

## THE CORRELATION BETWEEN STUDENTS' FREQUENCY OF LISTENING TO ENGLISH SONGS AND THEIR LISTENING ACHIEVEMENT

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### *Abstract*

*This study is aimed at investigating whether there is a significant correlation between students' frequency of listening to English songs and their listening achievement. This study was conducted at the first year students of State Senior High School 9 Bandarlampung, Lampung. A descriptive quantitative was employed in this study which used ex-post facto design and the data were taken from questionnaire, semi-structured interview, and listening test. The data were analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 16.0. The hypothesis was tested by using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The test result showed that there is a significant correlation between students' frequency of listening to English songs and their listening achievement. From the result of interview, it showed that most of the students believe that by having high frequency of listening to English songs, it helps them in recognizing the spoken language and get high score in listening ability.*

**Keywords:** *listening to English song, listening ability, frequency of listening*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Listening, as one of the basic skills of language, plays an important role in the language learning. By listening to sound or spoken language, people are able to produce language. Listening is dominantly used in everyday life. Listening is not only the process of hearing, but also identifying, understanding, and interpreting spoken language as the first step of successful communication. In other words, before someone understands and starts to speak, he or she has to hear the sound, words,

and speech pattern first. Therefore, in the language learning, the first step will be listening while speaking, reading, and writing come later. In learning language one should be a good listener, to be able to focus to what is demonstrated, remember what is shown or told, and then practice speaking to gain functional skill in active communication.

In daily activities, people spend most their time to listen to things, such as world news programs (BBC, CNN, VOA), music, movie, talk show, speech and lectures. Morley (1991) states that

listening is the most common communicative activity in daily life; we can expect to listen twice as much as we speak, four times more than we read, and five times more than we write. Thus, there can be no doubt that every time we do the listening activity.

Actually, the listeners need not only to understand what is being said, but also to select the important and relevant information and reduce it to a form that can be taken down quickly in writing and remain understandable for intake later. As a result, the mastery of listening ability is crucial for English foreign language learner, and it should play an active role in activities and focused tasks. Therefore students need more listening exercises in the classroom even outside of the classroom, so that they are used to listen a target language and could have enough of real world exposure.

According to Orlova (2002) song is short musical work set to a poetic text with equal importance given to the musical and in the words. It may be written for one or several voices and it is generally performed with instrumental accompaniment. It is noticed that students will often recite the words of the song while singing it; it makes the

students unconsciously understand the content of the songs. It will eventually develop their active understanding of the songs. It makes students' ears accustomed to listening either to English song or dialogue or monologue. Listening to song, for most students are enjoyable experiences. Through listening to English songs, students are exposed to authentic example of the target language, because simple and repetitive songs often contain a resurgent grammatical pattern and listening to song also can improve students' motivation and general morale, and show the language not only as a subject of study but also as a source of enjoyment and entertainment.

Orlova and Wonho (2002) have observed that listening to song can develop listening ability. According to them, songs contextually introduce the feature of supra-segmental (how rhythm, stress, intonation, and pronunciation affect students in English context). They believe that students from any language background can take advantage of using songs as an input for their language learning, especially for improving their listening ability and of course their' listening achievement.

Particularly this research is proposed to investigate whether there is significant correlation between students' frequency of listening to English songs and their listening achievement

There are some reviews of related literature in this research: review of theory which include listening and song. In defining what is meant by listening, some experts have their definitions.

Burton (1997) cited in Basaran (2002) states that many people spent 70-80% of their waking hours in some of communication as follows: 9% writing, 16% reading, 30% speaking, and 45% listening. From the statement above, it can be seen that listening is mostly done by people in communicating.

Nunan (1991) states that listening, along with reading, as receptive skill. That is, it requires a person to receive and understand incoming information rather than produce. As people listen, they process not only what they hear but also connect it to other information they already know. In other words, listening is not same as hearing (Rixon, 1986). It is since the former requires whole hearted concentration, readiness and awareness in recognizing what is being heard, especially in spoken language, as there

are listening characteristics that should be taken into account.

According to Morley (1991), listening is the most common communicative activity in daily life, we can expect to listen twice as much as we speak, four times more than we read, and five times more than we write. Because it is the first skill when we learn a language, listening is considered as the first step in learning a language. It means that learning a language is started from listening. That is why listening becomes important to be investigated in this research, listening comes first into human life than the other skills.

