



## Teaching Adult English Language Learners Through English Song Lyrics Gap-Fill at STIT Tanggamus

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### Abstract

This study evaluates the effectiveness of gap-fill activities employing English song lyrics in boosting listening skills, vocabulary acquisition, and motivation among adult learners at STIT Tanggamus. Utilizing a qualitative case study technique, the research collects data through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and questionnaires to measure learners' involvement and impressions of this novel teaching style. The findings demonstrate that integrating familiar songs dramatically enhances learners' language skills and confidence while promoting a collaborative and joyful learning environment. However, problems such as picking good music and handling initial learner concern underline the necessity for careful implementation. The study suggests that song-based activities can be a valuable instrument in adult language education, bringing practical insights for curriculum creation and teaching practices.

**Keywords:** Gap-fill activities, English song lyrics, adult learners, language acquisition, qualitative case study, ELT.

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### INTRODUCTION

The significance of English proficiency for adult learners, particularly in higher education environments such as STIT Tanggamus, is paramount. Mastery of the English language plays a crucial role in determining academic achievement and professional opportunities, given the increasing global need for English proficiency. To tackle these needs, institutions are required to innovate their teaching methods to meet the distinct challenges encountered by adult learners, including sustaining motivation and engagement in language learning processes (Bergey et al, 2018; Samson & Collins, 2012).

Adult learners frequently encounter challenges in language acquisition stemming from their past educational experiences and the cognitive changes that come with aging. These factors can diminish their confidence and obstruct the implementation of effective learning strategies (Bernal, 2017). Utilizing innovative teaching strategies, like gap-fill

activities featuring English song lyrics, can enhance student engagement and motivation, offering a practical and relatable framework for language acquisition (Bergey et al, 2018; Lytovchenko et al, 2018).

Gap-fill activities, where participants fill in missing words in song lyrics, have demonstrated effectiveness in enhancing listening skills, broadening vocabulary, and increasing overall motivation in adult learners. This culturally relevant approach proves to be especially beneficial for learners hailing from various educational backgrounds, serving as a crucial instrument for promoting an inclusive learning environment (Holliday, 2009; VanPatten & Smith, 2022).

Assessing the impact of these activities is essential for comprehending their contribution to improving language acquisition and boosting learner confidence. The findings from this study can guide the creation of curricula designed to meet the unique needs of adult learners, as demonstrated by institutions, such as STIT

Tanggamus (Lee, 2018; Samson & Collins, 2012).

This study has the potential to enhance innovative teaching methods tailored for adult learners. Furthermore, it is used to explore gap-fill activities impact on learner motivation, listening comprehension, and vocabulary improvement. By showcasing the practical benefits of integrating music into language instruction, educators can refine their strategies to achieve better learning outcomes and enhance student engagement (Berger et al, 2018; Holliday, 2009).

Addressing the challenges adult learners face in acquiring English proficiency is useful for their academic and professional growth. Creative teaching approaches, such as gap-fill activities with song lyrics, can help overcome these obstacles, resulting in improved learning experiences and outcomes (VanPatten & Smith, 2022; Lytovchenko et al, 2018).

The researcher hopes this study would give contribution to innovative English teaching methodologies for adult learners. Moreover, it could be used as practical implications for curriculum design and teaching practices at STIT Tanggamus and similar institutions.

## **METHOD**

This study utilizes a qualitative case study methodology to assess the effectiveness of gap-fill activities employing English song lyrics in enhancing language skills among adult learners at STIT Tanggamus. The participants are adult students enrolled in English classes, chosen based on characteristics such as age, prior experience with English, and their desire to participate in new learning activities. Data collection involves multiple methods, including classroom observations to assess engagement levels during the activities, semi-structured interviews with both instructors and learners to capture experiences and perspectives, and questionnaires to evaluate learner motivation and attitudes toward this teaching method (Nunan, 1992; Merriam, 2009).

Thematic analysis is performed to study the qualitative data, enabling the identification of patterns and themes. This strategy provides a thorough understanding of how gap-fill exercises affect listening skills, vocabulary growth, and overall learner motivation. The findings seek to give actionable insights for curriculum creation and teaching techniques at STIT Tanggamus and other similar institutions, thereby advancing the broader field of English language instruction for adult learners (Schoch, 2020; Creswell, 2017).

