



Research Article

A Study On Using English Songs To Improve Student's Listening Skill In Ho Chi Minh City University Of Food Industry

Le Thi Van Anh

Ho Chi Minh City University of Food Industry, Vietnam

Abstract

The study examines the use of English songs to enhance students' listening skills at Ho Chi Minh City University of Food Industry (HUFI). Listening, a crucial yet challenging language skill, often faces neglect in the classroom, leading to low student motivation and engagement. Traditional passive methods of teaching listening do not effectively address students' learning needs, prompting the exploration of alternative approaches. Music, particularly English songs, offers a dynamic way to create a relaxed and motivating learning environment, providing opportunities for meaningful language exposure through melody and lyrics. This research investigates the effectiveness of integrating English songs into listening exercises to improve listening comprehension among HUFI students. The study involved 102 participants, exploring their difficulties with listening, their perception of the use of songs, and the benefits derived from this method. Findings reveal that students struggle with recognizing English sounds, maintaining concentration, and grasping key ideas in spoken passages. However, using English songs has significantly enhanced students' listening skills by increasing their engagement, vocabulary acquisition, and comprehension abilities. The study highlights the positive impact of songs on student motivation and recommends incorporating music into language teaching to foster better listening outcomes.

Keywords

Listening skill, English songs, Foreign language, Positive and negative connotations.

Introduction

Background

Listening is one of the most important skills. Listening is not only hearing but also comprehending. The ability to understand what the speaker is saying is used to determine the success of speaking. Listening, as the primary means of

communication, is one of the skills that must be learned. The average adult spent far more time in listening than reading, writing and speaking (Janusik, 2002). Listening was once thought to be a passive mechanism in which listeners simply obtained information.

Many teachers simply clarify the key or difficult terms in listening materials to the students, play the recording, and check the exercise responses, influenced by the conventional definition of listening that I described earlier. If students give incorrect answers, teachers can replay the recording until they

*Corresponding author: Le Thi Van Anh

Email addresses: lethivananh1382000@gmail.com

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get the correct answer. Students become bored and therefore unmotivated to learn in this situation. Teaching students to listen is a difficult activity that necessitates contact between teachers and students. Adults, as well as teenagers, like to listen to music. Listening to English songs is fashionable among the younger generation. With beautiful melodies and unforgettable lyrics, incorporating English songs into college listening classes can help students relax, increase motivation, and get enough language exposure.

The characteristics of listening comprehension, factors influencing listening comprehension, and difficulties in teaching listening comprehension will be presented in order to get the key idea of the theoretical context of the present study. There will also be some sections with English songs, including the characteristics of English songs, the roles of English songs in listening classrooms, the reasons for using English songs in listening classrooms, and the principles for selecting songs. The next section of the literature review will concentrate on how to use English songs in college listening classes.

Research questions

The study was presented according to the following questions:

- 1) What is the level of listening skills of HUFİ students?
- 2) How important is it for students to use English songs to improve listening skill?
- 3) What are the strategies for using English songs given to improve listening skill?

Purpose of the study

The aim of this study is to examine at the characteristics of comprehensive listening, the problems that HUFİ students have with learning listening skills, the role of the English song, and strategies for improving listening skills. To develop listening skills, use English songs in training. Following that, students will be given a simple strategy for using English songs to become more involved in listening skills class.

Significance of the study

Students' listening skills are significant, but they often lack them, pay little attention to them, and do not practice them. Furthermore, since listening is both critical and challenging, the technique of using English songs to research carefully listening is an effective solution. The research paper lays out specific techniques for getting students to participate in listening class.

