



POP SONGS AS A CREATIVE LEARNING TOOL TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' LISTENING ABILITIES

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Abstract

Pop songs have been widely used to improve listening ability among students as alternative and creative tools in learning English. This study aims to explore students' voice toward English pop songs usage to increase their listening abilities and to identify the challenges they face during the learning process. This is a descriptive qualitative method which use questionnaire and interviews given to an Indonesian state Islamic University students. The research found that most students use pop songs as a creative listening learning tool as it improves their listening. Moreover, they accept that pop songs enhance their pronunciation, intonation, as well as vocabulary. The students also admit that pop songs help them to become enjoy. In addition, English pop music enhances students' mood and motivation. However, the students mention that there are some challenges appear during their learning namely understanding the fast tempos lyrics, the existence of unfamiliar words, ungrammatical lyrics, and obstacles in culture and religion for Muslim students. This study strengthen that English pop songs is a useful as well as creative tool for listening exercise, particularly as it is used collectively with proper teaching technique namely lyrics' reading, listening repeatedly, as well as clear pronunciation songs' selection.

Keywords: Students' Voice, Creative Learning Tools, English Pop Songs, Listening Ability

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INTRODUCTION

Listening is widely recognized as one of the most fundamental skills in language learning, forming the essential base for achieving proficiency in communication. As an international language, English necessitates that learners cultivate robust listening abilities to comprehend spoken discourse effectively (Syarifudin & Rahmat, 2021). Nonetheless, a significant number of students encounter obstacles in mastering listening comprehension, which can be attributed to restricted exposure and to conventional instructional approaches that may not sufficiently capture their engagement. Within the sphere of English language pedagogy, the utilization of songs has attracted growing interest as an educational instrument. English pop songs, in particular, supply a captivating and genuine medium for practicing listening skills. They provide learners with exposure to real-world language application, including features such as pronunciation patterns, intonation, and colloquial expressions. Moreover, the rhythmic and melodic qualities of songs support memory retention, thereby rendering the learning experience more pleasurable and productive (Utami et al., 2023).

The use of English pop songs can be effectively framed within the theory of task-based language teaching (TBLT) and the concept of authentic materials. Unlike scripted textbook dialogues, songs present a complete, authentic linguistic and cultural artifact that requires learners to engage in real-world listening processes, including decoding connected speech and inferring meaning from context (Nation & Newton, 2020). The creative application lies in designing pedagogical tasks around this authentic material. For instance, gap-fill exercises target selective listening, jumbled lyric activities require global understanding and sequencing, and discussions on thematic content promote critical thinking and cultural awareness. This transforms passive listening into an active, meaning-focused task that mirrors natural language use.

Furthermore, the efficacy of songs is underpinned by their dual impact on the affective filter and cognitive engagement. Music's ability to reduce anxiety and increase motivation directly addresses Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis, positing that lower anxiety creates conditions more conducive to language acquisition. Simultaneously, the melodic and rhythmic structure of songs aids cognitive processing. As argued by Ludke (2021), music can enhance memory encoding and recall through mechanisms like chunking and repetition, making song lyrics more memorable than decontextualized vocabulary lists. This combination of a positive emotional state and enhanced memorability makes pop songs a powerful, creative tool for reinforcing listening comprehension and vocabulary retention.

Despite these advantages, certain challenges are linked to the use of English pop songs for listening comprehension. Some learners find it difficult to grasp the lyrics because of the rapid pace, indistinct pronunciation, and unfamiliar vocabulary, which often includes slang and idiomatic phrases (Rahman et al., 2024). Furthermore, the informal grammatical structures that are common in song lyrics can lead to confusion for students who are more accustomed to the formal language presented in textbooks. A number of studies have investigated the function of music in language acquisition, emphasizing its utility in enhancing vocabulary, pronunciation, and learner motivation. However, there is a limited body of research that has specifically scrutinized students' perceptions regarding the use of English pop songs as a tool for listening comprehension, especially in a formal academic context (Situmeang & Panjaitan, 2024).

