

# **USING ENGLISH SONGS IN IMPROVING LISTENING SKILL**

## **A RESEARCH ARTICLE**

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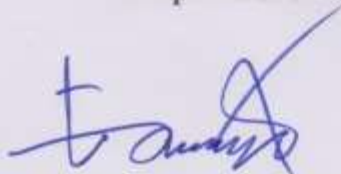
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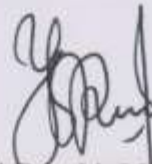
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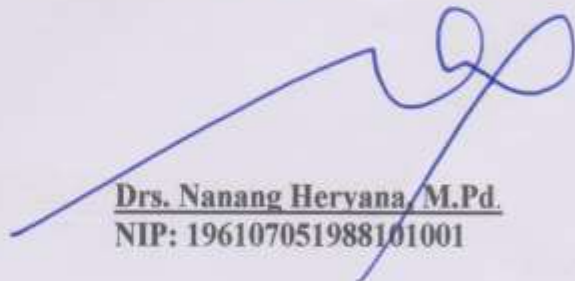
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# USING ENGLISH SONGS IN IMPROVING LISTENING SKILL

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## **Abstract**

This research is aimed at improving students' listening skill in Class Eleven Multimedia of Vocational High School Mandiri Pontianak in Academic Year 2017/2018. This research used English songs as technique in teaching listening. This research was done by giving students Fill in the Blank song lyrics. The method of this research was classroom action research, which consisted of 2 cycles. The subject of this research was students of Class Eleven Multimedia of SMK Mandiri Pontianak in academic year 2017/2018. The research was conducted to solve the problem encountered by the students in listening. Most of the students were not able to listen well because they lacked of vocabulary. The technique of data collecting for this research was observation and test. The tools of data collecting were listening test, observation checklist, and field note. The result of this research showed that English songs improved students' listening skill by Filling in the blank song lyrics. The students' individual score in listening also improved in teaching learning process. From this result, it can be concluded that students' listening taught by English songs had improved. In another word, this media can help students in listening.

***Keywords: English Songs, Listening, Classroom Action Research.***

## **INTRODUCTION**

Listening is one of the most important skills to master. Listening is not only just hearing, but also understanding. The success of speaking is measured in terms of the ability to understand the words what is the speaker saying. As the main tool of communication, listening becomes one of the skills to be mastered by senior high school students. Meanwhile, based on School Based Curriculum, listening is one of the skills taught in senior high school.

Based on the researcher's observation at SMK Mandiri Pontianak, especially eleven grade of multimedia students, regarding to the result of listening test, only few of students could pass the passing grade. The researcher found out students still got difficulties in identifying the words. Their lacked of vocabulary causing them got difficulty to identify the words especially identifying noun, verb and adjective. For example, when the teacher gave them listening test, many of them

did not finish the test because they did not know the answer.

Something which is also being the problem is because students lacked of excitement during teaching and learning process. For example, when the teacher gave the listening test, they kept talking to each other and did not pay attention to the material. Besides that, many of them still let the answer in blank and did not finish the task. They were not motivated in listening and effected to their passion and interest in listening. As the conclusion, the students had problem with their learning strategy and motivation.

To solve the problems, the researcher decided to conduct a classroom action research which focus to improve students' listening by applying English songs. English songs brings positive energy that effected to the students' motivation when listening. English songs were used entitled Count on Me by Bruno Mars, Fight Song by Rachel Platten, Superman by Five for Fighting and Song for Mama by Boyz

II Men as media. The teacher played English songs and students identified the words or lyrics that contained in the songs. The students were asked to fill in the blank lyrics by answering noun, verb and adjective. Those songs express common theme of people about friendship, mother, and dreams. In addition, those song lyrics used simple vocabularies so students can identify the words and at the same time can understand the moral values from the songs.

Similar study had been done by a researcher proved that English songs could improve students' listening and learning process. Since the song can attract attention, students will interest and enjoy the class. Vernon in Xiao (2013) said that English songs bring energy to the classroom and boost students' confidence. If the students are interested both in material and teaching, they can enjoy listening.

Considering the problems above, the researcher was motivated to conduct classroom action research and used English songs in improving students' listening skill to eleventh grade students of multimedia class of SMK Mandiri Pontianak in academic year 2018. The focus of the classroom action research in this research is the process how do English songs improve students' listening. The researcher believed through this research, the media can solve the students' problems and this technique can be a reference for the teacher.

