

THE IMPACT OF WESTERN POP SONGS ON PHRASE UNDERSTANDING IN STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT; *This study aims to investigate how Western pop songs affect students' phrasing comprehension, especially in terms of English comprehension. Many students use Western pop songs that are often played on mass media and digital platforms as an important resource in their language learning. This study analyzed how the lyrics of Western pop songs can affect students' ability to understand certain English phrases, including collocations and idiomatic phrases. The results showed that listening to Western pop songs repeatedly can improve mastery of English phrases, enrich vocabulary, and make it easier to understand sentence structure. However, when it comes to phrasing comprehension, students with stronger language backgrounds and weaker ones have significant differences. The results provide a new insight into the use of musical media in language learning and how Western pop songs can be an effective tool in improving the understanding of foreign languages, especially in the context of phrasing understanding.*

Keywords: *Western Pop Songs, Phrase Understanding, Students, English, Language Learning.*

ABSTRAK; Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki bagaimana lagu-lagu pop Barat memengaruhi pemahaman frasa siswa, terutama dalam hal pemahaman bahasa Inggris. Banyak siswa menggunakan lagu-lagu pop Barat yang sering diputarkan di media massa dan platform digital sebagai sumber penting dalam pembelajaran bahasa mereka. Penelitian ini menganalisis bagaimana lirik lagu-lagu pop Barat dapat memengaruhi kemampuan siswa untuk memahami frasa bahasa Inggris tertentu, termasuk kolokasi dan frasa idiomatik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mendengarkan lagu-lagu pop Barat berulang kali dapat meningkatkan penguasaan frasa bahasa Inggris, memperkaya kosakata, dan memudahkan pemahaman struktur kalimat. Namun, dalam hal pemahaman frasa, siswa dengan latar belakang bahasa yang lebih kuat dan yang lebih lemah memiliki perbedaan yang signifikan. Hasil penelitian memberikan wawasan baru tentang penggunaan media musik dalam pembelajaran bahasa dan bagaimana lagu-lagu pop Barat dapat menjadi alat yang efektif dalam meningkatkan pemahaman bahasa asing, terutama dalam konteks pemahaman frasa.

Kata Kunci: Lagu-lagu Pop Barat, Pemahaman Frasa, Siswa, Bahasa Inggris, Pembelajaran Bahasa.

INTRODUCTION

The influence of globalization has had a great impact on the lives of the Indonesian people, facilitating international interaction through advances in information and communication technology. One of the most significant globalizations spread in Indonesia is cultural globalization, one of which is in the field of music. The adoption of western music in the Indonesian music industry occurred in the 1960s, when Indonesian rock and pop bands began incorporating elements of western music into their songs.¹ In recent decades, western pop music has become more popular in Indonesia. Based on data from the Jakpat survey in 2023, 78% of respondents chose the pop genre. Thus, pop is the most popular genre favored by the Indonesian people.²

The influence of music globalization can be used to improve English skills, especially among the younger generation. According to Griffie (1992: 3) Songs are easy to find everywhere, because songs are present in every aspect of human life.³ For students, music is not something unfamiliar. Almost all students must be familiar with songs and tend to like songs. Listening to songs provides fun entertainment and can help relax the mind. In fact, for some students, western music has been adopted as a lifestyle for them.

Based on research that has been conducted previously, Lolong (2019) aims to identify students' perceptions of English learning through songs. In addition, this study also analyzes and describes aspects of learning that can improve students' ability in English through listening to English songs. The results of the study show that students consider the use of songs as a fun, not boring, effective, entertaining learning method, and a means to learn culture, increase learning motivation, and strengthen brain capacity. In addition, research that has been conducted by Farhansyah (2023) regarding the Analysis of the Use of Songs to Improve Students' English Proficiency. This study aims to determine the effectiveness of the use of songs in improving

¹ Tanjilia NurJanah, The Influence of Western Music in Indonesia: *The Development and Impact*, *FatihINSPIRA* (2024) accessed on *The Influence of Western Music in Indonesia: The Development and Impact*.

² Nada Naurah, Melihat prefensi orang Indonesia: *genre apa yang paling digemari?* Goodstats.com (2023) diakses pada Melihat Preferensi Musik Orang Indonesia: Genre Apa yang Paling Digemari? – GoodStats.

³ Lolong, S., MARENTEK, A., & RATTU, J. A. (2019). *Students' perception of the use of English songs for English language learning*. Electronic Journal, Faculty of Letters, Sam Ratulangi University, 1(3).

students' English language skills. The results of the study show that the use of songs to improve English language skills is an effective way because it can help students to develop their listening and pronunciation skills.

Previous research has shown that college students tend to prefer English-language songs, which can play a role in improving their language skills. One of the important parts of improving English skills is understanding phrases. English phrases are often used in everyday communication, both in formal and informal contexts. In addition, many academic materials, digital information, and entertainment content use idiomatic phrases or typical expressions that cannot always be translated directly. Western pop songs often contain distinctive phrases that can be an effective means of improving students' understanding of English in a practical way. So the author is interested in analyzing the impact of western pop songs on the understanding of phrases in students.