This research is propelled by the researcher's personal interest in comprehending students' viewpoints on listening to English pop songs for the enhancement of their listening skills. The investigation concentrates on students enrolled in the English Language Education Department, who are currently in the midst of developing their listening capabilities as a vital element of learning English. From the researcher's initial observations, it was gathered that many students perceive listening to English pop songs as a enjoyable and efficient method to improve their listening comprehension, covering facets such as vocabulary expansion, pronunciation, and understanding of context. With the advancement of the modern era and globalization, Western culture has steadily permeated Indonesia, particularly through pop songs that appeal to the younger generation. This phenomenon has prompted many students to develop an interest in English pop songs. Their curiosity about the lyrics and the meanings behind them leads to an unintentional process of learning English through these songs. This activity offers not only entertainment but also a chance to hone listening skills, build vocabulary, and comprehend correct pronunciation within an enjoyable framework.

The scope of this research is confined to the English Language Education Department at the State Islamic University of Mataram, with specific attention on the students of this department. This cohort was selected as they are at an intermediate stage of their studies and have presumably encountered a variety of English learning methods, including listening exercises. The department offers a pertinent setting for this study, given its emphasis on listening skills as a core part of English language proficiency. Additionally, the students' existing familiarity with English pop songs establishes them as a suitable group for examining the impact of this medium on their listening comprehension. These initial observations have motivated the researcher to delve deeper into students' perceptions of the benefits derived from

listening to English pop songs. By examining students' views on this practice, this study seeks to yield valuable understanding regarding alternative techniques that can be employed to augment listening skills in English language learning. The research aims to fill this gap by inquiring into students' attitudes toward listening to English pop songs and by pinpointing both the benefits and the challenges they face within this learning strategy.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholarly interest in the application of music for language learning has grown considerably. Recent findings affirm that English pop songs substantially support vocabulary building, pronunciation refinement, and increased learner motivation (Kamil, 2024). According to Murphey (2013), songs function as effective models of authentic spoken language; their inherent repetition, rhythm, and rhyme facilitate pronunciation practice and enhance lexical recall, while also immersing students in colloquial, everyday expressions. This body of work collectively confirms music's potency as a pedagogical instrument for advancing listening proficiency.

Multiple empirical studies have specifically investigated the influence of English pop songs on listening comprehension. Tolhairi (2023), examining student perceptions, discovered that 88% of participants found songs to be a stimulating and beneficial medium for honing listening skills, expanding vocabulary, and improving pronunciation, despite some difficulties with rapid lyrics and unfamiliar slang. Corroborating this, Wibianti et al (2023), in a university-level study, reported that repeated listening to lyrics aided students in discerning pronunciation patterns and inferring contextual meaning, though challenges related to fast tempo and informal grammar persisted. Similarly, Putri et al., (2022) observed that high school students demonstrated greater motivation in listening tasks when songs were integrated into lessons, yet they also encountered obstacles stemming from atypical pronunciation and non-standard grammar in the lyrics.

The theoretical foundation of this study is anchored in established language acquisition theories that underscore listening's critical role. Krashen (1982) Input Hypothesis posits that learners require comprehensible input to acquire a language, a need met by the authentic and context-rich input provided by English pop songs. Complementing this, Brown (2011) characterizes listening as an active cognitive process of decoding linguistic signals and constructing meaning. From this perspective, engaging with songs sharpens learners' ability to identify phonemes, intonation, and features of connected speech, all of which are vital for effective comprehension. Synthesizing these perspectives, the current research affirms English

pop songs as a valuable medium for listening skill development, while also recognizing the necessity for targeted instructional strategies to address the linguistic variations they present.

