IAIN BATHSANGKAR

JURNAL TA'DIB, Vol 23 (2), 2020, (Juli-Desember)

ISSN: 1410-8208 (*Print*) 2580-2771 (*Online*)
Tersedia online di http://ecampus.iainbatusangkar.ac.id/ojs/index.php/takdib/index

Indonesian EFL Learners' Beliefs about Advantages of Songs in Language Learning

Received: 01-11-2020; Revised: 22-11-2020; Accepted: 30-12-2020; Published: 31-12-2020

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Abstract: Despite a considerable body of studies, little attention is given to the advantages of using songs in learning (learner-centred). The study, therefore, is aimed at eliciting Indonesian EFL learners' beliefs about the advantages of using songs for their language learning. Researching the research phenomenon through a qualitative study using a case study design, in-depth interview technique was applied to collect the data of the learners' beliefs from eleven university learners majoring English. This study indicated an interesting finding that it was perceived that the learners believed that there were some advantages of using songs in learning English: increasing their EFL learning in the aspects of language skills (listening and speaking), language components (vocabulary mastery and pronunciation), their knowledge, their confidence and relaxation, and improving their mood and focus. Thus, it is recommended that songs be used either in teachers' EFL teaching and in learners' EFL learning.

Abstrak: Meskipun telah banyak penelitian yang dilakukan, namun masih sedikit perhatian yang diberikan tentang manfaat penggunaan lagu dalam pembelajaran (berpusat pada peserta didik). Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap keyakinan pembelajar Bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing di Indonesia tentang manfaat penggunaan lagu dalam pembelajaran bahasa asing mereka. Meneliti fenomena melalui studi kasus, teknik wawancara mendalam diterapkan untuk mengumpulkan data tentang keyakinan sebelas mahasiswa jurusan Bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini menunjukkan temuan yang menarik bahwa peserta didik percaya bahwa ada beberapa keuntungan dari pemanfaatan lagu dalam pembelajaran bahasa Ingris mereka pada aspek keterampilan bahasa (menyimak dan berbicara), komponen bahasa (penguasaan kosa kata dan pengucapan), pengetahuan mereka, kepercayaan diri dan relaksasi mereka, serta memperbaiki suasana hati dan fokus mereka. Oleh karena itu, disarankan agar lagu digunakan dalam pengajaran bahasa Inggris oleh guru maupun dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris oleh peserta didik.

Keywords: Indonesian EFL Learners, belief, advantages, English songs, language learning

INTRODUCTION

earners' success in a foreign language learning is determined by many Ifactors deriving from the learners themselves, their teachers, and others. Learners' factors are like motivation (Zoltan, 2008; and Engin, 2009), aptitude (Sekhan, 2013; , attitude (Tahaineh & Daana, Alkaff, 2013; Levine, 2013; 2003: Dehbozorgi, 2012; Ahmed, 2015; and Oroujlou & Vahedi, 2011), belief (Saeb & Zamani, 2013; Bernat & Lloyd, 2007; A. Davis, 2008), language learning strategy and style (Gahunga, 2010; Rao, 2006; Rao, 2006) and anxiety. Examples of teachers' factors personality, belief (Borg, are like their 2001), attitude, gender etc. Other factors that may also influence the EFL learners' success in a language learning are like media, materials, learning environment etc. All those factors should be the teachers' concern in EFL learning.

