



## Exploring the Relationship Between Students' Listening to English Pop Songs and Vocabulary Mastery

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### Abstract

*This study investigates the relationship between students' engagement with English pop songs and their vocabulary mastery among 7th-grade students at SMPIT Al-Ibrah. Data were collected from the scores of a listening English pop songs questionnaire and a vocabulary mastery test. Pearson's correlation analysis revealed a significant positive correlation ( $p < 0.05$ ) between students' listening to English pop songs and their vocabulary proficiency. The findings suggest that students who frequently engage with English pop songs tend to have better vocabulary mastery. This correlation underscores the potential of English pop songs as effective resources for vocabulary acquisition and listening skill development. The study highlights the importance of incorporating authentic and enjoyable materials into language learning activities to enhance students' motivation and engagement. Educators can leverage the power of music to create dynamic and immersive learning experiences that resonate with students' interests and preferences. However, the study's limitations include its focus on a single school and grade level. Future research could explore the long-term effects of integrating English pop songs into language learning curricula across diverse educational settings and age groups. Overall, this study contributes to our understanding of the role of English pop songs in language learning and underscores the importance of innovative approaches to language teaching and learning.*

**Keywords:** *students' engagement, vocabulary mastery, writing skill, Role of English pop songs.*

### INTRODUCTION

Listening skills are considered as difficult basic skills and need to be improved continuously because they provide sound input that serves as a basis for language acquisition and allows students to interact in verbal communication. Purnomo (2017) argues that students will consider listening as a tense skill because it is temporary, and students feel that they often cannot process the information they hear quickly. "Listening" is different from "Hearing". Hearing is a physical ability



while listening is a skill (Sari, 2014). Listening means paying attention and trying to process what you hear.

In other terms, listening skills is when you get the meaning of what the speaker are saying. Because when someone can listen at a higher level, it will make the development of relevant abilities such as reading, writing, and so on will become simpler (Li, 2016). The process of learning to use English is not easy because the Indonesian tongue is different from Westerners. The difference can be in the rules of the sound system (phonology), word formation (morphology), word structure (syntax), meaning of words (semantics), and social context (sociolinguistics).

Listening is the language skill which often used in almost all communication, but this skill is still often considered a very difficult skill and can sometimes create anxiety and frustration by foreign language students and second language learners (Hasan & Tan, 2017). Learning to listen is one of the important skills that must be mastered by students. Because listening is an activity to obtain information where this activity has an important role as the first input for students. Sari (2014) Found some facts that the students still experience a difficulty in expanding vocabulary and also remembering the words. One of the reasons was that they learned vocabulary in boring and inefficient ways. While vocabulary mastery must be prepared in every student to communicate using English in oral and written form.

Vocabulary is a core component in learning English, therefore if students do not have a lot of vocabulary, they will find it difficult to understand what they encounter in text or listen to a conversation (Shakerian et al, 2016; Ulyah et al., 2021; Maruf & Helingo, 2022). The more students master the vocabulary, the easier it will be for students to practice their listening skills.

Songs are one type of fun media that can improve listening skills, vocabulary, and expand cultural knowledge (Uswatun, 2017; Maruf et al., 2021); Maruf & Anjely, 2020). That is because many people find it easier to memorize something fun and melodic than ordinary expressions (Widhiastuti, 2012; Arifin et al., 2022). The song is also considered as an activity like drilling because the pattern



of songs with repetitive lyrics can make us get used to saying English vocabulary unconsciously and pleasantly. In addition, Barnabas (2019) states that listening to western songs helps students to get new ideas and also develop students' vocabulary. Murphey (1992) states that songs are a very useful medium for learning vocabulary, sentence structure, and sentence patterns. Millington (2011) also states that songs can increase students' vocabulary. This statement is also supported by Cebula (2008) because listening to songs students will pick up a lot of new vocabulary.

Popular song or what is usually called the pop song is one of several music genres that are in great demand by many groups, especially young people who are still attending school. Besides being pleasant to hear, pop songs also make us snap our fingers and make someone get carried away when listening to them. Shakerian et al (2016) indicate that pop songs are an ideal source for vocabulary learning because students often spend a lot of free time just listening to music, especially pop songs. The popularity of English pop songs has the potential to motivate students to learn English (Limbong, 2012). In addition, Domoney and Harris (1993) also argue that greater student attention and involvement in listening to pop songs will make students more motivated to learn English, because they will use their knowledge, music, and language. From the above statement, the researcher can assume that students who often listen to English pop songs and spend their free time listening to English pop songs are likely to have a positive relationship with vocabulary mastery.