The use of English pop songs in English language teaching has become a focus due to their potential to enhance various language skills among learners, particularly in listening. Research shows that these songs can significantly improve students' listening abilities. Additionally, the use of pop songs has been proven effective in vocabulary acquisition. A study conducted on eighth-grade students found that the group taught with pop songs had a better grasp of vocabulary compared to the group that did not use this method. These songs help reinforce vocabulary through enjoyable and memorable contexts (Imliyana et al, 2015).

Furthermore, pop songs can be a valuable resource for teaching grammar structures, especially tenses. Analysing the lyrics of songs allows students to understand various tenses better, as each song typically contains many examples of different tenses. Integrating songs into lessons can also improve students' pronunciation and speaking skills. Lolong et al (2019) mention that singing along with the song helps them practice intonation, stress, and rhythm naturally, which in turn boosts their confidence and articulation skills.

In the context of listening learning itself, the media used is essential for achieving the learning goals set by the teacher. Media serves as a communication tool and information resource that creates an engaging classroom environment. In general, educational media covers various modern forms of communication that have developed since the late 19th century, such as television, movies, radio, the music industry, newspapers, magazines, advertising, and electronic media like the Internet and mobile phones, all of which serve to entertain and spread information to a wide audience. There are various tools that can be used in teaching listening, such as CD players, digitally recorded materials, tape recorders, and MP3s. Additionally, learning a language is not an easy task, so songs can help motivate and encourage students to stay engaged. Songs are considered an effective and motivating approach for foreign language learners. Teachers must be able to select the right song for teaching. With advancements in technology, EFL students are now more exposed to popular culture, and one of its products is popular songs. These English pop songs can be chosen by teachers to teach listening (Ismail & Damayanti, 2019).

Popular songs are familiar to students and easy to understand. This familiarity comes from the characteristics of popular songs, which are directly connected to daily life and have emerged from various lifestyles and modern social formations. As a learning tool, songs help motivate students by creating a comfortable atmosphere. Students are encouraged to actively

participate in the learning process by utilizing their musical knowledge. In this way, songs help students build confidence in learning the language. Therefore, popular songs suitable for classroom activities, particularly in listening skills, can be very beneficial (Lestary & Seriadi, 2019). Thus, the use of pop songs in English language teaching not only makes learning more enjoyable and relevant but also serves as an effective pedagogical tool to transform traditional language teaching into a dynamic and engaging learning experience for students (Nagauleng, 2015).

METHODS

In order to provide a thorough comprehension of a phenomenon by methodically and factually describing it without changing the variables, this study uses a qualitative research technique with a descriptive method. Studies that aim to capture participant viewpoints and offer detailed accounts of events, experiences, or social contexts as they naturally occur can benefit from the qualitative descriptive technique. Sandelowski (2000) asserts that "qualitative descriptive studies are the method of choice when straight descriptions of phenomena are desired." This method is perfect for research aimed at examining real-life situations and meaning-making processes since it enables researchers to remain close to the data and the participants' speech.

The study was carried out at the State Islamic University of Mataram in Indonesia. The questionnaire used to gather replies from respondents in order to speed up the study process was one of the main data sources. This study employed an open-ended questionnaire. Answers to open-ended inquiries are unrestricted (Geer, 1988). Respondents are encouraged to answer these questions with more than one word, rather than just "yes" or "no." In addition to semi-structured interviews, which offer more freedom than structured interviews, this questionnaire investigates how students interpret English pop music in terms of enhancing listening abilities. This method's primary goal is to collect respondents' thoughts and insights in order to investigate subjects more thoroughly (Fadilla & Wulandari, 2023). Students that actively use English pop music in their learning process make up the research's respondents. Purposive sampling was used to choose the participants in order to make sure they had relevant experiences and were accustomed to listening to English pop songs as part of their language learning routines.