Song is words sung to a tune. Song lyrics will stimulate phonetics, vocabulary and improve grammar. Hornby (1990, p. 1133) said "Song is a piece of music with words that is sung". That words sometimes have meaningful or interesting meaning that can make people more enjoyable. Songs also have some genres such as pop, rock, EDM (Electronic Dance Music), RnB, ballad, and reggae.

Song is like book story. Sometimes it tells about love, friendship, enthusiasm, family, politic and social life. For example, Ed Sheeran is a famous British singer who known as the best singer in expressing about love with beautiful and meaningful lyrics. Then there is Redemption Song by Bob Marley. The song tells us about emancipation from mental slaves

and the last there is Boyz II Men with their famous song Song for Mama. It asks us to love our mother. Those songs proved that in expressing something is not only by speech or protest to something, but it also can be expressed by writing it into song so people can sing and enjoy it.

Song is known as the best media to express when people feel sad, happy and depression. When people express their thought through song, it means song can relax people's mind. If students' feel relax, they can learn actively. Stanislawczyk and Yavener in Kuśnierek (2016, p. 24) stated "Using songs in the classroom are of the opinion that songs are advantageous tools and a teacher should take advantage of it during linguistic practice".

Song also can motivate students. Popular songs nowadays are related with people's experienced. Those songs also are connected to the same topic such as friendship, dream and love which are the common feeling of people. Since most young people nowadays are interested in a wide range of cultural forms outside classes, songs may be a really motivating and unique teaching tool (Baoan, 2008). Not only that, song can bring positive atmosphere.

The important thing in making teaching learning lively is how the teacher can create new technique and control the situation in the classroom. Kuśnierek (2016, p. 24) stated "Song may be used to relax students since for many learning a new language is a new experience". The last advantages of the song can express attitudes and values by how it sounds. Many songs have different genres with different types. That types mean what are the lyrics on the song containing about. As an example, although rock song is sounded defiant and seems like assaulting on the ears, but the lyrics contain moral values. Like a song "It's My Life" from Bon Jovi, it teaches us to do what can we do our best or never.

Although song has some advantages, it also has disadvantages. If the song is always played in the classroom, it makes class becomes mussy especially when the song is played loudly. The students also make some noises if the teacher cannot control and handle

the class. According to Murphey (1992, pp. 8-9) "Loudly playing songs may disturb neighboring classes. Murphey also added that some learners get too excited and may forget about the discipline".

Before applying songs as media, songs should be selected as good as possible. Teacher should consider the suitability of the song for students by seeing the theme, genre and the age, good property such as speaker and the quality sound of song should be clear and loud. These are three suggestions by Lems cited in Kahraman (2008) could be taken into consideration for song selection:

Firstly, song lyrics should be clear and loud, not submerged in the instrumental music. The quality of the sound will be listened to students must be good, so the students can listen clearly. Secondly, the vocabularies' load for the song should be appropriate to the proficiency level. There are many songs especially rap or hip hop song used unsuitable words like cursing or insulting people/thing and possibility make students are using those words in their daily life. The last, songs should be pre-screened for potentially problematic content, such as explicit language, references to violent acts or sex, or inappropriate religious allusions. Many songs contain inappropriate lyrics like sex, drugs and violence that may confuse the students.

Those song selections are very important and the teacher should be considered that in order to success teaching listening in the class. The teacher is not only teaching but also guiding students to reach the goal. Because if the songs are unsuitable for students, the students will get difficulty. The teacher also needs observing which songs are appropriate for students based on the lyrics, tempo and meaning of the songs.

In this research, the researcher selected the song based on the moral values of the songs. The tempo and genres also be criteria for songs selection. The researcher chose Fight Song, Superman, Count' on Me and A Song for Mama because they all have slow tempo. Each song also has positive meaning, for example Fight Song and Superman are motivating people to reach the dreams and fight all the

obstacles like a superman and never give up easily. The researcher hope students can apply and learn the lyrics in their real life.

By using song, students not only study but also relax their mind. Futonge in Arevalo (2010, p. 4) said that songs can also provide a relaxed lesson. They also can form the basis for many lessons. English songs are great language pack that bundles a culture, vocabulary, listening, grammar, and a number of other language skills in just a few poems. It can be used for a wide range of English for teaching and learning foreign languages. This also was supported by Shen (2009, p. 88) "being a combination of music and language, songs have innumerable virtues that deserve our attention. Their richness in culture and themes, their idiomatic and poetic expressions, their therapeutic functions and so on makes them an impeccable tool for language teaching". So, utilizing songs in classroom can relax students' mind and body and can make them listening more enjoyable.