Literature Review

Listening is the basis of speaking and writing as a form of feedback. Since the two performance abilities are more difficult, if a student does not receive good listening feedback, he or she will struggle in writing and speaking. Listening is crucial because it allows students to lay the groundwork for speaking and writing. Students can improve their pronunciation and learn a variety of useful words, phrases, and sentences through listening. While the value of listening is becoming more widely recognized, there are still many challenges in teaching listening to second language learners in the classroom. Many task-based tasks are boring and lack personal interest, according to Yang (2008), and students can lose interest in listening as a result. Some instructors, for example, rely excessively on textbooks and ignore student experiences. Only the teacher delivers lectures in the classroom, and group discussions are uncommon. Therefore, the inclusion of English songs in the listening class not only creates excitement for students but also provides all the necessary information to achieve effective results. The definition of the current study's theoretical context, the features of listening comprehension, factors influencing listening comprehension, and difficulties in teaching listening, as well as an abbreviation for English as a Second Language (ESL), will be discussed. Then there will be several parts of English songs. The study will be discuss about the characteristics of English songs, their function for ESL listening, the reasons for using English songs for ESL listening, and the principles of song selection. The literature review's final segment will concentrate on how to use English songs in college ESL listening lessons.

Definition of Listening skill

As defined by Oxford (1993, p. 206), listening was once thought to be a passive process in which people simply received information. Listening is a dynamic problem-solving ability that encompasses more than just sound perception. Comprehending meaning terms, phrases, clauses, sentences, and connected dialogue is part of listening. Furthermore, listening is one of the basic language skills, according to Saricoban (1999). It is a medium through which children, teenagers, and adults obtain a significant portion of their knowledge, understanding of the world and human affairs, ideals, values, and appreciation. As mentioned by Rivers in Hayuni (2006), listening is a creative ability. It means we comprehend the sound that falls on our ears, and we take the raw material of words, word arrangements, and the rise and fall of the voice, and we create meaning from it. Listening ability, according to Russell in Hayuni (2006), is listening with comprehension, focus, and appreciation. Then, as part of the listening exercise, language skills such as pronunciation, vocabulary mastery, writing, speaking, and reading must be integrated. The ability to pay attention or hear something is referred to as listening abilities. Listening, on the other hand, is not the same as hearing.

Hearing is basically a passive, automatic operation. It is possible to detect sounds without being aware of the fact that you are doing so. Listening, on the other hand, does not immediately translate the words into the message they are conveying. It is important to determine the context and message of the sounds or words while listening. It is a dynamic process that entails much more than simply labeling sounds or phrases.

Problems in Listening skill

Normally, people always listen with a certain purpose. If the purpose of listening is just for relaxation, entertainment to relieve stress such as listening to music, the listener hardly needs any skills at all. However, if the purpose of listening is to acquire information, especially when listening to foreign language tapes and discs to learn languages, learners need to have some skills such as judgment before listening, concentration while listening, infer the main information to be heard from the keywords in the lesson (keywords), analyzed and synthesize the information heard. Listening is made up of a bunch of those individual skills. All of these factors make learning listen a big challenge, and it's no wonder that students struggle with it. The following are the views of some authors when giving the difficulties that learners often face in the process of learning listening skills. As stated by Underwood (1989), listening to English can be difficult for a variety of reasons. 1. Listeners are unable to comprehend what the speakers are saying because they have no control over the rate at which the message is delivered. 2. Pay attention but don't have the ability to ask the speaker to repeat or clarify the message. 3. A lack of well-developed vocabularies. 4. Misunderstanding of texts, including the context of what the speakers are saying. Penny Ur (1996, p. 111), the author of many books on language teaching said that learners often encounter the following difficulties while learning to listen: (1) Failing to recognize the sounds the British say, (2) Having the habit of having to understand all the words in a sentence to understand the content of the lesson, (3) Can't understand when English people speak naturally fast, (4) Need to listen many times to understand, (5) Finding it difficult to grasp all the information and not predicting what the speaker is about to say, (6) If they have to listen for a long time, learners will feel tired and lack concentration. by listing the difficulties of learners in listening to the views of the scientists presented above, several survey questions are formulated to collect factual information for the research process what difficulties faced by students in the learning process. In fact, closely following the reference 102 HUF's students, the most common difficulties in academic work are: (1) Do not recognize English sounds, (2) lack of concentration while listening, (3) difficult to grasp the main part of the listening passage.