By taking on a non-participatory stance, the researcher let students freely voice their opinions without having any direct effect over them ((Martinez et al., 2024). An online survey with open-ended questions was used to gather data, which revealed students' opinions about

how well English pop songs improve listening comprehension. Selected participants were also interviewed in a semi-structured manner to learn more about their experiences, difficulties, and methods for using songs as a listening aid.

The Miles and Huberman framework, which comprises of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drafting, was followed in the data analysis. In order to concentrate on pertinent themes, data reduction entailed sorting and filtering replies. The information was then categorized and presented as narrative descriptions to emphasize important conclusions about how students saw the advantages and difficulties of using English pop music to improve their listening skills. Ultimately, by spotting trends and recurrent themes that helped address the study objectives, conclusions were reached. By comparing questionnaire responses with interview data, source and technique triangulation was used to guarantee data validity and credibility (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Students from the English Language Education Study Program were interviewed and given questionnaires to complete in order to gather data for this study. The main conclusions of this study are as follows.

Students' voices on English Pop Songs as Creative Learning Tools

English pop songs improve listening abilities

According to the survey, 22 students highly agreed that listening to English pop music improves their listening abilities. Students stressed that songs help them improve their listening comprehension by exposing them to a variety of accents, pronunciations, and intonations. Learners become more aware of the organic flow of spoken English thanks to the melodic rhythms and repeating structure of song lyrics. Many students stated that they were able to identify and internalize frequent words and expressions used in ordinary conversations by repeatedly listening to songs. Only a small percentage of respondents (three students) reported that they had trouble understanding song lyrics because of the use of unfamiliar idioms or slang terms, fast-paced lyrics that made it difficult to discern individual words clearly, and singers' frequent word blending, which obscures pronunciation and meaning. Additionally, they noted that some songs do not always adhere to basic grammar norms, which makes it more difficult to understand the song's entire meaning without consulting written lyrics or translations.

Deeper understanding of these conclusions was obtained via the interviews. A number of students reported that listening to songs trains their ears to detect various English sounds and

nuances that they might overlook in conventional classroom environments. One of the informants mentions it as follows.

“English songs train the ear to distinguish intonation and pronunciation, which enhances listening skills. Common idioms are frequently used in lyrics, which aid with vocabulary and sentence structure comprehension (S1).”

Another student claimed that by listening to songs with a range of tempos and rhythms—from slow ballads that emphasize clear articulation to fast-paced pop songs that test their listening accuracy—they were exposed to a diversity of speech patterns. This variety allowed students to adapt to various speech styles, which ultimately enhanced their overall listening abilities. It is said as follows:

"I listen to about ten English songs every day, which is a great way for me to get better at listening. Thus, I believe that songs have a big influence on my listening skills (S2).

"English songs help because I usually choose the songs I like, with a tempo that is not too fast and clear pronunciation (S3)."

The English pop songs improve students' vocabulary and pronunciation

The questionnaire indicates that 14 students believe that listening to English pop music helps them learn new words and pronounce words correctly. New vocabulary, idioms, slang, and colloquial terms that are not frequently taught in formal academic settings are sometimes introduced through songs. Students highlighted that the context provided by song lyrics made it easier to understand the meanings of new words and phrases. Meanwhile, 7 students mentioned that listening to English pop songs helped them recognize and practice the correct pronunciation of words by mimicking the way singers articulate them, making their spoken English sound more natural.

Four students observed that although songs presented new vocabulary, several words and phrases—particularly idioms and slang—were hard to grasp without further context or translation. As a result, they had to look up definitions or consult the lyrics to improve their knowledge. These conclusions were confirmed by interview responses. As they came across new words in interesting and memorable circumstances, many students said that regular exposure to music spontaneously increased their vocabulary. Four pupils are listed as follows:

"Listening to English songs regularly helps me improve my vocabulary and speaking skills (S5)."

English songs train the ear to distinguish intonation and pronunciation, which enhances listening skills. Common idioms are frequently used in

lyrics, which aid with vocabulary and sentence structure comprehension (S1)".