Using songs to teach English has received much attention due its profound advantages as authentic materials, and has been emphasized due to its great benefits (Romero, 2017) to either the first, the second and even the foreign language (Forster, 2006) because it can improve students' motivation and performance in learning a foreign language (Chen & Chen, 2009). Some research regarding songs in EFL teaching and learning proves the advantages of songs. For instance, that conducted in Turkey to find out the elementary school teachers' perspectives on the use songs as listening materials. The research results show that songs improve the learners' listening skills (Sevik, 2011). Other similar studies were also conducted in Malaysia (Razak & Yunus, 2016) in Bangladesh (Razak & Yunus, 2016), in Nigeria (Ajibade & Ndububa, Through the studies, the effects of three variables including songs were measured and proved to increase learners motivation. Other studies related to the use of songs were also conducted (Albaladejo et al., 2018; Alisaari & Heikkola, 2017). A suggestion is also proposed to teach grammar (Roslim et al., 2011; Abdul Razak & Yunus, 2016; Akbary et al., 2016), (Abidin vocabulary et al.. 2011). pronunciation 2008) (Villalobos Ulate. through songs. Most of the research has strongly recommended the use of songs to young learners. Little teach has recommended the importance of using songs for teen-agers and adult learners. Moreover, the research focused on using songs on teaching language skills and language components in the advantages of using songs for teaching EFL learners. Some studies which also emphasize such beliefs are the importance of teachers' belief about EFL (Borg, 2001); the beliefs of Malaysian teachers' in using English songs in ELT (Tse, 2015) and attitude towards oral skill teaching (Almutairi & Shukri, 2016).

Most of the previous studies were conducted based on teaching point of view instead of learning point of view. In other words, it is argued that second and EFL foreign learners' beliefs in using songs in their learning have been neglected. In fact, not many studies have been conducted on the learners' belief in EFL learning despite its importance, and the studies are nothing to do with learners' beliefs in songs. In fact. learners' belief is really influential in EFL learning since it is very important construct (Altan, 2006) that influence their thoughts and behaviors (Incecay and Dollar: 2011). In EFL learning context, the learners belief is said to have a big impact on their language learning (Abdi and Asadi: 2015) because "what learners believe affect their language learning much more than their teachers do" (Riley, 1996: 128, in Abdul & Abid, 2012). In other words, whether the learners will learn or not will depend on the belief that they hold. Thus, researching the EFL learners belief in their EFL learning is a must if the learners' success will be the focus.

It is undeniable that there are some studies on EFL learners' belief, like those about: grammar instruction and error correction conducted in Turkey (Incecay & Dollar, 2011); language learning (Bernat & Gvozdenko, 2005; Bernat & Lloyd, 2007;

Graham, 2006; (Truitt, 1995) Rifkin, 2000), aspects of language learning (A. Davis, 2008), oral corrective feedbacks (Yang, 2019). corrective feedback (Kartchava, 2016), relationship between self-efficacy belief and vocabulary learning strategy in Iranian EFL learners (Heidari et al., 2012), and that between gender, proficiency, learning strategies, and self-efficacy belief in Turkey (Yilmaz, 2010). This study is different since it tries to elicit the Indonesian EFL learners' beliefs in advantages of using songs in their EFL learning. While the previous studies emphasize the use of songs to teach English based on the teaching perspectives, this research sees songs from the adult learners' beliefs. In this study, the focus is on how the learners learn English through English songs.

METHOD Reseach Design

This study was conducted to investigate Indonesian EFL learners' beliefs in using songs to learn English. Thus, it was conducted by implementing qualitative paradigm and categorized as a case study. By using qualitative paradigm, the learners' feelings, thoughts and behaviours could be elicited. In a higher education context, revealing these is important because the students are adult learners who are expected to do more independent learning as a way to prepare them for their future career. Eliciting their feelings, thoughts and behaviours in their foreign language learning hopefully would help them to get optimum benefit from their EFL to anticipate their future career. However, this study was not intended to be generalized to other EFL learners.

Research Participants

Eleven Indonesian EFL learners from a higher education institution located Tanah Datar Regency, West Sumatera Province in Indonesia took part in this qualitative research. They already had the ability to listen and the experience in learning English as Foreign Language (EFL). In order to be able to collect data of this research, purposive behaviours -sampling technique

was adopted. This type of sampling technique was used since only those who talked about songs in their English language learning were selected as the sample.

Data Collection

Data of this research were collected by using In-Depth Interview and with an openended questionnaire. To elicit the EFL learners' beliefs, some sophomore EFL learners were asked whether they like listening to English songs outside of the classrooms. Those who answered "yes" were asked the next question. The question was used to reveal whether they used songs to improve their EFL learning. If they answered with "yes", they were asked how the songs improved their English learning. Their answers to the third questions became the data of the research. The authors also reviewed the literature from various sources such as books, internet, journal, and other resources related to research key issues.

