

A Conceptual Analysis of Utilizing English Songs in Teaching Speaking Skills

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effectiveness of using English songs to enhance speaking skills among seventh-grade students at SMPN 26 Bandar Lampung. A quasi-experimental design was employed, with 30 students in the experimental group, who received instruction incorporating English songs, and 30 students in the control group, who were taught using traditional methods. Data were collected through pretests and posttests assessing speaking skills across five criteria: fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary usage, grammar, and confidence. Additionally, a student motivation questionnaire was administered to gauge engagement and attitudes toward learning. The results indicated that the experimental group showed significant improvement in all areas, with notable gains in fluency and confidence, compared to the control group. Students in the experimental group also reported higher motivation and enjoyment in learning English through songs. The study concludes that English songs can be a valuable tool in improving speaking skills, fostering student engagement, and reducing anxiety. However, the study also highlights the need for teacher training and addressing logistical challenges to fully integrate songs into language instruction. Future research should explore larger, more diverse samples and examine the long-term effects of song-based learning.

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Introduction

English, as a global language, plays a pivotal role in communication across nations, cultures, and professional fields. Its prominence in education, particularly in non-English speaking countries like Indonesia, cannot be overstated (Istiara et al., 2023). Recognized as a critical subject by Indonesia's education system, English is often a requirement for graduation in junior and senior high schools (Napida et al., 2024). Students are expected to develop competency in four core language skills: speaking, reading, writing, and listening (Hasbi & Purnama, 2024). Among these, speaking stands out as a vital skill, as it enables learners to convey ideas, engage in dialogues, and actively participate in discussions and debates. Proficiency in speaking

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is not only a cornerstone of effective communication but also a fundamental requirement in various professions such as public speaking, journalism, translation, and teaching (Andewi, 2024).

Despite its importance, speaking remains one of the most challenging skills for students to master. Many learners struggle with pronunciation, vocabulary acquisition, and confidence, which significantly hinders their ability to speak fluently (Aminatun & Hastomo, 2024). At SMPN 26 Bandar Lampung, a school located in a remote area, these challenges are further compounded by limited resources, low academic performance, and a lack of motivation among both students and teachers. The school's geographical isolation makes it difficult for students to access English learning materials and innovative teaching tools, which exacerbates their struggles with mastering speaking skills (Istiara & Hastomo, 2023).

In addition to these systemic barriers, traditional teaching methods often fail to engage students. The monotonous nature of conventional classroom instruction, combined with uninspiring and rigid teaching practices, frequently leads to disinterest and disengagement (Oktarina et al., 2024). Consequently, students at SMPN 26 Bandar Lampung, like many others in similar contexts, exhibit minimal enthusiasm for learning English. This lack of motivation manifests in low participation rates, poor speaking proficiency, and a general reluctance to use the language in everyday contexts (Hastomo et al., 2024).

Amidst these challenges, music emerges as a promising avenue for enhancing language learning, particularly speaking skills. Music has long been recognized for its universal appeal and its ability to transcend cultural and linguistic barriers (Nadera, 2015). For many students, music serves as a source of joy, creativity, and connection, making it an effective tool for fostering engagement in the classroom. English songs, in particular, have the potential to transform the language learning experience by introducing an element of enjoyment and relatability (Lestari & Hardiyanti, 2020). By leveraging students' natural interest in music, educators can create a more dynamic and stimulating learning environment that encourages active participation and boosts speaking confidence.

The integration of English songs into teaching practices has been explored in various studies, with promising results. Songs offer a unique combination of rhythm, melody, and repetition, which can aid in the retention of vocabulary, pronunciation, and sentence structure (Chou, 2014; S, 2024). The repetitive nature of song lyrics helps learners internalize language patterns, while the rhythm and melody enhance memory retention. Furthermore, singing along to English songs allows students to practice pronunciation in an engaging and non-threatening way, reducing the fear of making mistakes. These attributes make songs a valuable resource for developing speaking skills in language learners.

In addition to linguistic benefits, the use of songs in teaching speaking skills addresses motivational and emotional aspects of learning. Music has the power to evoke positive emotions, reduce anxiety, and create a sense of community among learners (Hasbi & Purnama, 2024). For students who struggle with the pressures of traditional language learning, singing provides a more relaxed and enjoyable

alternative. This emotional connection to music can enhance students' willingness to engage with the language, ultimately fostering greater confidence and competence in speaking (Kholid et al., 2024).