"Listening to English songs often assists enhance our vocabulary and speaking ability (S6)."

Another student noted that songs frequently employ slang and informal language, which made it easier for them to comprehend how English is used in everyday situations. In terms of pronunciation, students stressed that they may practice articulation, stress patterns, and intonation by imitating vocalists. Singing along to slow-paced, clear songs helped individuals learn how to pronounce words correctly, while quicker songs tested their capacity to keep up and improved their speaking abilities.

"Listening exercises are made fun by songs. The melody makes it easier for us to recall words. Slang terms or statements that are often used in everyday life can occasionally help us better understand the context (S3).

Songs make English learning become enjoyable

According to the survey, 22 students said that English pop music enhanced the fun and interest of language learning. They said that incorporating music into their study produced a calm and stress-free atmosphere. Students' motivation and interest in studying English rose because music offered an emotional connection that traditional learning resources frequently lacked. Only three students, however, reported that although English pop songs made learning fun, they occasionally had trouble comprehending certain lyrics because of fast-paced singing, foreign vocabulary, or idiomatic phrasing. Additionally, they noted that several songs valued melody above precise pronunciation, making it more difficult to understand the precise words and meanings without consulting written lyrics or translations.

Responses from interviews supported this idea. Students reported that music helped them stay motivated and engaged by fostering a positive and engaging learning environment. Two pupils observed,

"Studying English becomes less stressful and more enjoyable when songs are used. It lifts my spirits and makes learning enjoyable (S4).

Songs are more thrilling and pleasurable than formal talks, which can be tedious. We still learn even though it doesn't feel like studying (S3)".

Another student reported that they were more engaged and participated in class activities when teachers chose songs that suited their musical tastes. Many students also mentioned how songs' emotional content—such as poignant lyrics or captivating melodies—made it simpler to recall words and phrases, which improved their language learning experience even more.

“Naturally, music greatly inspires me to learn English, particularly since I enjoy Taylor Swift's songs so much. I'm more motivated to learn English since I truly want to comprehend their lyrics (S2)”.

English pop music improves mood and motivation

Results revealed that 20 students concurred that listening to English pop music really improves their mood and inspires them to learn the language. Students talked about how music made it easier for them to unwind, lowered their stress levels, and fostered a supportive learning environment that promoted engagement. The emotional connection to music played a crucial role in sustaining their motivation to learn. Meanwhile, only a few respondents (5 students) mentioned that certain English pop songs contained lyrics that were difficult to understand due to fast-paced delivery, unclear pronunciation, or unfamiliar vocabulary, which sometimes made learning through music challenging. Some also pointed out that not all song lyrics were appropriate or relevant for learning, as they occasionally included informal or grammatically incorrect expressions that could lead to misunderstandings in language use.

Only five students out of the respondents indicated that their comfort level when employing English pop music as a teaching material was influenced by cultural and religious issues. Some people were picky about the songs they listened to because they believed that some lyrics had themes or messages that went against their moral principles. Others pointed out that although music was fun, it may occasionally be distracting, making it more difficult to focus while learning. The influence of music on motivation was highlighted in interview responses. Two pupils exchanged,

"Songs, especially those by my favorite musicians, really inspire me to study English. I'm inspired to learn more and comprehend the lyrics (S4)”.

"Using songs in learning makes studying English more fun and less stressful. It helps improve my mood and makes learning feel like entertainment (S2)."

Two more students reported that listening to motivational or upbeat music gave them energy and improved the quality and efficiency of their study sessions. Additionally, students said that their engagement was enhanced by personal ties to certain songs or musicians, which prompted them to investigate lyrics, meanings, and cultural allusions, further enhancing their language learning experience.

"English songs motivate me to study harder (S5)."