Data Analysis

The data from interviews were analyzed with the proposed steps by Miles, Huberman Saldaña (2014).They are data condensation, data display, conclusion drawing and verification. In data condensation, we reduced the data by choosing the most relevant data to answer the aim of this study. By displaying data, we mean the use of excerpts to infer the presentation, so that the data can be better interpreted and communicated. Finally, in drawing and verifying conclusions stages, the intended data were referred back to the data display and raw data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION Results

The results of this study show that there are several advantages of songs based on the informants' beliefs as shown in the Table 1 below:

No	Advantage	Informant
1	Development of listening comprehension	S1, and S2
2	Improvement of pronunciation mastery	S1, S2, S7, S8, and S9
3	Improvement of vocabulary mastery	S1, S2, S7, S8, and S9

No	Advantage	Informant
4	Development of knowledge and confidence	S7, and S8
5	Making them calmed and relaxed	S3, and S6
6	Restoring mood and focus	S3, S10, and S11

The advantages of listening to English songs based on the students' beliefs are more elaborated and classified in following section.

Development of Listening Comprehension

The interview findings revealed that English songs improved the learners' listening skill. For example, S1 and S2 (coded from Student Participant number 1 and 2) used English songs to improve their comprehension. They listening acknowledged that the songs were a way to improve their listening comprehension because when they listened to the songs, their listening skills were honed.

Student S2, for instance, described her experience in using English songs as follow:

> Song is one strategy that I use to understand English listening texts. So, in order to understand English listening texts, I often listen to English songs...So, listening English songs can improve my listening because in my opinion, songs are not only media entertainment but also media of learning. By listening to English songs more often, I get accustomed **English** words and their pronunciation. So, when I listen to formal recordings presented by the lecturer of Listening subject, I am already familiar with the words in the texts. They are not new to me anymore.

S5 and S3 informed that they listened to favourite songs to improve their listening comprehension. They liked pop songs like Bruno Mars's and Adele's. From the songs, they got new sentences, new words, and idioms. It indicated that the learners looked for the lyrics and translated and memorized the assist their listening song to comprehension. By listening to English songs repeatedly, the songs would be stored into their memory. The songs were also fun for some learners as acknowledged by S3, S5, and S6. They chosed their favourite songs to improve listening comprehension. In other word, listening to English songs were certainly very influential in improving the learners' listening skill. Meanwhile, S9 mentioned that in listening subjects, he used taking note strategy to predict new words that he did not know or did not understand. Another participant, student S3, expressed

her experience in learning English through English songs in the excerpt below:

> Listening to songs makes me relaxed. As a result, I can be more focused on what I am listening to. I like to listen **English** songs. Thev entertaining for me. Listening to English songs makes my mind calmed, and relaxed. Listening to English songs, increases my English vocabulary, and improves pronunciation to English words. In other words, for me, songs is more functioning to restore my mood and focus. In listening, if I am more focused and in a good mood, my listening is improved.

The next participant student S5, for example, mentioned how she learned from English songs:

> Every day, I always listen to my favourite songs to improve listening comprehension. I like pop songs like Bruno Mars's and Adele's. From the songs, Ι get new knowledge, new sentences, words, and idioms. I usually look for the lyrics and translate and memorize them. These improve my listening comprehension. By listening English songs repetitively, the songs will be stored into my memory. The songs are also fun. Right? So, I favourite choose my songs to listening ability. improve my Listening to English songs

certainly very influential in improving my listening skills.

Improvement of Pronunciation

The Interviews also revealed that learners increase their pronunciation by listening to English songs. Pronunciation in this context, assisted the learners to speak and convey the message to listeners. Learners who had good pronunciation ability likely were more to have understandings even if they make some language mistakes. S2 declared that by listening to English songs, she could pay attention to particular language sounds and components that included speech individual sounds.

Here is the example of statements got from the participants:

Student **S2**, for instance, described her experience in using English songs as follow:

Song is one strategy that I use to understand English listening texts. So, in order to understand English listening texts, I often listen to English songs...Through songs, I got a lot of new vocabulary and they improved my pronunciation.