Benefits of learning listening skill through songs

Moreover, each school has different facilities. In some schools, the learning equipment is still poor, for example, listening devices (speakers, headphones) are also lacking. That affects students' listening comprehension. In addition, the learning environment is also easy to makes students feel bored and uninterested, leading to poor learning results. Therefore, the use of English songs for listening classes is an effective solution. As specified by Lo, R. and Fai Li, H. C. (1998), learning English through songs will help students improve their linguistic skills by changing the monotonous ambience in the classroom and providing a fun learning atmosphere. Songs are one of the most enchanting and culturally rich tools that can be used in language classes with ease. According to Maley (1987), songs include sounds, poems, and melodies, all of which can help students remember things. It means that songs can help to develop their functionality in English Language Teaching (ELT). The lyrics of a song are rooted in a student's long-term memory after students listen to and memorize it in class. Hornby (1990) states that a song is a piece of music that is sung with words. Song is also a great language package that bundles culture, vocabulary, listening, grammar and a host of other language skills in just a few rhymes. As said by Ross (2006), listening to a phone call to grasp a postponed appointment, or listening to songs to learn more about well-known English-singing artists, are examples of authentic listening materials. When designing lessons and materials to teach students listening skills, it should be kept in mind that students need to be motivated and stay motivated. This is best done by identifying and selecting materials that are relevant to students, such as using English songs. The use of English lessons is to motivate and promote students' interest in the content of the material.

Songs are a type of listening activity with vast potential. The important feature of the song is that the students feel happy and can stay excited. Using English songs in the classroom has many benefits. Through popular contemporary songs, students are very receptive and practice regularly. The most important feature of using songs is repetition. The songs contain sentence patterns and help develop listening, pronunciation, and rhythm skills.

Practicing listening

A listening practice by using English songs can be built in 3 main steps as follows:

- Before listening: during that time, you should prepare the necessary things for the listening lesson.
- While listening: you need to focus your attention on the listening text and develop an understanding of the topic of the lesson.
- After listening: summarize what you have heard

and what knowledge you have about the topic hear.

Before listening

An English song model, learners need to think about songs, describe one of their favorite songs, and predict some possible words or expressions in the song. More specially, there are a few factors to be sure of before you begin listening: motivation, context, and preparation.

i) Motivation:

It is extremely important before listening that you must know clearly what is the purpose and motivation to motivate you to listen to English? A listening lesson that you find interesting, along with exercises that spark further exploration of the listening passage, will be the motivator for most students looking to improve this skill.

ii) Background

Our daily listening in life has provided us with a natural environment to hear language along with the vast amount of information that language provides. However, when students listen to a recording in class, it is a very unnatural process because listening becomes passive. Therefore, in English centers, before letting students listen to a text in English, teachers should introduce the context and situations that are happening in the listening lesson to help students update their knowledge, contribute learn more about the lesson.

iii) Preparation:

Preparing new vocabulary, idioms mentioned in the listening is a necessary preparation before starting the listening.

While - listening

Learners need a specific reason to listen to help focus attention. During the listening process, learners should listen 3 to 4 times for a listening lesson, adjust the speaker's speed and stop at the highlights in the lesson, etc.

The first task in the first listening: find out information about the listening topic. This helps you understand the overall content of the song.

The second task for second listening: listen in more detail. This requires learners to have a deeper and more detailed understanding of the listening text. You can accomplish this task by writing single words, marking or illustrating what you have heard, and so on.

Third listening task: listen again to check your answers or read a faulty summary of the song and correct them.

Self-studying English at home, especially self-training in listening skills, is an activity that requires a lot and often requires high concentration, active learning, and linguistic thinking. It is for this reason that you should allow yourself space to "breathe" or "think" between listening sessions. An effective listening method is to allow learners to compare answers between listening sessions. This not only gives you a chance to relax between listening sessions, but it also helps test your understanding by reviewing before listening again.

Post listening

There are two common forms after listening practice. first, learners will focus on the content: list what they like or don't like from the song's content; write a song commentary for a newspaper or website; write another lyric for the song. the second is to focus on form: look at words and identify word forms; find new words in songs and learn their meanings; note the common collocations (phrases with rules) in the song.