## **FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

### **Findings**

Observational data from gap-fill sessions demonstrated excellent levels of learner engagement and interaction. Students actively participated in the exercises, exhibiting passion as they worked together to complete the song lyrics. This collaborative setting prompted discussions regarding terminology and lyrical meaning, creating a deeper grasp of the content. Instructors reported that students were more engaged and willing to contribute during these sessions compared to typical teaching approaches, demonstrating that music effectively attracts attention and produces a pleasant learning atmosphere (Tiapapa, 2023; Tasnim, 2022).

Semi-structured interviews gave extra insight into the perspectives of learners and teachers. Students noted that using recognized songs made the learning process pleasurable and relatable, considerably enhancing their enthusiasm to learn English. Instructors remarked that this strategy not only increased listening abilities but also encouraged pupils to engage with English outside the classroom. Both groups stressed the importance of selecting songs that resonate with learners' preferences, as this strongly influences their level of engagement (Creswell, 2017).

Questionnaire answers indicated major gains in learners' motivation and confidence after participating in gap-fill activities. Respondents reported feeling more adept in their English skills,

particularly in listening comprehension and vocabulary usage. Many reported a wish to continue utilizing music as a learning aid, demonstrating that this strategy positively promotes both language development and attitudes toward learning (Schoch, 2020; Tiapapa, 2023).

### Discussion

The findings agree with adult learning theories, such as Knowles' principles of andragogy, which stress the significance of self-directed learning and relevance. Incorporating music into courses gives an exciting and meaningful setting for language learning. Allowing learners to choose songs that resonate with their interests produces a personalized learning experience that enhances motivation and retention (Merriam, 2009). Additionally, the collaborative nature of gap-fill activities stimulates social interaction, which is vital for adult education.

When compared to typical teaching approaches, gap-fill exercises provide considerable advantages. Traditional approaches frequently rely on rote memorization and grammatical drills, which can disconnect adult learners. In contrast, gap-fill activities provide an interactive, enjoyable way to practice language skills while introducing learners to actual language use through music. This strategy not only develops listening skills but also improves word understanding in a contextualized manner (Afriyuninda, E., & Oktaviani, 2021; Amroini et al, 2023).

However, the efficiency of the gap-fill strategy depends on various aspects. Selecting appropriate songs that meet learners' interests and ability levels is crucial. Additionally, educators need proper training to facilitate these activities successfully and enhance learning outcomes. Challenges may arise if the songs involve sophisticated vocabulary or unusual cultural references, which can impair comprehension. Addressing these challenges is crucial to optimize the method's success in institutions like STIT Tanggamus (Tsang, 2020; Tiapapa, 2023).

### CONCLUSION

The study indicated that integrating English song lyrics with gap-fill tasks substantially increases adult learners' listening comprehension, vocabulary, and general motivation in learning English. Observations demonstrated heightened student involvement during these activities compared to traditional techniques, with learners regularly cooperating to investigate language and song meanings. Semi-structured interviews reinforced these results, with participants indicating that familiar tunes made learning fun and relatable, considerably enhancing their intrinsic motivation. Questionnaire responses further indicated improved confidence among learners, demonstrating the favorable influence of this strategy on their language learning experience.

Nonetheless, the study also found problems. Selecting songs suited for learners' competency levels proved crucial, as songs with sophisticated vocabulary or new cultural references occasionally caused confusion. Additionally, while many learners flourished in the interactive setting, some initially hesitated to participate owing to concern about making mistakes in front of peers. These findings underline the need for cautious song selection and building a supportive classroom culture to fully reap the benefits of this strategy.

To effectively utilize gap-fill activities with English song lyrics in adult language learning environments, educators could employ numerous tactics. First, a well-curated selection of music that accommodates varied competency levels and cultural backgrounds is vital to guaranteeing accessibility and student comfort. Educators should also build an inclusive classroom climate that promotes cooperation and open discourse, enabling learners to share their perspectives and questions without fear of criticism. Pre-activity discussions regarding the songs' themes or language might help bridge cultural divides and prepare students for the assignment.

Future research could explore further song-based teaching modalities to promote

language learning. For example, employing music videos for further visual context or inviting learners to produce their own lyrics around personal or thematic subjects may bring further engagement. Comparative research assessing the efficiency of song-based methods vs other novel strategies, such as gamification or project-based learning, could help discover the most effective approaches for adult learners. Such findings would lead to the creation of comprehensive frameworks for improving English language teaching in varied learning situations.

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