The other participant (S5) acknowledged that she listened to English songs using British or American style. The pronunciations in the songs sometimes had things to do with the recordings that she heard. In other words, the pronunciations of words that learner hears in English songs are often related to the songs that she hears. Whatever the types of the songs are, whether rap, slow, pop, or jazz, they can train their pronunciation.

Improvement of Vocabulary Mastery

It is pertinent to note that by listening to English songs, learners' vocabulary achievement increases rapidly. As acknowledged by five participants (S1, S2, S7, S8, and S9) of interview, they got a lot of new vocabulary.

S1 and S2 besides, by listening to English songs, they got much new vocabulary and pronunciation. In other words, when listening to English songs, they got many new words and their English

pronunciation got better. It was also noted that the students declare that listening to English songs improved their comprehension. If the learners listened to English song, they are consciously and unconsciously accustomed to hearing English words. It would make them easier to obtain what the speakers meant.

Student **S2**, for instance, described her experience in using English songs as follow:

Song is one strategy that I use to understand English listening texts. So, in order to understand English listening texts, I often listen to English songs...Through songs, I got a lot of new vocabulary and they improved my pronunciation.

They also got some new terms and idioms while training their ears to be accustomed to listening to those new words, phrases or sentences and understood the meaning of them based on the context of the language usage.

Improvement of Knowledge and Confidence

From interview findings, it is noted that some comments of participants, for example S7 acknowledged that by listening to English songs, his knowledge and confidence of using English language improved well. It was also confirmed by S8 that her confidence to use English slightly increased because she was accustomed to listening to several words, phrases and sentences in the songs. The learners automatically can used them in their learning activities either for spoken or for written language.

Another students that also expressed his feeling was student **S7.** He informed the improvement that he got from listening to English songs as presented below:

Listening to songs and watching movies can improve my mood and my listening skills. So, by frequently listening foreign, and especially to western songs, I get a lot of new vocabulary. You know, each song has its own vocabulary. Thus, from there, I got a lot of new vocabulary while

training my ears to get used to listening to those new words. Listening to English songs also improves my knowledge, and my confidence in doing public speaking.

Making Them Calmed and Relaxed

Two participants (S3 and S6) feel that listening to English songs would reduce their anxiety, encourage their motivation and interest, and make them relaxed to learn English. In other words, the learners viewed English songs entertaining. So far, they felt that learning English independently outside the classrooms. Songs made them calm and relaxed. As acknowledged by S3 and S6 that listening to songs made them relaxed. As a result, they could be more focused on what they are listening to. They liked to listen to English songs because they made their mind calmed, and relaxed, as stated by the informants, such as below:

Listening to songs makes me relaxed...Listening to English songs makes my mind calmed, and relaxed. Listening to English songs, increases my English vocabulary, and improves my pronunciation to English words.

Restoring Their Mood and Focus

Other advantages of using songs in English learning were also felt by three participants (S3, S10 and S11). They felt that listening to English songs could restore their mood and focus. They acknowledged that when they were in bad mood, feeling bored and tired due to many tasks, listening to different genres of songs would refresh their mind and feeling so that their mood will be better. Moreover, they felt that after listening to English songs from Western countries, they would be more focused as mentioned.

Listening to songs makes me relaxed...for me, songs is more functioning to restore my mood and focus. In listening, if I am more focused and in a good mood, my listening is improved.

Majority of learners in EFL classrooms like singing and usually have good responses

to songs use in EFL learning. As stated in the literary studies that there are some advantages of use English songs use. In this research, can be outside classroom language activities and can be recommended for the EFL learners of higher education. Being independent EFL adult learners will be encouraged when songs are also introduced as the tasks for outside classroom activities. They stimulate the learners' interest and attention that make their motivation improve well. It certainly will make the learner reach good achievement. As acknowledged by T2, T3, T10, and T11, they could improve their mood by listening to English songs. Thus, from this acknowledgement, it could be inferred that songs could assist to provide a relaxing atmosphere that makes EFL learning a nonthreatening environment. By reducing anxiety, the learners' interests to learn the target language became high. Learners assumed that learning English by using songs made them fun and enjoyable. However, to make songs meaningful for their learning no matter how enjoyable memorable singing songs can be, the learners should use songs in their independent learning outside of the classrooms.