Summary

Listening is the most important and difficult skill. Students often face many difficulties in improving listening skills, such as lack of vocabulary as well as specialized knowledge, not keeping up with the speed of the speaker, lack of concentration when listening, or difficulty grasping ideas main part of the speech. Moreover, some teachers depend on lesson plans and have little interaction with students, so students are often bored and have difficulty concentrating. Therefore, the use of English songs to improve listening skills is an effective method. Songs help students increase interest, provide language structure, improve listening skills, pronunciation, and rhythm. The study presents the difficulties of students when learning listening skills and analyzes the benefits of using English songs to improve listening skills. Then give effective ways to use English songs to practice listening skills more easily and effectively. In addition, the survey was conducted to get the students' actual information about practicing their listening skills and the difficulties they often face to come up with the most effective solutions.

Methodology

The study design

The research paper done is a study of classroom activity. it means a study done in a classroom to increase the quality of learning and teaching listening skills. it is conducted on naturally occurring grounds, primarily using qualitative methods common to research such as observation and recording of events and behavior. It can also be seen as an action taken to solve a problem identified in the class.

Participants

The project was carried out at the Ho Chi Minh University of Food Industry, more specifically 102 students were surveyed. Most majors of the surveyed students are English majors, and some students are from other majors. English is the main subject of these students in the university program; however, there are some cases where students from different programs meet in the same group of English subjects. These groups have about 35-45 students because of the different

schedules between English departments.

Assessments and measures

To gather the data required to address the research questions Questionnaires, classroom observations, and student records have all been considered by the reviewer. To begin, the author uses questionnaires to determine if the author's listening skills are derived from their interests, as well as students' difficulties in learning listening skills. Second, based on a series of questions, the author gathers student material and observes student success in class. Finally, the study of students' thoughts on the overall success of the research moves from the sub-questions to the overall success of the research.

Data analysis

The author collected data using a variety of methods in order to find potential answers to the study questions.

i) Listening is a crucial and challenging ability to master.

Student attitudes and reflections on listening experiences

According to the data gathered, students have a variety of difficulties when learning to listen, including a lack of recognition of English sounds, inability to keep up with the speaker's rhythm, and a lack of vocabulary and sentence structure. When it comes to listening, most students have a tendency to lose focus.

Students' understanding of the listening texts

Prior to the method of listening to English songs, most students lacked attention while listening, were bored easily, and their listening effectiveness was low. The majority of the students felt very excited and concentrated after using the song-listening process, and the class became more relaxed and receptive.

Practice pronouncing words correctly and finding natural ways to shorten them in spoken language.

Students can become familiar with pronunciations, intonations, and inflections as a result of listening experience with songs, which they will use in practice while speaking. The ears become more alert and understanding becomes easier.

ii) Cultural topics related to the song

Students' perceptions of their surroundings

Students consider social and cultural problems, and they believe that their English learning is facilitated in a positive and real-world setting, allowing them to fully appreciate and comprehend the value of foreign language learning. Students recognize societal issues that interest them and seek solutions to those issues. Since then, they've evolved into committed listeners who are eager to contribute to society.

Use songs to increase cultural knowledge and compare differences

A song used in a listening classroom can be exploited for a variety of learning purposes. a song is chosen not only for

relaxation or just entertainment, but students also know a variety of other issues, know the details, content features of the language to understand cultures and differences between English speakers in different countries

Results and discussion

Results

The author gathered the following details after surveying 100 students at Ho Chi Minh University of Food Industry (HUPI):

The first question "Which year are you in?" indicates that the mostly of students surveyed are third-year students (86, 3 %) (Figure 1); followed by the second question "When did you start learning English?" which shows the several of the students who start learning English from the age 6- 10 years old (55, 9%), and 31, 4% of students learn English from age of 3- 6 (Figure 2). It reveals that the students polled have been exposed to and acquainted with English for at least 10 years. This suggests that students spend adequate time learning English before entering university to equip themselves with basis English skills and become fluent at intermediate and advanced levels.