Despite these advantages, the practical implementation of songs in language teaching is not without challenges. Limited access to technology and resources in remote schools, such as SMPN 26 Bandar Lampung, poses significant obstacles. Additionally, some educators may lack the training or confidence to incorporate music into their teaching practices effectively. These barriers highlight the need for comprehensive strategies and guidelines to support the integration of songs into English language instruction. By addressing these challenges, educators can unlock the full potential of music as a tool for language learning.

This study aims to provide a conceptual analysis of how English songs can be utilized to enhance speaking skills among students, with a particular focus on addressing the challenges faced by learners in resource-constrained environments. By examining the theoretical underpinnings and practical applications of using songs in language teaching, this research seeks to bridge the gap between academic insights and classroom realities. It draws upon a diverse range of literature and case studies to explore the multifaceted impact of songs on language learning, from improving linguistic proficiency to fostering motivation and engagement.

The research is guided by several key questions: How can English songs be effectively integrated into teaching practices to improve speaking skills? What are the theoretical foundations that support the use of songs in language education? What challenges do educators face in implementing song-based teaching strategies, and how can these be addressed? By exploring these questions, the study aims to provide actionable recommendations for educators, policymakers, and researchers seeking to enhance speaking skills through innovative and creative methods.

In conclusion, the integration of English songs into language teaching offers a compelling approach to overcoming the challenges associated with traditional instruction. By combining the cognitive, emotional, and motivational benefits of music, educators can create a more engaging and effective learning experience for students. This study emphasizes the need for a comprehensive and adaptable approach to language education, one that leverages the power of music to foster improved speaking skills in diverse educational settings. Through this analysis, the research seeks to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on innovative teaching methods and to inspire educators to explore the transformative potential of music in their classrooms.

Method

Research Design

This study employed a quasi-experimental research design to investigate the effectiveness of using English songs to enhance students' speaking skills. The quasi-experimental approach was chosen to compare the outcomes between two groups: an experimental group that received instruction incorporating English songs and a control group taught using conventional methods. This design is particularly suitable for educational

contexts where random assignment is often impractical. The experimental class consisted of 30 students who were taught speaking skills with English songs integrated into their lessons, while the control class, also comprising 30 students, received instruction without the use of songs. Both groups were selected based on their availability and enrolled in similar classes to ensure comparability. Initial proficiency levels in English were established through a pretest administered at the start of the study.

Instruments

Three primary instruments were used to collect data. First, a Speaking Skill Assessment Rubric evaluated students' performance based on five criteria: fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary usage, grammar, and confidence. Each criterion was scored on a scale of 1 to 5, with a total maximum score of 25. Second, pretests and posttests were developed to measure changes in students' speaking abilities before and after the intervention. The tests included structured tasks such as storytelling, role-playing, and delivering short speeches, providing a comprehensive evaluation of speaking skills. Third, a Student Motivation Questionnaire assessed students' attitudes and engagement in learning English. The questionnaire consisted of 15 Likert-scale items measuring enjoyment, engagement, and confidence in speaking activities, with responses ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Data Collection

The data collection process spanned eight weeks and followed a structured approach. Initially, both groups completed the pretest to establish a baseline for their speaking skills. The pretest tasks were recorded and evaluated independently by two raters to ensure reliability. During the intervention, the experimental group engaged in lessons that utilized English songs as a core teaching tool. Each session included a warm-up activity featuring a selected song, followed by exercises such as singing along, analyzing lyrics for vocabulary and pronunciation, and role-playing scenarios inspired by the song's themes. In contrast, the control group was taught using traditional methods, including grammar drills, textbook exercises, and reading aloud, without incorporating any music or song-based activities.

At the end of the intervention, both groups took the posttest, which mirrored the pretest in structure and evaluation criteria. The posttest tasks were recorded and assessed by independent raters using the same rubric. In addition to the posttest, the students completed the motivation questionnaire, which captured their perceptions of the teaching methods and their impact on speaking confidence and enjoyment.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed quantitatively to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention. Pretest and posttest scores were compared using statistical tests to determine the improvement in speaking skills for both groups. The rubric scores were analyzed for each criterion—fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary usage, grammar, and confidence—to identify specific areas of progress. Questionnaire responses were summarized to assess the motivational impact of incorporating songs into teaching practices. This systematic approach provided a comprehensive understanding of how English songs influenced students'

speaking abilities and their engagement in the learning process.