RESEARCH METHODS

The type of research used by the author is a qualitative approach through literature studies and questionnaires as supporting data. In this study, the author obtained data on the use of western songs to improve students' ability to understand phrases by using questionnaires as a tool to get direct information from respondents and measure the extent to which students understood phrases through western pop songs and evaluate previous related researches, as well as conducting research on various written sources such as books, articles, and journals related to problems studied.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research was carried out with the aim of identifying and analyzing the impact of western pop songs on student learning. As a component of global culture, Western pop music has spread to various countries, including Indonesia. Western pop music with lyrics that often use English has a significant impact on various aspects of life, including language comprehension in students. The ability of students to understand and use English terms is one of the affected elements.

The Influence of Western Pop Songs on Language Proficiency

Western pop songs not only attract attention because of their catchy melodies, but also because of their lyrics that often contain phrases, idioms, and phrases that are typical of the English language. Through listening to these songs, students can expand their vocabulary and understand different forms of phrases that may not be found in ordinary textbooks. For example, many Western pop songs use idiomatic expressions such as "hit the road" or "in the long run", which give the listener a contextual understanding.

These songs also encourage many students to be better at speaking English. According to research conducted by Wibowo (2017), students who are exposed to English-language media tend to have better language skills, especially in terms of listening and understanding sentence structure. This is due to the fact that they listen to the language informally, which is closer to everyday use, as well as formal.⁴

Understanding Phrases in Western Pop Songs

Phrases in Western pop songs typically consist of collocations, distinctive phrases, and colloquialisms, which are naturally applied in daily interactions by native English speakers. This gives students the opportunity to understand different ways of using language in a more dynamic and natural way, which are often not discussed in detail in formal English learning.

According to Santoso (2016), many Indonesian students have difficulty understanding and using idiomatic phrases in English due to cultural differences and language structures. However, exposure through Western pop songs can help them recognize patterns of use of the phrase in a more dynamic and contextual context. Songs like "Let It Be" by The Beatles or "Take It Easy" by the Eagles, for example, not only introduce new words, but also introduce an understanding of how those phrases are used in everyday conversation.⁵

Potential Difficulties in Understanding Phrases

Although Western pop songs have many benefits in aiding language comprehension, there are some challenges faced by students in understanding phrases. Most Western pop songs contain more informal phrases, risking confusing listeners who are not yet familiar with the

⁴ Wibowo, A. (2017). *Peran Media Massa dalam Penguasaan Bahasa Inggris Mahasiswa*. Jurnal Bahasa dan Sastra, 6(1), 78-90.

⁵ Santoso, R. (2016). *The Use of Popular Media in English Learning: A Case Study of Indonesian Students*. Journal of Foreign Language Education, 5(2), 122-134.

more complex structure of the English language. For example, slang or phrases with specific connotations can cause confusion for listeners who are not familiar with the cultural or social context behind the use of the phrase.

For example, in more modern pop songs such as "Bad Guy" by Billie Eilish or "Old Town Road" by Lil Nas X, there is the use of idioms or expressions that can be difficult to understand without a deep cultural context. Hadi (2019) in his research stated that students often consider direct translation as the best way to understand song lyrics, even though many phrases cannot be translated in the same way in Indonesian. This can lead to a wrong or superficial understanding of the true meaning.⁶

Positive Impact on English Language Learning

On the positive side, exposure to Western pop songs can improve students' language comprehension skills by providing examples of authentic and relevant language use in daily life. These songs provide real context about how language is used in social situations, including the use of phrases in informal conversations, conversations on social media, and interactions between individuals.

According to Dewi (2020), students who listen to Western pop songs can learn more about the use of language in a wider range of cultural contexts. For example, they may recognize expressions such as "hit the nail on the head" or "burn the midnight oil," which have figurative meanings and are often used in everyday conversation. This, in turn, improves students' ability to communicate more naturally in English.⁷

The following are three aspects of English language skills that can be improved through songs.

Listening

Songs are everywhere, so songs are one of the best media to improve *listening* skills. Listening to songs is an activity that many people usually do in their daily lives. If we already like a song, we will listen to it often, and we will get used to listening to English words. This can certainly improve *listening* skills in English.

⁶ Hadi, S. (2019). *Kesulitan Mahasiswa dalam Memahami Lirik Lagu Pop Barat dan Implikasinya terhadap Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris*. Jurnal Linguistik Terapan, 8(1), 56-68.

⁷ Dewi, N. P. (2020). *The Effect of Exposure to Western Pop Songs on the Improvement of Students' English Vocabulary*. Journal of English Education, 12(3), 145-156.

Vocabulary

If you listen to your favorite song often, it will stick in your head and repeat without realizing it. This process makes it easy to identify new English vocabulary that you want to learn. By memorizing and understanding English songs, listening to them will help recognize the meaning of the words in the song and allow students to automatically expand their vocabulary.

Pronunciation

Songs play a very important role in helping students to improve *pronunciation*. In listening to the song, we will inadvertently sing the song. By singing that song, we finally practice *pronunciation*. Indirectly we will recite the lyrics of the song. Therefore, songs can help us in practicing *pronunciation*.⁸

This study revealed some interesting findings related to the relationship between Western pop songs and English phrase understanding among 3rd semester students of non-English Literature majors.

