal input and opportunities for independent



practice. Digital tools allowed students to replay songs, follow lyrics, and learn at their own pace, supporting learner autonomy and repeated exposure. This approach aligns with contemporary educational goals that emphasize student-centered learning and flexibility. In the Indonesian context, the program also reflects the principles of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum by creating a joyful, engaging, and meaningful learning experience.

Despite these positive outcomes, the study has limitations. The four-week implementation period was sufficient to measure short-term improvement but does not guarantee long-term retention of listening skills. Additionally, the small sample size and purposive sampling limit the generalizability of quantitative results, although the qualitative findings remain relevant for similar EFL settings. Overall, the results and discussion indicate that integrating English songs and digital platforms into listening instruction is a promising and effective approach for improving students' listening comprehension, motivation, and classroom engagement.

CONCLUSION & SUGGESTIONS

Based on the triangulated data obtained from the pre-test and post-test results, classroom observations, and student perception questionnaires, this study concludes that the From Lyrics to Listening program is an effective and enjoyable instructional model for improving the listening comprehension of ninth-grade EFL students at Nurul Jadid Junior High School. The program successfully addressed common challenges found in traditional listening instruction by providing engaging, authentic, and meaningful learning experiences. The significant increase in students' listening scores, with an average gain of 24.3 points, indicates notable improvement in key areas such as vocabulary recognition and meaning interpretation. In addition to cognitive gains, the program positively influenced students' affective domain by increasing motivation and classroom engagement while reducing anxiety and reluctance to participate. Furthermore, the integration of digital media allowed students to access authentic multimodal input and encouraged independent learning beyond the classroom context. Overall, English songs functioned as an effective bridge between students' personal interests and formal language learning, transforming the listening classroom into a more dynamic, motivating, and pedagogically sound learning environment.

Based on these findings, several suggestions can be proposed. English teachers are encouraged to integrate song-based activities more systematically into listening instruction rather than using songs merely as warm-up activities. Incorporating songs into

structured listening stages, including pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening activities, can maximize students' comprehension development and active engagement. Teachers are also advised to make greater use of accessible digital platforms such as LyricsTraining and YouTube Lyrics Mode to support self-regulated learning and provide repeated exposure, which is essential for developing listening fluency. In selecting instructional materials, teachers should continue to choose contemporary English songs with clear pronunciation and relatable themes to maintain students' interest and motivation.

For school administrators, it is recommended to ensure the availability and proper functioning of audio-visual facilities, including speakers, projectors, and reliable internet access, to support the effective implementation of digital song-based learning. Administrative support in the form of professional development programs or workshops is also crucial to help teachers develop skills in integrating multimedia and creative instructional models that align with the Merdeka Belajar curriculum. Finally, future researchers are encouraged to investigate the long-term retention effects of song-based listening instruction through longitudinal research designs. Further studies may also focus on examining the impact of songs on specific linguistic features of listening, such as connected speech and reduced forms, which are commonly encountered in authentic spoken English.

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