There are several reasons expressed by experts that pop songs are beneficial for EFL students. The first reason is flexibility. Pop songs have a number of purposes, and there are many reasons why they are considered an important pedagogical tool for language learning in general and particularly for vocabulary development (Limbong, 2012). Pop songs are useful for learning vocabulary, sentence structure, and sentence patterns, as well as reflecting mother tongue culture (Murphey, 1992). Second, Murphey (1992) analyzes that the language used in pop songs is generally associated with the level of native English speakers around the age of 11. So, students will find it easier to understand every word they hear in



the lyrics of pop songs because the language used is easier for them to learn. From the reasons above, it can be concluded that pop songs are a complete language package which combines culture, vocabulary, listening, grammar, and a number of other language components in just a few poems, and pop songs are very suitable as well. Students to acquire a lot of new vocabulary because the language contained in pop songs is very appropriate for their age so that students will find it easier to learn new vocabulary and can also practice their listening skills.

In addition, pop songs can be useful for learning vocabulary, and the language used in pop songs is also related to their age so that students will find it easier to learn new vocabulary. Additionally, English pop songs are more favored by students. Iqbal (2018) also said that English pop song is a song which not only gives a good feeling to the listener but also can represent the listener's feeling, which is why English pop song become one of the students' favorites. This means that if listening to English pop songs is a student's favorite, they will often listen to English pop songs which will affect the student's vocabulary. And there will likely be a correlation between listening to English pop songs and vocabulary mastery.

There are lots of researchers who discuss English songs. Like research conducted by Arevalo (2010) which shows that songs are the type of authentic material that is most suitable for developing listening comprehension because students feel motivated when working with authentic types of material. Additionally, research from Meutia et al (2014) also shows that there is a positive correlation between habits in listening to English mastery of songs and vocabulary towards listening skills. And Sarining (2017) shows that there is a significant relationship between vocabulary mastery, the habit of listening to English songs, and speaking skills. From the previous studies above, we can see a lot of research on English songs. But English songs are still in general form because English songs have so many genres. According to Kailani (2007), there are 9 types or genres of songs which are Classical, Pop, Rock, Metal, Country, Hip-Hop, Ballads, Dance, and Love song. Therefore, the researcher is interested in examining the relationship between listening to English pop songs and vocabulary mastery because seeing the fact above that English pop songs have the potential to motivate students in learning



English, especially in practicing their listening skills and vocabulary mastery due to the more attention and involvement of students to pop songs.

## **METHODS**

### **Research Design**

This research's design is quantitative. The method used in the study is correlation analysis. Correlation analysis is employed when there are two or more variables, and the aim is to determine if there is any relationship between those variables and how strong the relationship is. The researcher chose this design because they want to investigate the relationship between students' listening to English pop songs and their vocabulary mastery.

### **Participants and Setting**

The population of this study consists of all 7th-grade students of Al Ibrah Middle School, which comprises 6 classes and a total of 146 students. Before selecting the research sample, the researcher's first step is to categorize the students by distributing an open-ended questionnaire to all 7th-grade students of SMPIT Al-Ibrah. This questionnaire aims to identify students who frequently listen to English pop songs, as not all students may be familiar with or listen to this genre of music.

The researcher distributed an open questionnaire consisting of four questions via Google Form to all 7th-grade students of SMPIT Al-Ibrah and identified 77 students who fit the criteria for this research.

The next step is for the researcher to determine the sampling technique. For this study, the researcher employed simple random sampling. According to Creswell (2012), at least 30 participants are needed for conducting correlational studies. Thus, the researchers selected 30 students as the sample for this study.

### **Data Collection**

Data collection in this study involves the use of questionnaires and tests. The questionnaire is utilized to gather data on students' listening to English pop songs, while a vocabulary mastery test is employed to collect data on students' vocabulary proficiency.



The Students' Listening to English Pop Songs Questionnaire was adapted from Al-efeshat and Baniabdelrahman (2020) to assess students' listening habits using a five-point Likert scale. The scale ranges from "Strongly Agree" as 5, "Agree" as 4, "Neutral" as 3, "Disagree" as 2, to "Strongly Disagree" as 1.

The questionnaire is presented in Indonesian to facilitate students' comprehension and response. It comprises twenty statements divided into four parts: discovery skills, activity skills, word recognition skills, and attention.

The Vocabulary Mastery Test was adapted from Nation and Beglar's (2007) vocabulary list based on English pop songs commonly listened to by students. The vocabulary in the test was adjusted to match the vocabulary found in these songs. The test consists of 20 questions and is distributed via Google Form. To prevent cheating, a 60-minute timer is set for the test, after which the test automatically closes.