Results and Discussion

Results

Table 1. Speaking Skills Finding

Criteria	Pretest (Experimental Group)	Pretest (Control Group)	Posttest (Experimental Group)	Posttest (Control Group)	Percentage Improvement (Experimental Group)	Percentage Improvement (Control Group)
Fluency	2.3	2.2	4.1	3.1	78.3%	40.9%
Pronunciation	2.4	2.3	4.0	3.0	66.7%	30.4%
Vocabulary Usage	2.5	2.4	4.2	3.2	68.0%	33.3%
Grammar	2.6	2.5	3.8	3.0	46.2%	20.0%
Confidence	2.7	2.6	4.3	3.2	59.3%	23.1%
Overall Average	12.5	12.3	19.8	15.6	58.4%	26.8%

According Table 1, the findings provide insights into the impact of using English songs on students' speaking skills in the experimental class compared to the control class. Statistical analysis of the results highlights significant differences in performance and engagement between the two groups.

The pretest was conducted at the beginning of the study to evaluate the baseline speaking abilities of the students in both groups. The scores were assessed using the speaking skill assessment rubric, which measured fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary usage, grammar, and confidence. The mean scores for the experimental and control groups were similar, indicating that both groups had comparable initial proficiency levels. For instance, the average pretest score for the experimental group was 12.5 out of 25, while the control group scored 12.3. This close alignment in baseline scores ensured that any subsequent differences could be attributed to the instructional intervention rather than pre-existing disparities in ability.

After the eight-week intervention, both groups completed the posttest, which was identical in structure and scoring criteria to the pretest. The posttest results revealed a marked improvement in the speaking skills of the experimental group compared to the control group. The average posttest score for the experimental group rose to 19.8, reflecting a 58.4% improvement from their pretest scores. In contrast, the control group showed a more modest improvement, with an average posttest score of 15.6, representing a 26.8% increase.

When analyzed by individual criteria, the experimental group demonstrated significant gains in all areas. Fluency scores increased from an average of 2.3 in the pretest to 4.1 in the posttest, suggesting that the use of English songs helped students speak more smoothly and confidently. Pronunciation scores also improved substantially, from 2.4 to 4.0, as students benefited from listening to and mimicking native-like sounds in the songs. Vocabulary usage saw a notable enhancement, with scores rising from 2.5 to 4.2, indicating that students acquired new words and phrases from the lyrics. Grammar scores improved from 2.6 to 3.8, reflecting greater accuracy

in sentence construction, while confidence levels increased from 2.7 to 4.3, showing that students felt more at ease speaking English after participating in the song-based lessons.

The control group also made some progress, but their gains were less pronounced across all criteria. For example, their fluency scores improved from 2.2 to 3.1, and pronunciation scores increased from 2.3 to 3.0. Similarly, vocabulary usage rose from 2.4 to 3.2, grammar from 2.5 to 3.0, and confidence from 2.6 to 3.2. These improvements suggest that traditional teaching methods had some positive effect, but they were not as effective as the song-based approach in fostering speaking skills.

Statistical tests were conducted to compare the posttest results of the two groups, and the differences were found to be significant. The experimental group outperformed the control group in all five criteria, with particularly striking differences in confidence and vocabulary usage. These findings highlight the effectiveness of using English songs as an instructional tool for developing speaking skills.

The student motivation questionnaire provided additional insights into the impact of the intervention on students' attitudes toward learning English. Responses from the experimental group indicated a high level of enthusiasm for the song-based lessons. Over 85% of students in this group agreed or strongly agreed that the use of English songs made learning more enjoyable and engaging. Many students reported feeling more motivated to participate in speaking activities and less anxious about making mistakes. One student noted, "I enjoyed learning English with songs because it felt like fun, not study." Another commented, "Singing helped me remember words better and gave me confidence to speak."

In contrast, students in the control group expressed mixed feelings about their learning experience. While some appreciated the structured approach of traditional methods, others found the lessons monotonous and uninspiring. Only 50% of the control group reported feeling motivated to participate in speaking activities, and several students mentioned that they struggled to stay engaged during the lessons.

Qualitative observations during the intervention further support the quantitative findings. In the experimental group, students actively participated in singing activities, often showing enthusiasm and creativity. For instance, during role-playing tasks based on song themes, many students demonstrated improved fluency and willingness to use new vocabulary. Teachers also observed that students were more willing to take risks in their speaking, attempting complex sentences and expressing their ideas more freely.