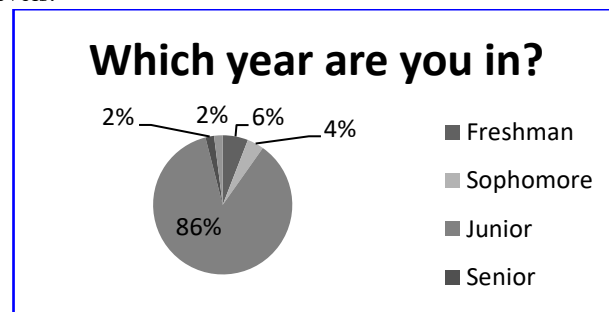


Figure 1: Student academic

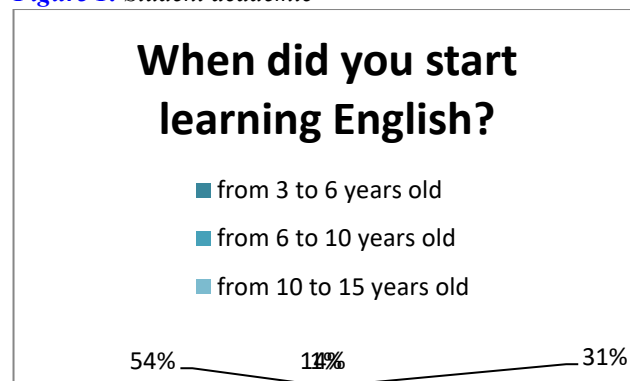


Figure 2: English level of students

Furthermore, the surprising thing is 65, 7 % of students find it challenging in their listening skill and 21,6% in their speaking skills when questioned "Which skill do you find the most difficult?" (Figure 3). This can be explained by the fact that most students' previous learning environments were not

conducive to them using English in and out of class, or they did not place a high priority on learning English.

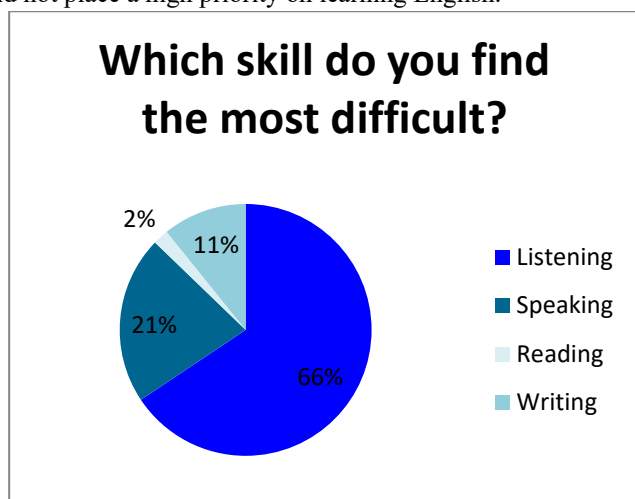


Figure 3: the most difficult skill of students

At school and in self-study, 91,2% of students have trouble acquiring listening skills (Figure 4). Although they have been exposed to English for a long time, most students still have many difficulties in listening skill.

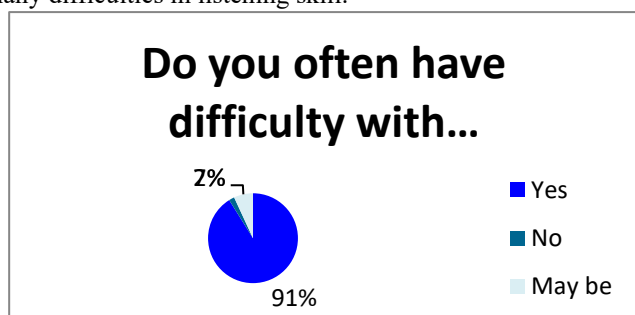


Figure 4:

In terms of key information, the fifth research question “What difficulties do you often face while listening?” uncovered some of the challenges students face while learning and practicing listening skills, including: not keeping up with the speakers' speed (53,9 %), not recognizing English sounds (47,1 %), lack of concentration when listening (42,2 %), difficulty grasping the passage's main idea (44,1 %), and limited vocabularies (20,6 %) (Figure 5).