Listening is the skill in understanding what is the speaker saying. According to Brown in Bozorgian (2012, p. 658) "Listening is at the heart of language learning, but it is the least understood and least researched skill in language learning and it is often disregarded by foreign and second language instructors. Listening is the communication skill most used in all level." Holden (2004, p. 4) said that adult spend 40-50% of their communication time engaged listening, 25-30% speaking, 10-15% reading and less 10% writing. So, it can be concluded that listening is the most common communicative activity in daily life.

Teaching listening is not the same like teaching speaking, writing or reading. Teaching listening needs more attention and the topic should be interesting because in this case, students will be bored easily. According to Morley and Rost stated in Gilakjani (2016, p. 123) "Listening is the most important skill for language learning because it can be mostly used in normal daily life and develops faster than the other language skills which indicate that it makes easy the development of the other language skills". Therefore, listening is very

important language skill because the focus of the listening is understanding.

By mastering listening skill means the students had prepared their skill in receiving information. Because if we want to know the information we have to know what is the problem and then try to understand it. But mastering listening is difficult for students because they find many unfamiliar words or vocabulary. It can make students do not understand the meaning of the material. English songs have beautiful melodies and the lyrics are easy to imitate and memorize (Liao and Jiang in Xiao, 2013). That is the reason why use English song is good to improve students' listening skill.

In teaching listening, the teacher must have a method to build the atmosphere because a good atmosphere makes students enjoy listening. If the students do not pay attention, they will be lazy to join the activity. Some of them may be talking with their friends or playing by themselves. Teacher may know in listening class needs a full of concentration on the audio to be played. Thomson (2005) said that some teachers find that their students are often busy talking and chatting among others and do not concentrate on the listening subject. So the teacher should motivate the students to focus on subject and make sure they will be interested on the subject. According to Harmer (1998, p. 212) there are four principles in listening, they are: 1) a teacher should encourage his students to listen as often and as much possible. 2) When the teacher plays the track only probably there will be no spare time to pick up some important information, then they will ask for second chance. 3) A teacher should draw out the meaning of what is being said to intended and find out what impression. 4) A teacher should encourage the students to response to the content of a listening not just to the language.

Based on explanation above, it can be concluded that how the teacher manages the classroom and create atmosphere are very important. Beside to encourage them, it also has impact on success of the students in reaching the goal.

The ability to master listening effectively is one of the most important skills in communication. Listening and hearing are not the same. Sometimes people cannot distinguish listening and hearing. Hearing is to listen physically, it means there is a voice heard by the ears, but it is not digested by the mind, so anything that sounds windy then it is not memorable. While listening, it involves the active efforts of mind and needs full attention to what we hear through the ears. But, to listen well is not easy because there are some stages.

There are five stages in listening, they are: The first stage is hearing. In this stage, the listener is receiving the information or message by the sound. The second is understanding. This stage is the process of learning and then understanding what is the speaker saying. The third stage is remembering. In this stage, the listener is not only receiving the information but also adding the information into their mind. The fourth is evaluating. At this point the listener starts the stage of the process before a message is completed requires that the listener no longer hear and attend to the incoming message as a result and the listening process ceases. And the last is responding. This stage requires that the receiver complete the process through verbal and/or nonverbal feedback (Tyagi, 2013).

To make this research becomes clearer, the procedure of the teaching listening by English songs had been conducted as follows: 1. Teacher greets students and tells the learning objective to students. 2. Teacher asks students' favorite songs and asks one student to sing it briefly. 3. Teacher introduces and applies an English song, entitled Hold on 'till the Night to students and asks students to listen the song. 4. Teacher asks students to pay attention on the lyrics. 5. Teacher asks students to mention noun, verb and adjective in the lyrics. 6. Teacher gives the students paper to fill in the blank the lyric of Fight Song. 7. The students are asked to complete the blank lyrics by writing the answers using noun, verb and adjective. 8. Teacher plays the song four times. 9. After students finishing their tasks, they submit to teacher. 10 Teacher gives paper to fill in the blank the lyric of Superman. 11. The

teacher plays the song. The students are asked to complete the blank lyrics by writing the answers using noun, verb and adjective. 12. The students submit their tasks to teacher. 13. Before closing the class, the teacher asks student to make conclusion of material that they have been learned. 14. Teacher confirms students' understanding. 15. Teacher closes the class.