"Obviously! You will be thrilled to comprehend the words without consulting the translation, particularly if the music is popular or your

favourite. When I finally grasped the song's meaning, I felt incredibly fulfilled. (S3)”

Challenges in Learning to Listen to English Pop Music

Challenges to understand the lyrics

According to the questionnaire, quick tempos, slang, idioms, and ambiguous pronunciation made it difficult for 21 students to comprehend English song lyrics. Rapid lyrics were frequently difficult for students to follow, especially when vocalists employed colloquial language or cultural allusions that they were unfamiliar with. Rap and hip-hop were particularly prone to this problem because of their fast-paced lyrics and intricate rhymes. Only a small percentage of respondents (4 students) stated that they had trouble understanding some of the lyrics, but they overcome these difficulties by listening to the songs again, reading the lyrics, and consulting dictionaries or internet translations. Additionally, they observed that exposure to a variety of songs over time progressively enhanced their capacity to identify pronunciation patterns and more readily understand novel words.

Responses from interviews verified these challenges. Many students clarified that they had to pay close attention to every word in the fast-paced songs, and even then, they occasionally missed important words. Three pupils discussed,

“Sometimes the lyrics move so quickly that I have to pay close attention to understand them. Although difficult, it also helps me become more focused (S3).”

"We can become used to hearing words in various accents and intonations by listening to English music. Sometimes the lyrics move quickly, therefore we have to pay more attention in order to understand the words (S5)”.

“Sometimes the lyrics move so quickly that I have to pay close attention to understand them. Although difficult, it also helps me become more focused (S3)”.

Another student emphasized how idioms and slang increased the song's intricacy and made it more difficult to comprehend its meaning without consulting translations.

"Listening exercises are made fun by songs. The melody makes it easier for us to recall words. Slang terms or statements that are often used in everyday life can occasionally help us better understand the context (R3).

Students reported employing a variety of techniques, like watching lyric videos, reading along with the lyrics, or utilizing translation tools, to get beyond these obstacles. Over time,

these techniques enhanced their vocabulary, helped them understand challenging lyrics, and helped them become better listeners.

Challenges to understand lyric's structures

According to the questionnaire, twenty-one pupils had trouble comprehending the grammatical structures of English pop songs. Many have pointed out that songs frequently place more emphasis on melody and rhythm than on precise grammar, which results in informal or unusual sentence structures. Students acclimated to the traditional grammar norms taught in classrooms were perplexed by this. Only a small percentage of respondents (4 students) stated that even if certain lyrics did not adhere to traditional grammar standards, they saw this as a chance to learn how English is used in informal, everyday discussions. They felt that being exposed to informal structures improved their comprehension of spoken English in everyday situations, making learning more engaging and useful.

Interview responses provided further insight into this challenge. Students noted that while some songs used incomplete sentences, contractions, or slang, they also offered a glimpse into how English is used informally in everyday conversations. One student stated,

"Songs often break grammar rules, but it helps me understand how people speak in casual conversations (S6)."

In order to overcome this, some students made comparisons between grammatically acceptable sentences and song lyrics in order to spot discrepancies and comprehend the context of particular idioms. They were able to strike a balance between their formal grammar understanding and everyday language use thanks to this exercise.

Challenges in culture and religion for Muslims' students

According to the questionnaire, listening to English pop music presented cultural or religious difficulties for 19 students. Some said they were uncomfortable or reluctant to fully connect with the content because certain lyrics or concepts went against their ideals. Only a small percentage of respondents (6 students) stated that, despite the fact that some lyrics did not reflect their cultural or religious beliefs, they were able to do so by carefully choosing songs with neutral or positive themes. They stressed that they were able to continue using English pop songs as a learning aid without compromising their personal values by emphasizing the language advantages of music rather than its content.

Deeper understanding of this problem was obtained through interviews. Students clarified that they frequently filtered their playlists, selecting music that supported their ideas and had neutral or positive meanings. One pupil said,

"When the songs offer positive meanings, I feel more at ease. It increases the enjoyment of learning (S6)".