Instrument development involves several steps, including translating the instruments by linguists, instrument testing, and assessing validity and reliability. The instruments were translated and distributed to 15 students, equivalent to the study population, to assess validity and reliability. Pearson Product Moment and Cronbach Alpha tests were conducted to determine validity and reliability.

### **Data Analysis**

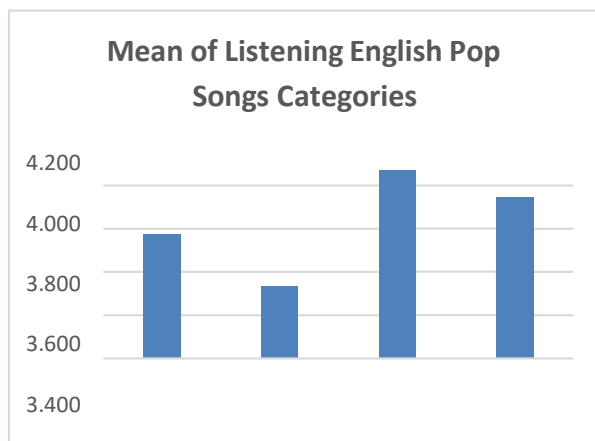
Bivariate correlation analysis is employed as the research design to examine the relationship between two variables. Descriptive statistics are used to provide detailed information on the data collected. Additionally, simple linear regression analysis is used to determine the significant contribution of students' listening to English pop songs to vocabulary mastery. Pearson's product moment correlation is used to analyze the relationship between students' listening to English pop songs (X) and their vocabulary mastery (Y). Statistical software, such as the IBM SPSS17 Statistics program, is utilized for data analysis.

## **FINDING**

### **Students' Listening English Pop Song**

The data on students' listening to English pop songs were collected through the distribution of questionnaires. Descriptive analysis was employed as a tool to calculate the data, utilizing SPSS and Microsoft Excel for analysis. The findings are summarized in the table below:

Table 2. Mean of Listening English Pop Songs Categories



Based on the data collected and analyzed, the results for the four categories of listening to English pop songs are as follows: 1) Discovery Skill ( $M = 3.778$ ), Activity Skill ( $M = 3.534$ ), Word Recognition ( $M = 4.075$ ), and Attention ( $M = 3.946$ ). The analysis indicates that the category with the highest impact on listening to English pop songs is Word Recognition ( $M = 4.075$ ), suggesting that students are particularly adept at recognizing words within the lyrics of pop songs. Conversely, the category with the least impact on listening to English pop songs is Activity Skills ( $M = 3.534$ ), indicating that students may not engage as actively in activities related to listening to English pop songs.

These findings provide valuable insights into students' listening habits and preferences regarding English pop songs, which can inform future teaching strategies and curriculum development initiatives. Further discussion and implications of these results will be elaborated upon in the subsequent sections.

Table 3. Students' Listening English Pop Songs Statistics





Total

N	Valid	30
	Missing	0
Mean		76.37
Median		74.50
Mode		90
Minimum		55
Maximum		93

The analysis of the questionnaire data reveals that the average listening to English pop songs among 7th-grade students at SMPIT Al-Ibrah is positive. The students attained an average score of 76.4 in listening to English pop songs. This indicates that students generally exhibit a good level of engagement with English pop songs.

Several factors may have contributed to this positive outcome. Firstly, students have demonstrated a strong understanding of the content presented in the questionnaire, as evidenced by their responses. Additionally, students appear to view listening to English pop songs as an enjoyable leisure activity, contributing to their willingness to engage with the material.

These findings suggest that fostering a positive attitude towards listening to English pop songs can be beneficial for language learning outcomes. Educators may consider incorporating more interactive and engaging activities involving English pop songs into the curriculum to further enhance students' listening skills.

Overall, the results underscore the importance of creating a conducive learning environment that encourages students to actively participate in language learning activities, such as listening to English pop songs.

### Students' Vocabulary Mastery

The data of the students' vocabulary mastery results can be seen below:

Table 4. Students' Vocabulary Mastery Statistics

	Valid	30
	Missing	0
Mean		76.83





Median	75.00
Mode	95
Minimum	50
Maximum	100

The average vocabulary mastery score of 7th-grade students at SMPIT Al-Ibrah is 76.83, indicating a good level of proficiency. This positive outcome may be attributed to students' frequent engagement with English pop songs in their spare time. Research by Shakerian et al (2016) supports the idea that pop songs serve as an effective source for vocabulary learning, as students often dedicate significant amounts of free time to listening to music, particularly pop songs.

Overall, the statistical summary reflects a commendable level of vocabulary mastery among students, with the influence of listening to English pop songs being a contributing factor to their proficiency.