## **METHOD**

The researcher had used classroom action research (CAR) as the research design to help teacher finding the problems. In this case the researcher had improved the students' listening skill of eleventh grade students of SMK Mandiri Pontianak by using English songs technique. Classroom action research is a research which is conducted in the classroom to solve some problems that happen during teaching and learning process. Action research is a systematic procedure done by teachers (or other individuals in an educational setting) to gather information about, and subsequently improve, the ways their particular educational setting operates, their teaching and their student learning (Cresswell, 2012).

Classroom action research is aimed to improve the quality of teaching and learning process or to solve the real problems happen in the classroom. One of the main aims of action research is to identify a "problematic" situation or issue that the participants – who may include teachers, students, managers, administrators or even parents – consider worth looking into more deeply and systematically (Burns, 2005).

Action research is systematic, intentional research that is carried out by practitioners themselves and is not imposed by others. According to Goodnough (2011, p. 5) "It is insider research in the sense that those directly involved in the situation take action to improve their own practice and their understanding of that practice, while resolving problem". Through classroom action research, the researcher will be able to solve the problem in the classroom. At the end, it will improve students' achievements in their study.

## **Setting and Subject of the Research**

### **Setting**

This research had conducted at *SMK Mandiri Pontianak* which located at *Jl. Tanjung Raya II/Sami Sumping Kelurahan Saigon Pontianak Timur, Kota Pontianak*.

### **Subject**

The researcher had been conducted this research to eleventh grade of multimedia class students in academic year 2017/2018. This class consisted of 24 students, comprising 17 male students and 7 female students. The reason the researcher chose that class is because students of that class were not interested and dislike listening.

### **Technique and Tool of Data Collection Technique**

Technique of data collection that are applied in this research: 1) Observation. The researcher had used observation checklist and field notes. The purpose of the observation was to know the activities during teaching and learning process, such as how the teacher explained the materials, what will the students' respond and how the students have been worked in doing the test. 2) Test. The researcher also used test in order to know the students' improvement in listening by using English songs. The researcher had used listening test in form of listening four English songs: *Fight Song by Rachel Platten Superman by Five for Fighting, Count on Me by Bruno Mars and A Song for Mama by Boyz II Men*.

### **Tool**

The tool of data collection of this research: 1) Observation Checklist. Observation checklist consisted of the action applied by the researcher to see the improvement of the students' listening skill by using English songs. 2) Field Notes. Field notes were made by the researcher. It was contemporaneous note of observations taken during the teaching and learning process. The collaborator wrote down anything occurred during the application of the technique, including the obstacle that the teacher and collaborator had found in teaching learning

process. 3) Test. Test is frequently used to measure students' listening skill. The researcher used listening test and gave four audio of English songs: *Fight Song* by Rachel Platten and *Superman* by Five for Fighting, *Count' on Me* by Bruno Mars, *A Song for Mama* by Boyz II Men and ask them to complete the blank lyrics on the paper.

### Data Analysis

The researcher analyzed data by using check list/observation sheet and field notes to describe the process of teaching and learning using English songs. Besides that, the researcher calculated the data of students' individual score listening skill by using formula. The total answer as follows:

$$\text{Individual score} = \frac{\text{Total correct answer}}{\text{Total question}} \times 100$$

If the students' individual score is higher from cycle to cycle, the researcher considered that the students' listening skill using English songs technique improved.

## RESEARCH FINDING AND DISCUSSION

### Research Finding

The researcher describes the findings of this research based on the research purpose was mentioned in chapter I that the students were getting difficulty identified vocabularies in listening and during teaching learning process, they were not excited and made the class being noisy. The students got difficulty in identified the words because of their lacked of vocabulary so they did not really serious study and annoyed their friends. The researcher of this research believed that using English songs can improve students' listening skill.

To convince the idea, a classroom action research was conducted to eleventh grade students of multimedia class of SMK Mandiri Pontianak in academic year 2017/2018 on November 12<sup>th</sup> to November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017. Two cycles were carried out involving 24 students and a collaborator.

As the result of discussion and sharing with the teacher, the researcher found that students had problem in mastering listening. Therefore,

the researcher decided to conduct CAR using English songs to improve students' listening skill.