Types and process of listening activities have been observed by Boyle (2005) and Rost (2002). They argue that there are three types of listening activities that can be used to help improve listening skill; first is *no overt response activities*. Students do not have to do anything in response to the listening text. Often students' facial expression and body language will betray what they have understood. Activities of this type include storytelling, listening to songs or watching movies and videos. Second is a *short response activity*. Students do not only have to give responses verbally but

can also respond by performing a task in response to instructions, ticking off items on a worksheet as they hear them being said, ticking off true/ false answers in response to statement or writing down missing words from cloze exercises. The last is *long response activities*. Students can engage in answering questions verbally about a listening text, taking notes from a mini-lecture by rewriting what being said in different words to the ones being used or writing a brief summary of a listening text (Boyle, 2005; Rost, 2002).

In line with the explanation above, there are top-down and bottom-up processing in listening. There are two processes involved in listening, and both can be utilized when songs are used as the practice of the target language. The activity which is selected for a particular song will determine which of these processes is active. According to Nunan (1991) bottom-up processing is where the listener builds up the sounds into words, sentences and meaning while top-down processing is where the listener uses background knowledge to understand the meaning of a message. Practicing both of these processes is essential for developing listening comprehension. This

kind of process is what Flowerded and Miller (2005) called as “interactive process”. In this process the listeners use the combination of both top-down and bottom-up process to comprehend the spoken language.

Furthermore, song is defined by Hornby, (1993) as short poem or verses set to music and intend to be sung. Song, which belongs to genre including both lyrics and music, can be added to list. They are marked by richness of content, poetical metaphor and symbol that emotionally reflect the world we live in. Songs can motivate a positive emotional influence on listener. From the statement above, we can infer that songs consist of lyrics or poetic text.

The lyrics of the songs that are sung by the singer can be heard by the listener, and actually it is considered good in English language teaching especially in listening. Because when students are accustomed to listen to English songs they will be easily recognize the utterances of the singer, and that ability can be implied when they have a listening test. Songs are precious resources to develop students’ abilities in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. They can also be used to teach a variety of

language items such as sentence patterns, vocabulary, pronunciation, rhythm, adjectives, and adverbs.

While the students listen to a song, indirectly they could learn to find new vocabularies, pronunciation, grammar and the implementation of a word in phrase or sentence. It is effective, because the students could learn and entertain themselves at the same time (Dozer, 2001; Saricoban and Metin, 2000).

According to Lynch (2006), if the students listen to the target language more often, they will improve their listening ability through the experience by listening to songs. He states that there is a tendency that when the students' frequency of listening to English song is high, the listening score is high. Ekowati (2007) also found that the students who often listen to English songs are more able and easier recognize the spoken language from the native speakers.

The writer assumes that if students listen to English songs more often, they will have better achievement in listening. A large amount of time or high frequency in time of listening to English songs can help develop listening mastery. Thus, the writer is interested in investigating the

students' frequency of listening to English songs and their listening achievement.

However, listening to English songs more often is not the only factor that gives contribution in listening achievement. Factors such as wide vocabulary, good learning strategies, good oral language skill, background knowledge and any other factors also can influence learning achievement. Nevertheless, the writer still believes that frequency of listening to English song correlates with listening achievement.

Based on the problems statements and the theoretical description which are related to research, the hypothesis of this research can be formulated as follows:

There is a significant correlation between students' frequency of listening to English songs and their listening achievement.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study was conducted at the even semester of the tenth grade of State Senior High School 9 Bandarlampung, in academic year of 2011/2012. This study was conducted from April 2012 to June 2012. This study used quantitative approach which used *Ex post facto*

research design since there was no treatment on the subjects of the research but the data was collected by seeing the correlation between cause and effect that may happen (after the fact). *Ex post facto* design involve only one group and does not use control class. Hatch and Farhady (1982) state that *ex-post facto* design is used when the writer does not have control over the selection and manipulation of the independent variable.

Co-relational study focuses on the relationship among variables that exist naturally. It does not involve the manipulation of independent variables. By this reason, the researcher looks at the type and or degree of relationship between two or more variables rather than the cause-effect relationship (Hatch and Farhady, 1982).

In this study the population were all students at the tenth grade of State Senior High School 9 Bandarlampung. There are nine class at tenth grade. In this research, the writer determined the sample by using simple probability random sampling class by using lottery. The writer wrote nine classes in rolled papers and put into a glass. Then, the writer shook the glass twice and one class that came out was selected as the sample.

Therefore, the sample of this research was class X.9, consisting of 30 students and the try out class of this research was class X.6 consisting of 30 students. They were selected since they were reputed have the same level of ability with the sample of this research.

For purpose of this study, the data was gathered by using some data collecting techniques consisting of questionnaire, semi-structured interview, and listening test. To ensure that the items have good quality, the writer used *Pearson Product Moment Correlation*, *Spearman Brown*, and *Cronbach's Alph*.