The research findings show that the EFL learners believe that songs improve their listening skill, their pronunciation, expose vocabulary, improve their new knowledge and confidence, make them calm relaxed since English songs entertaining, and fun (to listen to) for them (delete "for them"). The research results also indicate that using songs will restore the learner' mood and focus. The learners' responses, motivation, success, simplicity, and feedback should be the things considered while preparing the learning tasks of English through English songs. Thus, the purposes of learning English by using English songs as media is for enjoyment, for information, for perception. for comprehension and overcome the learning restrictions because Foreign Indonesian learn English as Language (EFL) context, where there is limited input and response from environment.

Discussions

The current research show that the Indonesian EFL learners believe that songs improve their listening, their speaking, their pronunciation, and their vocabulary mastery. Besides, songs increase their knowledge, their confidence, and their motivation, and make them calm and relaxed, because in their opinions, songs are entertaining and fun.

Previous work has also documented the advantages of using songs, especially for young language learners. It was proved that using songs can improve the four skills in a foreign language, stimulate motivation and active participation, and provide enjoyment (Davis Fan, 2016; (Kuśnierek, 2016)(Aguirre et al., 2016); (Ashtiani & Zafarghandi, 2015);(García Conesa & Juan Rubio, 2015); (Israel, 2013) (Diakou, 2013); "(Kara & Aksel, 2013); (Jarvis, 2013); (Vinyets, 2012); Millington, 2011; (Abidin et al., 2011) (Shen, 2009); (Asrifan, 2009); (Schön et al., 2008); Ajibade & Ndububa, 2008; Saricoban & Metin, 2000). However, these studies have been conducted based on teacher-centred approach, focusing beginning level of students. These studies conducted to investigate the ELT were results when teachers use songs as the teaching materials to teach English. In other words, the orientation of the studies is teachers' belief. Thus, as long as the teachers believe that songs are good for teaching English, they will use the songs in their teaching learning process. Meanwhile, if they do not have such belief, they will not the their teaching. use songs in Unfortunately, even though the teachers believe that songs are good to teach English, if the students don't, the results will be not as expected. The reason is that "what learners believe affect their language learning much more than their teachers do" Riley (1996: 128) (in Abdul & Abid, 2012). teachers should encourage the students to take charge of their own learning and support them to find their own ways of learning (Alharbi, 2015)The previous studies have successful discussing teachers' beliefs in

using songs to teach EFL, yet discussing learners' beliefs in the advantages of using songs in their language learning independently outside of the classrooms. In other words, Most notably, this is the first study to our knowledge to investigate EFL learners' belief in using songs to learn English among adult learners (university students). Even though the sample of our research believe that songs improve their listening, their speaking, their pronunciation, vocabulary and their mastery, their knowledge, and confidence, increase their motivation, make them calm and relaxed. some limitations are worth noting. Some more research needs conducting to a bigger sample size using qualitative or quantitative methods.

CONCLUSION

Using songs is believed by Indonesian EFL learners to have some advantages for their English language learning. It is deemed to be beneficial in improving their language skills. Besides, it is also believed that songs can improve their vocabulary mastery and pronunciation skills. Using songs is believed to be advantageous from teaching (teachers) and learning (learners) view-points. Thus, songs can be one kind of authentic materials to be used in the classrooms or outside of the classrooms.

English songs are recommended because they are not only enjoyable but also make teaching and learning process more effective. From teaching view-point, a body of research has recommended the use of songs to teach English. This research indicates the same direction from learning view-point. Since the research is done qualitatively and cannot be generalized, some more research needs conducting, either qualitatively or quantitatively

Acknowledgements

The authors are thankful to Institut Agama Islam Negeri Batusangkar and Universitas Islam Negeri Imam Bonjol Padang, for providing necessary facilities for conducting the research and publishing the article.

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