In the first cycle, the students listened two English songs, entitled *Fight Song* by Rachel Platten and *Superman* by Five for Fighting. They were asked to listen and complete the lyrics by writing the lyrics on the papers that have been given by the researcher. They completed the lyrics only by using noun, verb and adjective.

The first cycle was conducted on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017 and the class was started at 7.00 to 8.30. The teacher greeted the students and checked students' attendance. The teacher asked about difficult thing in listening to the students. Some of the students answered the same answers. They thought that the most difficult thing in listening was they did not like listening. It was difficult to identify the words. Besides that, they have limited vocabularies. So, the teacher told the students that she wanted to teach by using English songs.

Before applied English songs, the teacher introduced a song entitled *Hold on 'Till the Night* by Greyson Chance. The song was chosen because it has strong rhythm but has meaningful lyrics and the teacher wanted to gain students' interest. But, before playing the song, the teacher asked students about their understanding about noun, verb and adjective. Then the teacher played the song three times. The teacher asked the students to identify noun, verb and adjective in the lyrics they have listened. After that, the teacher showed the lyrics on the video.

The teacher played *Fight Song* by Rachel Platten and asked the students to fill in the blank the lyrics on paper that have been given to them. They completed the lyrics only by noun, verb and adjective. The song was played four times. The second song was *Superman* by Five for Fighting. Same as like the first song, the students to fill in the blank the lyrics by using noun, verb and adjective. The song was played four times. After students completed the tasks, the teacher asked to submit the tasks.

The researcher observed the result of planning and acting. She observed the whole process and activities in the classroom of the



first cycle. The activities for instance, students' response, and class situation. Based on the researcher observation, the researcher and the teacher found that the students were passive toward teacher's teaching technique by using English songs. Most of them were passive asking and answering the questions. That was a bad response.

During teaching and learning, they paid attention to the teacher but there were some students did not pay attention and kept talking to their friends. When the teacher asked about noun, verb and adjective, many of them already knew but there were four students did not know about noun, verb and adjective so the teacher gave little examples to them.

When the teacher played a song - Hold on 'Till the Night, they were difficult to mention the words in the lyrics. But when the teacher showed the lyrics, the class were being noisy and cannot be controlled. Moreover, when the teacher asked them to fill in the blank the lyrics, they were not focus to complete it because they joked too much. Also, there were some of them did not finish it yet because of the time, so they did not know the answer and left it in the blank.

In this stage, both the researcher and the teacher reflected what they had done in this cycle. Based on the result of observation toward teaching learning in this cycle, the students' participation was not too active because they did not pay attention and kept talking to each other.

At the first explanation, some of the students thought the tasks that had given was difficult. As the prove, the result of some students was still not good and have no improvement. Some students needed more attention and focused to reach the goal. It means, that the second cycle was waiting for being conducted. There were other problems; the first problem was about time management. The teacher did not have time to conclude all material in the last activity because the time has ended. The last problem was the students were not too serious when did their tasks. They were joking to their friends and disturbing other students' concentration.

Based on the discussion and reflection in cycle 1, the researcher and the teacher decided to do some changes in order to minimize the problem appeared in cycle 1. In this stage, the researcher planned to manage the time carefully in order the teacher can conclude the material before the time ended. The teacher also needed to control the class to overcome students' noise and made them to pay attention. The teacher played the third song was sung by Bruno Mars and was Count' on Me four times and A Song for Mama by Boyz II Men four times. Then asked students to fill in the blank the lyrics by writing using noun, verb and adjective.

The second cycle was conducted on Monday 20th, 2017 and the class was started at 7.45 to 9.15. The teacher greeted the students and checked students' attendance.

Before the teacher played the songs, she told to students to do not force themselves to think hardly. She then asked students to enjoy the teaching learning and do not feel burdened. Because if they were burdened, the teaching learning process cannot be done well.

The teacher gave two English songs; Superman by Count on Me by Bruno Mars and A Song for Mama by Boyz II Men. The teacher played a previous song: Fight Song and asked students to remember and discuss the lyrics because they did not finish and complete the lyrics in the last meeting. The students' were active answering unlike in the previous meeting they were passive and shy. After that, the teacher played Count on Me. Each student was given a piece of paper to fill in the blank the lyrics. The song was played four times. After students finish the first tasks, then the teacher played the second song which the title was A Song for Mama by Boyz II Men and was played for four times. Same as like the first song, each student was given a piece of paper to fill in the blank the lyrics by using noun, verb and adjective.