Students occasionally reported that the songs' cultural allusions were challenging to comprehend, which further complicated the learning process. Many, however, saw these instances as chances to improve their English and widen their awareness of the world by learning more about the cultural background of the language.

DISCUSSION

The study's findings show that students view English pop music as very useful resources for enhancing several facets of their English listening abilities. Most participants said that listening to song lyrics repeatedly improved their comprehension of intonation, pronunciation, and the flow of natural speech. Additionally, students reported that listening to music increased their vocabulary and gave them an enjoyable approach to practice pronouncing words correctly. Additionally, music produced a calm learning environment that boosted motivation and decreased stress, making learning English more pleasurable and emotionally stimulating.

Both questionnaire and interview reply support these conclusions. Students repeatedly talked about how repeated listening made it easier for them to absorb slang, colloquial idioms, and natural pronunciation patterns—all of which are usually absent from conventional textbook-based instruction. Additionally, they demonstrated a deep emotional bond with music, particularly when the songs suited their own preferences, which boosted engagement and interest in English language learning exercises. These results demonstrate the importance of enjoyment and personal significance in language learning, especially when it comes to speaking fluency and listening comprehension. These results corroborate and support earlier research. For instance, Tolhairi (2023) found that 88% of students thought English songs improved vocabulary, pronunciation, and listening skills. But unlike his study, which concentrated on *Pondok Pesantren* pupils, ours is more broadly applicable and includes university students, particularly those majoring in English Language Education. In a similar vein, Wibianti et al (2023) discovered that vocabulary was easier for pupils to recall when it was accompanied by catchy tunes and precise pronunciation. These earlier studies are in line with this one, where students reported that repeating lyrics and melodic patterns improved understanding and memory retention. In contrast to our questionnaire, which employs open-ended questions, their study employed closed-ended questions to ascertain the students' perceptions. As a result, we have a variety of contextual responses to the pupils' perceptions.

Although there are many advantages to using English songs in listening training, this study also found a number of issues that students frequently face, issues that have been noted in other studies. One major challenge is comprehending songs with fast-paced lyrics, which frequently include informal language, colloquial idioms, and poor articulation. This is consistent with Putri et al., (2022), who found that many pupils had trouble understanding words in fast-paced songs. In a similar vein, Muhamad & Rahmat (2020) emphasized pronunciation problems, especially when songs contain sounds that learners are not familiar with, including fricatives, diphthongs, or related speech processes like assimilation, elision, and contractions. Mispronunciations and confusion are sometimes caused by these characteristics.

Furthermore, the use of metaphors, cultural allusions, and figurative language in lyrics can make their meaning difficult for non-native speakers to understand. Additionally, Tasnim (2022) noted that, particularly in culturally sensitive circumstances, cultural mismatches—such as songs with improper themes or values that are at odds with learners' beliefs—may cause discomfort or disengagement. Some Muslim students in the current survey voiced similar worries about specific song lyrics. Large class sizes, little class time, and restricted access to high-quality audio equipment are further logistical issues. Despite these challenges, students frequently came up with their own coping mechanisms, like using dictionaries or translation software, watching music videos with subtitles, and reading lyrics. These results imply that although English songs are useful for teaching listening skills, their successful integration necessitates careful song selection, consideration for learners' backgrounds, and pedagogical support to assist students in navigating linguistic and cultural complexity.

CONCLUSION

The study finds that students perceive that English pop songs as a creative learning tool. The students mention that English pop songs improve students' listening skills. By listening to English pop songs, learners are exposed to real vocabulary and pronunciation. Moreover, English pop songs help students to have enjoy English learning. In addition, English pop music enhances students' mood and motivation in learning. However, there are some challenges experienced by students in listening English pop songs as creative learning tools namely understanding the fast tempos lyric, structures of the lyric as well as obstacles in culture and religion for especially for Muslims' students.

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