In the control group, participation was generally lower, and students appeared more hesitant to speak. Teachers noted that students often relied on memorized phrases and were reluctant to engage in spontaneous speech. This contrast underscores the motivational and confidence-building benefits of integrating English songs into language instruction.

Discussion

The findings of this study provide significant insights into the role of English songs in enhancing speaking skills and align with the results of previous research while also highlighting some unique contributions. By comparing the current findings to

earlier studies, a broader understanding of the effectiveness and challenges of using English songs in language learning can be achieved.

The present study's findings demonstrate that integrating English songs into speaking lessons significantly improves students' fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary usage, grammar, and confidence. This aligns with the work of Aminatun and Hastomo (2024), who found that using English songs increased students' speaking abilities and motivation in a similar setting. They emphasized that the repetitive and rhythmic nature of songs aids language retention and builds students' confidence to speak, a result corroborated by the substantial improvement in confidence scores observed in the experimental group of this study. Both studies also highlight the motivational benefits of music, with students reporting higher engagement and reduced anxiety when participating in song-based activities.

Another comparable study, conducted by Lestari and Hardiyanti (2020), focused on vocabulary mastery as an outcome of using English songs as teaching media. Although vocabulary was not the primary focus of the current study, the findings reveal significant improvement in students' vocabulary usage, reinforcing their conclusions. This suggests that songs effectively introduce new vocabulary in a contextualized and memorable manner, which then positively impacts other aspects of language proficiency, including speaking.

However, the current study diverges from the findings of Anakotta et al. (2020), who explored the integration of fishbowl techniques to enhance speaking skills. While their study demonstrated that innovative instructional strategies could effectively improve speaking performance, it did not address the motivational aspects highlighted in the present research. English songs uniquely engage students emotionally, fostering enjoyment and willingness to participate. This emotional connection appears to amplify the learning experience, a dimension less evident in Saputra's findings.

The findings also reveal some challenges that previous studies have not emphasized. For instance, the implementation of song-based instruction in resource-limited settings, such as SMPN 26 Bandar Lampung, requires additional planning and adaptation. While Güler and Bozkurt (2021) reported the overall effectiveness of using songs, neither explicitly addressed the logistical barriers or the need for teacher training to maximize the potential of this approach. The current study identifies these practical concerns, underscoring the importance of equipping educators with the necessary resources and skills to integrate music into their teaching effectively.

One notable contrast with earlier research is the specific focus on comprehensive speaking skills. While many studies, including those by Rahbar and Khodabakhsh (2013), emphasized isolated aspects of language learning such as vocabulary or motivation, the current research adopts a holistic perspective. By assessing fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and confidence together, this study provides a more integrated understanding of the impact of English songs on speaking proficiency.

In conclusion, the findings of this study are consistent with previous research in demonstrating the benefits of using English songs to enhance language learning. However, they also extend the conversation by addressing practical challenges and offering a broader assessment of speaking skills. This study underscores the potential

of English songs to transform traditional teaching practices, provided that logistical and training challenges are addressed. These results contribute to the growing evidence that creative and engaging teaching methods, such as music-based instruction, are essential for improving language learning outcomes.

Conclusion

This study explored the effectiveness of using English songs to improve speaking skills among seventh-grade students at SMPN 26 Bandar Lampung. The findings revealed that the experimental group, which received instruction incorporating songs, showed significant improvement in fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary usage, grammar, and confidence compared to the control group. The positive results were supported by both quantitative data, including pretest and posttest scores, and qualitative observations, which highlighted increased student engagement and motivation. The use of songs also fostered a relaxed and enjoyable learning environment, reducing anxiety and enhancing students' willingness to participate in speaking activities. These outcomes align with previous research but also emphasize the motivational aspect of song-based learning, which was less emphasized in earlier studies.

While the study contributes valuable insights into the benefits of using English songs in language education, it also has limitations. The sample was limited to one school, which may not fully represent the broader population of students, especially in urban or more resource-rich areas. Furthermore, the study's focus on a short-term intervention limits the ability to assess long-term effects. Future research should consider larger, more diverse samples and explore longitudinal impacts to provide a more comprehensive understanding. Additionally, addressing the practical challenges of integrating songs into classrooms, such as resource limitations and the need for teacher training, would be valuable. Overall, the study suggests that integrating creative methods like music can be a powerful tool to improve language learning outcomes, particularly for speaking skills, and encourages educators to explore and implement such approaches in their teaching practices.

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