Before the students submitting the tasks, the teacher confirmed that the students should finish all of the tasks and ask them do not let the tasks still in the blank.

During teaching learning process, the students were more serious and focus to

teacher' explanation. They also were not afraid asking related to the material. Not like the first cycle, all of the students were really active and excited. There were no students talked to themselves and disturbed others.

Before the teacher played the songs, the students really excited about the next song. When listening to the song, they seemed too focus and kept silent but sometimes they joined the rhythm to sing along.

Based on the result of planning, acting and observing toward teaching learning process in cycle 2, the researcher and the teacher were satisfied because the purpose to improve the students' listening skill by using English had been reached. There were many improvements after applying the second action of Classroom Action Research. The students' participation in listening by English song was better than the first cycle. It can be seen from the students' attention and attraction which more active and excited in the second cycle.

### **Research Discussion**

From the research finding, the researcher had some important points to be discussed: Teaching listening using English songs could improve students' listening. Through English songs, students could enjoy listening and learning new vocabularies from the lyrics of song. When the teacher introduced English songs as media, the students were not too excited and did not study seriously and made them did not finish their tasks. They disturbed other students' concentration. But in the second cycle, they showed many improvements especially in teaching learning process. They more enjoyed the class and study seriously. The students also were active asking question to teacher. They looked excited and finished their tasks before the time ended.

The researcher of this research considered that English songs were successful in improving students' listening to eleventh grade students of multimedia class of SMK Mandiri Pontianak. It could be seen from the process of teaching listening. The students were more active when the teacher asking the words from listening test even though they still needed to open dictionary for help them. Another

improvement was analyzed from their ability by complete the song lyrics by listening English songs. Furthermore, it can be seen from the students' score, they got better score in every cycle.

Conducting English songs also give all students motivation and help students improving their listening. Songs can enhance students' motivation. Songs also can relax students' mind and can help students memorizing the words. In similar research finding, the researcher has founded some scientific evidence whose conducted by other researchers. Firstly, Xiao (2013) founded that English songs provide enough input, lightens the atmosphere and students' motivation to learn. Another scientific, Futonge in Arevalo (2010) founded about the use of English songs. English songs are great language pack that bundles a culture, vocabulary, listening and grammar. In relation to results of this research, using English song can help students improving their listening.

### **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

#### **Conclusion**

Referring to the discussion in chapter IV, it could be concluded that the difficulties in listening was the major problem in learning English by the multimedia students at SMK Mandiri Pontianak especially class eleven. In cycle 1, the researcher found that during teaching learning process, students were not serious studying. They did not pay attention on teacher's explanation and kept making noise and causing them did not finish their tasks on time. In cycle 2, the students were more active and enjoying listening. They were more serious studying without made noise. They also finished their tasks on time. Using English songs as media helped students to enjoy listening by using English songs. As more details, English songs helped students to enjoy listening and created positive atmosphere. The tests were made by researcher by giving fill in the blank test and students answering the test used noun, verb and adjective. The students were allowed singing along but they should focus to test and do not make some noises. It was aimed to make them relax and enjoy the

activity with no burden. Songs were used in listening such as Fight Song by Rachel Platten, Superman by Five for Fighting, Count on Me by Bruno Mars and A Song for Mama by Boyz II Men. Those songs contained positive meaning in their lyrics so besides they can listen, they also can know the meaningful and beautiful lyrics.

The use of English songs has improved the students' listening. English songs also helped students in motivating them during teaching and learning process. In conclusion, this research could answer the research questions that the use of English songs improve students' listening.

Based on those descriptions above, the researcher believes that the action hypothesis of this research is proved: "English songs improve listening skill of the class eleven multimedia of Vocational High School SMK Mandiri Pontianak in academic year 2017/2018."

### **Suggestion**

Based on the research finding that the researcher has found, teaching listening by using English songs improved students' listening. It was proved that English songs were attractive and made teaching and learning process cheerful. For this reason, the technique is recommended to improve students' listening and excitement during teaching and learning process to the eleven graders of SMK.

In teaching listening, students' focus and attention are needed. If they do not focus to the material, teaching learning process cannot be done well. By using English songs, the teacher can create the situation of the class becomes lively. The teacher can increase students' interest in listening by using songs.

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