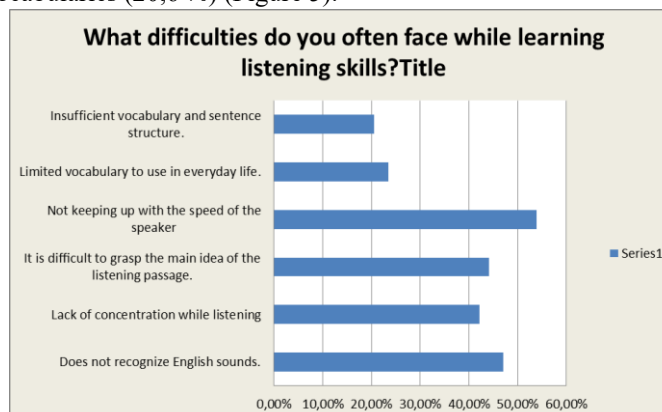


Figure 5: Difficulties when learning listening skill

Related to listening practice, in the sixth question “How do you usually improve your listening skill?” collected data to enhance students' listening skills: listening to English songs (56,9%), watching TV shows (24,5%), watching English movies with subtitles (14,7%), and interacting with native speakers (3,9%) (Figure 6).

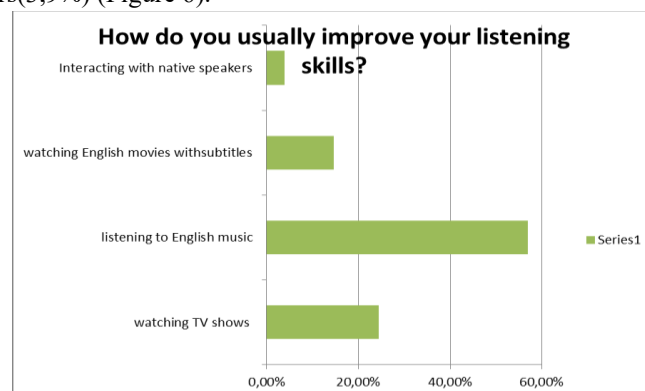


Figure 6: way to improve listening skill

In addition, the survey results also show that 76% of students commented that using English songs to improve listening skills is effective. That said, most students have noticed the effectiveness of listening practice with English songs and found their own solutions.

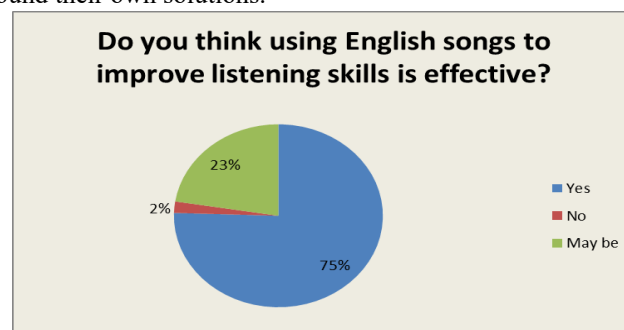


Figure 7: effective of English songs to improve listening skill

Findings

From the results of the survey, two main characteristics are drawn, namely: firstly, most of the surveyed students have started learning English a long time ago, but they still have many difficulties in learning the English language. A special skill is listening to skill. Some of the main difficulties that students often face have been pointed out: (1) not recognizing English sounds, (2) lack of concentration when listening, (3) Difficulty grasping the main idea of a listening lesson. When asked about the causes of difficulties with sounds in English, students pointed out that it is mainly due to the inability to distinguish between homonyms and words with similar pronunciation, confusion between homonyms and words with similar pronunciation, affirmative and negative form or some

influence on pronunciation of speech sequences in English. The reason that students often lose the ability to concentrate on listening is also clarified that it is due to poor health or lack of experience in listening comprehension. The students also said that the reason for the difficulty in grasping the main content of the listening passage is the inability to distinguish the information to be heard from the rest of the information or the inability to deduce the main idea of the listening passage from the text important words. Secondly, the survey results show that the effective level of using English songs to improve listening skills. The majority of students surveyed think that using listening practice from English songs is very effective. They also pointed out that English songs not only help them relax and create a sense of excitement but also provide them with a lot of information and new words. Others, have not yet realized the effectiveness of using this method. Summarizing from the survey questions of the study, it can be seen about the difficulties of HUFU students in learning listening skills and the effectiveness of the method of listening practice from English songs to students.