### **Correlation between Students' in Listening English Pop Songs and Students' Vocabulary Mastery**

The data used to calculate the correlation between students' listening to English pop songs and their vocabulary mastery were obtained from the score results of the listening English pop songs questionnaire and the vocabulary mastery test. The following are the steps in calculating the correlation between students' listening to English pop songs and their vocabulary mastery.

Pearson's product moment correlation is used to analyze the relationship between two variables. If the p-value is less than 0.05, there is a significant correlation. The relationship may be positive or negative. Furthermore, Pearson's r correlation in this study can be seen as follows.

Table 5. Correlations



		Listening Pop Songs	Vocabulary Mastery
Listening Pop Songs	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 30	.965** .000 30
Vocabulary Mastery	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.965** .000 30	1 30

From the table above, it shows that the significance value is 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between students' listening to English pop songs and their vocabulary mastery.

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the relationship between students' listening to English pop songs and their vocabulary mastery among 7th-grade students at SMPIT Al-Ibrah.

Firstly, the analysis revealed a positive correlation between students' engagement with English pop songs and their vocabulary proficiency. This correlation was statistically significant, as evidenced by a significance value of 0.000, which is less than the conventional threshold of 0.05. This suggests that students who frequently listen to English pop songs tend to have better vocabulary mastery compared to those who do not engage as often with this genre of music.

The positive correlation observed in this study aligns with previous research by Shakerian et al. (2016), which emphasized the effectiveness of pop songs as a source for vocabulary learning. The immersive and engaging nature of pop music, combined with students' inclination to spend leisure time listening to it, likely contributes to the enhancement of vocabulary skills. Additionally, the study's findings support the notion that authentic and enjoyable materials, such as English pop songs, can serve as effective tools for language learning.



Furthermore, the results indicate that students' vocabulary mastery plays a crucial role in their ability to comprehend and engage with English pop songs. Students with higher vocabulary proficiency may find it easier to understand the lyrics and derive meaning from the songs, thereby enhancing their listening skills in the process. This reciprocal relationship between vocabulary mastery and listening proficiency underscores the importance of vocabulary development as a foundational aspect of language learning.

In practical terms, these findings have significant implications for language educators and curriculum designers. Incorporating English pop songs into language learning activities can provide students with meaningful and enjoyable opportunities to expand their vocabulary and improve their listening skills. By leveraging students' existing interests and preferences, educators can create engaging learning experiences that promote language acquisition and fluency.

However, it is essential to acknowledge the limitations of this study. The research was conducted at a single school and focused specifically on 7th-grade students, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other contexts and age groups. Additionally, while the correlation between students' listening to English pop songs and their vocabulary mastery was found to be significant, the strength of this relationship may vary depending on individual differences and external factors.

In conclusion, this study highlights the positive relationship between students' engagement with English pop songs and their vocabulary mastery. By recognizing the value of authentic and enjoyable materials in language learning, educators can harness the power of music to enhance students' language proficiency and foster a deeper appreciation for English language and culture.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study sheds light on the importance of students' engagement with English pop songs in enhancing their vocabulary mastery. The findings underscore the significant relationship between listening to English pop songs and vocabulary proficiency among 7th-grade students at SMPIT Al-Ibrah.



The positive correlation observed in this study reinforces the notion that English pop songs serve as valuable tools for language learning. By immersing themselves in the lyrics and melodies of pop music, students have the opportunity to expand their vocabulary and improve their listening skills in an enjoyable and authentic context.

Furthermore, the reciprocal relationship between vocabulary mastery and listening proficiency emphasizes the interconnectedness of language skills. As students develop a richer vocabulary, they become better equipped to comprehend and engage with English pop songs, thereby reinforcing their language acquisition process.

These findings have important implications for language educators and curriculum developers. Incorporating English pop songs into language learning activities can enhance students' motivation, engagement, and overall language proficiency. By harnessing the power of music as a pedagogical tool, educators can create dynamic and immersive learning experiences that resonate with students' interests and preferences.

However, it is essential to recognize the limitations of this study, including its focus on a single school and grade level. Future research could explore the long-term effects of incorporating English pop songs into language learning curricula across diverse educational settings and age groups.

In summary, this study highlights the potential of English pop songs as effective resources for vocabulary acquisition and listening skill development. By embracing innovative approaches to language teaching and learning, educators can empower students to achieve greater proficiency and fluency in English language communication.

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INATESOL JOURNAL, Vol.1 No. 1, February 2024.  
Universitas Muhammadiyah Gresik – Indonesia  
p-ISSN XXXX-XXXX, e-ISSN XXXX-XXXX

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