The data were analyzed by using *Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient*, through SPSS to determine whether there is correlation between two variables or not. If there is a correlation, it is significant or not by using t formula (Coolidge, 2000).

After determining the correlation coefficient, it was necessary to find out whether the hypothesis is accepted or not. The null and accepted hypothesis for *Pearson Product Moment Correlation* as follows:

$H_0$  : there is no significant correlation between students' frequency of listening to English songs and their listening

achievement. We cannot accept this hypothesis if  $r_{\text{value}}$  is lower than  $r_{\text{table}}$ .

$H_1$ : there is significant correlation between students' frequency of listening to English songs and their listening achievement. We can accept this hypothesis if  $r_{\text{value}}$  is higher than  $r_{\text{table}}$ .

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings on correlation between students' frequency of listening to English songs and their listening achievement are based on the data gathered through written and oral interview.

The correlation coefficient ( $r_{xy}$ ) of the two variables was .782 at the significant level of 0.05. It means that there was a positive and high correlation between students' frequency of listening to English songs and their listening achievement.

Positive correlation means that low scores in one variable tend to go together with low scores in another variable; high scores in one variable tend to go together with high scores in another variable (Sugiyono, 2007).

The obtained correlation coefficient then needs to be calculated to find out whether the correlation is significant or

not by using *t formula*. The result of calculation showed that significance of correlation coefficient or *t* obtained is 6.615 in which the *t table* was determined as 2.048 at level significance of 0.05 and  $df= 28$  (see Appendix 17). It was then found out that the correlation coefficient is significant and the correlation is applied to every student in this research, since *t obtained* is higher than *t table* ( $6.615 > 2.048$ ).

This research proves that students who have high frequency of listening to English songs tend to have high listening score, and students who have low frequency of listening to English songs tend to have low listening score.

Coefficient of determination is also conducted to investigate the degree of the contribution frequency of listening to English songs toward the students' listening achievement. the coefficient determination of the correlation is 0.61. It means that frequency of listening to English songs contributes 61% of the students' listening achievement. In other words, it can be said that frequency of listening to English songs explains approximately 61% of the students listening achievement.

The students who have high frequency of listening to English songs are accustomed to the pronunciation of the native speaker. It makes them improve their listening achievement since they could recognize easily some new words and expressions in context that is uncommon.

The students who have high frequency of listening to English songs can also find many new words or vocabularies from the English songs they listened. For example, the students who chose love as the topic of songs, they could get new words such as, *soul*, *closer*, *heartbeat*, and *bring* from song *A Thousand Year* by *Christina Perry*.

By listening to English songs more, it helps the students to use their background knowledge to understand the meaning of the words or message from the English songs they listened. It is proved when the students got the meaning of words or message by understanding contextually while listening to English songs, top-down processing becomes selected strategy (Nunan, 1991). Besides top-down processing, bottom-up processing is also selected when the students listen their favorite English songs. By listening to

English songs, the students are used to use kind of process what Flowered and Miller (2005) called as “interactive process” which is the combination of top-down and bottom up processes.

In addition, from the result of the research, it can be seen that the students who have high frequency of listening to English songs, indirectly they are used to use top-down and bottom up processes. Therefore, when the listening test, they can get the better achievement in each components of listening test, such as determining the main idea, finding details information, making inferences and references, and also vocabulary.

In relation to the facts describe above, it can be summarized that there is a significant correlation between the students’ frequency of listening to English songs and their listening achievement. This is so because by having a high frequency of listening to English songs, it helps the students to have a good listening achievement.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

From reseach findings, it can be concluded that: (1) There is a significant correlation between students’ frequency of listening to English songs and their



listening achievement; (2) The correlation between students' frequency of listening to English songs and students' listening achievement was positive with the determination coefficient ( $r^2$ ) value .61. In other words, the correlation between them was 61%. It can be concluded that students' frequency of listening to English songs has influence on students' listening achievement; (3) Interview analysis in this study shows that the students believe that by having high frequency of listening to English songs help them in recognizing the spoken language. There is a tendency that when the students' frequency in listening to English songs is high, the listening score is also high or it can be said that the students' frequency of listening to English songs higher help improve the students' listening achievement.

It is therefore recommended that the English teacher should motivate their students to listen lots of English songs to enrich them with the variety of linguistic signals (vocabulary, idiom, etc), pronunciation, background knowledge, etc., and to make them ready when confronting the spoken language; by native speaker or native like speakers of

English. It is better for the students to make listening to English songs as a habit at least 30 minutes in a day. If the students listen to English songs more and more, it could help students to improve their listening achievement because they can practice to listen to the target language well all the time indirectly.

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