Discussion

It can be seen that most students are aware of the importance of learning English in general and learning listening skills in particular. Learning English and learning English on each skill requires students to practice persistently and long-term. Students often find their ways to practice listening better. However, they will face many difficulties in listening practice and learning. To have good speaking skills, students must practice speaking anytime, anywhere, similarly to have good listening skills, students must regularly practice with different listening speeds listening. Students often encounter problems while learning listening skills, such as being unable to keep up with the speaker's speed, having poor vocabulary and sentence structure, having trouble remembering sounds in English, and finding it difficult to focus while listening. From the research results, some important characteristics need to be discussed: teaching listening with English songs can improve students' listening ability. Through English songs, students can enjoy listening and learning vocabulary from the lyrics. From using English songs to learning listening skills, students feel more interested in class and study more seriously. The students also actively asked questions to the teacher. They look very excited and complete the lesson very well. The authors of the study considered that English songs were successful in improving students' listening ability. Students can learn many new words from song's lyrics, and their analytical ability is also improved by completing the lyrics of the songs. Songs can enhance students' motivation, help them relax their mind.

Conclusion

Restatement the research

As discussed in the previous section, students' English learning is hampered by difficulties in listening skills. In conventional teaching methods, the author discovered that students were not serious, did not pay attention to the teacher's explanations, were bored, and did not complete the lesson well. Students would be more involved and engaged in learning, more intense, and complete the lesson faster if they use English songs to practice listening. Using English songs as a means of communication allows students to enjoy listening while also creating a calm and relaxing environment. The recommended English songs are "Every time We Touch (Cascada); Let it go (Frozen OST); I do (911 band); I see the light (Mandy Moore ft. Zachary Levi). Those songs have good messages in their lyrics, so they can not only listen but also learn about the meaningful and beautiful lyrics. Students' listening skills have grown as a result of the use of English songs. They have been inspired to teach and learn English through songs in the language. In conclusion, this study will address the question of whether students' listening skills improve when they listen to English songs.

Present key the findings

Two main characteristics emerge from survey data of 102 HUFU's students: the first is the difficulties that students often encounter in the course of acquiring English listening skills. Some major issues include a lack of recognition of English sounds, an inability to concentrate while listening, and difficulty grasping the main concept of what they are listening to. In addition, several major causes of this difficulty were identified, including an inability to differentiate homonyms, a lack of listening comprehension experience, and an inability to distinguish what information needs to be heard from what is not.

Application for teaching and learning

According to the researcher's findings, teaching listening through the use of English songs strengthened students' listening skills. English songs were found to be appealing and made the teaching and learning process more enjoyable. As a result, using the method to enhance students' listening and excitement during the teaching and learning process is recommended. Students' concentration and attention are needed when teaching listening. Teaching learning cannot be done well if they do not concentrate on the subject. The teacher will make the classroom environment more vibrant by using English songs. Using songs, the instructor will pique the students' interest in listening.

Limited and suggestion for further research

The study provides important insights as well as the current state of students learning English, especially in the area of listening. The benefits and drawbacks of acquiring listening skill through listening to English songs are also discussed. However, the author's recognition and analysis of the issue could be faulty or deceptive to some extent; thus, it can be as an indicator of knowledge in future research, and done entirely better, more general, and more profoundly.

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Appendix

The survey of 102 HUFU's students was conducted through the following questions:

1. Which year are you in?
A. Freshmen B. Sophomore
C. Junior D. Senior
2. When did you start learning English?
A From 3to 6 years old
B. From 6 to 10 years old
C. From 10 to 15 years old
D. Others
3. Which skill do you find the most difficult?
A. Listening
B. Speaking
C. Reading
D. Writing
4. Do you often have difficulty with listening skill?
A. Yes
B. No
C. Maybe
5. What difficulties do you often face while learning listening skills?
A. Do not recognize English sounds
B. Lack of concentration while listening
C. It is difficult to grasp the main idea of the listening passage
D. not keeping up with the speed of the speaker
limited vocabulary to use in everyday life
insufficient vocabulary and sentence structure
6. How do you usually improve your listening skills?
A. watching TV shows
B. listening to English music
C. watching English movies with subtitles
interacting with native speakers
7. Do you think using English songs to improve listening skills is effective?
A. Yes
B. No
C. Maybe