1. Frequency of Listening to Western Pop Songs

Most respondents (66.6%) stated that they have included listening to Western pop songs frequently. This suggests that Western pop songs are quite popular among college students, even though they don't come from majors that focus on English language or literature.

2. Efforts to Understand the Meaning of Song Lyrics

As many as 60% of respondents admitted that they tried to understand the meaning of the lyrics of Western pop songs every time they listened to them. This effort shows that there is an intrinsic motivation to use song lyrics as an indirect medium for learning English.

3. The Impact of Western Pop Songs on Phrase Understanding

The results of the questionnaire showed that 53.3% of respondents felt that Western pop songs helped them in understanding English phrases. These findings support the theory that music can be an effective learning medium for improving language skills naturally, especially in terms of enriching vocabulary and phrases.

⁸ Muhammad Farhan dkk, “Analisis Penggunaan Lagu untuk Meningkatkan Kemampuan Berbahasa Inggris Mahasiswa”, Indonesian Journal of Innovation Multidisipliner Research, Vol. 1 No. 1 (2023).

4. Effective and Engaging Methods

The majority of respondents (86.7%) agreed that learning English through Western pop songs is an effective and interesting method. This reinforces the notion that fun learning methods can increase interest and success in language learning.

The results of this study support the theory of Stephen Krashen (1985) about the importance of meaningful and interesting input in language learning.⁹ Western pop songs, with a combination of rhythm, lyrics, and cultural context, provide a relevant stimulus for college students to learn English phrases.

However, it should be noted that only some respondents felt very helpful in understanding the phrase in depth. This can be caused by the difference in the cultural context contained in the lyrics of the song with the students' daily experiences. Additionally, the lack of access to direct explanations of idiomatic meanings in lyrics can also be an obstacle. Nonetheless, these findings show the great potential of Western pop songs as one of the relevant English learning methods in the modern era, especially for students who do not have a formal background in language studies.

Discussion

In the discussion on the impact of Western pop songs on the understanding of phrases in students, several important points were identified related to their influence on language skills, especially in terms of sentence structure and meaning understanding. The following are the results of the discussion summarized from the article:

Improved Understanding of Phrases and Vocabulary: Western pop songs, with their lyrics using a variety of idiomatic phrases and informal expressions, it provides opportunities for students to get to know and understand new vocabulary and phrase structures that are rarely found in formal learning. Students are often exposed to everyday language that is rich in variations in meanings and language styles.

The Role of Songs in Language Learning: Songs as a learning medium can improve the understanding of phrases in a more relaxed and fun context. Students tend to remember certain

⁹ Amanah, F. P. (2017). Krashen's Theory as a Solution to Solving the Problem of Speaking Ability in English Learners in Indonesia. In *Conference on Language and Language Teaching* (pp. 479-484).

phrases or phrases more easily because they are heard in the form of music, which improves memory through repetition and rhythm.

Influence on Sentence Structure: In many Western pop songs, especially those in the pop and R&B genres, the sentence structure used is more flexible and sometimes does not follow standard grammar rules. This can be a challenge for students in understanding or imitating the proper language structure. However, it also opens up opportunities to introduce them to a variety of more creative and expressive language uses.

Negative Effects on Grammatical Comprehension: Constant exposure to the lyrics of Western pop songs that use non-standard language or slang can affect students' grammatical comprehension, especially those who are still learning languages. Lyrics that are informal or do not follow the correct language rules risk making students consider the language style as a correct example, even though it is not in accordance with the grammatical rules that should be.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusion

Western pop songs have had a considerable impact on the understanding of phrases in English among college students. Apart from being a means of entertainment, this song is also an effective learning medium, helping students expand their vocabulary, recognize various phrases, and improve their language skills in general. However, understanding the phrases in these songs also requires cultural sensitivity and context, which can be challenging for students who are not familiar with English culture. Therefore, more comprehensive assistance in learning English is still needed so that the benefits of exposure to western pop songs can be maximized.

Suggestion

Western pop songs can be an effective language learning tool if used in the right way. For this reason, it is important for teachers to emphasize the difference between formal and informal language, as well as to teach the use of phrases and phrases that often appear in song lyrics. In learning, teaching can integrate the analysis of Western pop song lyrics, focusing on the structure of sentences and the meanings contained in them. In addition, students also need to be given an understanding of the difference between standard and non-standard language, considering that pop songs often use more relaxed language and are not always in accordance

with grammatical rules. In order for students' understanding to be more complete, teaching must also include the cultural context that exists in the lyrics of the song, because many phrases in pop songs are influenced by certain cultures and societies.

Further research can also be conducted to see how pop songs affect students' writing ability, especially in understanding the use of phrases in writing. Language teaching can also integrate songs in speaking and listening exercises to help students practice more natural pronunciation, accent, and intonation. However, it is important for teachers to choose songs with clear lyrics, not too fast, and in accordance with the level of students' abilities, so that the songs can support the material being studied. With a careful and planned approach, Western pop songs can be an effective means of enriching students' understanding of the language.

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