

## USING ISLAMIC SONGS AND ITS EFFECT IN TEACHING ENGLISH AT AN INDONESIAN ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY

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### Abstract

Islamic songs have gained prominence in the sphere of global education. However, they have yet received significant position in terms of the music scene, and little empirical evidence has been documented related to their use in Islamic universities or schools in Indonesia. Hence, this study aimed to fill this void and to investigate the effects of utilizing Islamic songs in teaching English at an Indonesian Islamic university. Grounded in a mixed-method case study, this study collected the data by distributing a questionnaire to 100 students and 10 lecturers from an Islamic University in Metro, Indonesia. The major findings show that the use of Islamic songs gave positive effects on the students' comprehension, motivation and class atmosphere. The incorporation of the Islamic songs in the teaching of English could enrich the students' knowledge of Islamic vocabulary.

**Keywords:** *Islamic Songs, Vocabulary, Education*

### INTRODUCTION

Over the last few years, there has been immense interest on utilizing songs as an aid in English language teaching (ELT) because it is a medium which can give the enjoyment and knowledge simultaneously. Džanić and Pejić (2016) claim that the use of songs had provided positive effects on students' language skills. However, the lyrics of popular songs used in the class might not completely suit with the needs of the students as mentioned by

DeWall et al., (2011) the lyrics of the popular songs in recent years mostly included loneliness, anger, antisocial behavior and social rejection. The use of Islamic songs is believed to be more appropriate to be used in class. Utilizing Islamic songs in Islamic schools or universities will make the teaching and learning process become more enjoyable and contextually suit the students and the Islamic songs can be used to teach Islamic values.

The studies of utilizing songs as media in ELT tend to discuss three aspects, namely first, the advantage of using songs in teaching English (Bokiev, Bokiev, Aralas, Ismail, & Othman, 2018; Lee, 2014), second, songs and English language skills such as vocabulary (Coyle & Gómez Gracia, 2014), listening (Hadian, 2015), writing (Alisaari & Heikkola, 2016), reading (Register, Darrow, Standley, & Swedberg, 2007), and grammar (Roslim, Azizul, & Mohd Zain, 2011) and third, songs and learning motivation (Chanda & Levitin, 2013; Lems, 2018; Setia et al., 2012). The aspects above obviously show that the study of utilizing Islamic song as an aid in English language teaching has not been reported by any existing studies.

Based on the rationales above, the following research questions are formulated.

1. To what extent is the percentage of using Islamic songs in teaching English at Islamic University?
2. What are the effects and benefits of utilizing Islamic songs in teaching English at Islamic University?
3. What are the popular Islamic songs used to teach English at Islamic University?

The results of this study are expected to help teachers in providing an effective and fun way in teaching grammar and vocabulary in appropriate contexts for Islamic students. The result can also enrich the repertoire of Islamic song which can be used as an innovative aid in the teaching of English. In other words, this result can also be a foundation in compiling the teaching material at the university level. Furthermore, this research is expected to improve the awareness on the importance of Islamic values in teaching English.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **English Language Teaching (ELT)**

Songbatumis (2017) holds a view that low concentration, students' low motivation, lack of discipline and boredom are the problem on teaching English in ELT. In addition, Kalyani & Rajasekaran (2018) also remark that the biggest challenges ever faced by any of teachers in teaching English is capturing the students' attention and putting across the knowledge in a way that stayed a long after students have left the classroom. The problems lie on the way teachers delivered the material. As stated by Oeamoum & Sriwichai (2020), the major problems in ELT are lacking specialist teachers in certain material and also repetitive teaching techniques that only focused on grammar and rules not based on the practices. The material is usually delivered through chalk talk method which may lead to a lost interest in the class. In addition, these repetitive materials delivered by the teacher such as grammar or reading make the students feel-bored in the class. Pawlak et al. (2020) reported that there are several factors that make students feel bored in class such as disengagement, monotony, repetitiveness, and also lack of satisfaction and challenge. Duman (2019) argues that boredom of the students in class has negative impacts in teaching and learning process.

Moreover, in this day in which everything can be accessed just by a click and people have severe addiction to technology, teachers need to find creative and novel aids to assist teaching activities to capture students' attention. Serdyukov (2017) remarks innovation in ELT is indeed badly needed to create high quality result of learning. Teachers should be able to use the technology effectively and efficiently. However, the teachers should also have a merit competence with the innovation in the class as mentioned by Arifin (2017) whether it is success or failure of certain instructional process depends on the way the teachers manage and perform the learning process in the class. Othman Abdelaziz Ahmed (2018) also stated that the use of creative teaching aid can enhance the students' motivation, interaction and participation in the class.

Hence, innovation in teaching aid is necessarily needed in English language teaching.

Asokhia (2009) defines teaching aids as an object or a product which is used as the source in learning process. Teaching aids help the teacher to create the conductive learning environment. Teaching aids are required to create an effective teaching. Also, based on Igbo & Omeje(2014)teaching aids are tools that help increasing the learning achievements. According to Kundu (2017) teaching aids can be classified into two different categories: (1) Traditional Approach (*Audio aids, Visual aids, Audio-visual aids and Activity aids*), (2) Technological approach (*simple hardware, hardware and software*). Hence, it can be inferred that teaching aid is various kinds of tool or resources that can help the teacher in teaching activity to clarify the material and to make it more interesting, simple and meaningful. The learning activities well managed by the teachers will lead to more communicative speaking class.

## **Teaching English at Islamic University**

The authentic characteristic of English language teaching at Islamic higher education in Indonesia lies on its purpose. The English teaching tends to interject the Islamic values in both language skills and pedagogy (Irwansyah, 2018). In teaching and learning English, there is fear that English will corrupt the local tradition and wisdom. Hence, it is crucial to serve the Islamic teaching in Indonesian ELT (Hidayati, 2017). The Islamic higher education must keep the religious and scientific aspect. The application of integrated curriculum is the breakthrough to cover both aspects. The Islamic higher education inserts the value of Islam in several recent modernist way. As a consequence, English is the bridge to reach these goals (Syah, 2015). Umam (2019) confirms that if the English instructional materials were equipped with the Islamic teachings, the students' Islamic characters will remain. At the same time, the students acquire the English competence as well.

## Using Song in ELT

There are several aids for adult to learn vocabulary such as movie, songs, podcast and so on. Song gives positive effects on the language learning especially vocabulary (Alisaari & Heikkola, 2016; Talamini, Grassi, To, Santoni, & Carretti, 2018). Hence, some studies remark that song is the best aid to learn vocabulary and teacher should use song as an aid in teaching vocabulary (Hallam, 2010; Kuśnerek & Derenowski Kalisz, 2016; Zamin, Adzmi, & Mohamad, 2020).

Song is a piece of music sung or composed for singing. Fransischa & Syafei (2016) argue that songs are precious resources to develop the abilities in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Alisaari & Heikkola (2016) also stated that listening to songs is considered to be the most suitable for introducing topics. In addition, Werner (2018) believes that songs are powerful tools and it can function as verbal memory and provide benefits for vocabulary learning. Tegge (2017) mentioned many people used to spend several hours each day to listen to songs. Peters & Webb (2018) revealed song positively affected the students in learning due to massive frequency of occurrence of the songs in the everyday life. (Kuśnerek & Derenowski Kalisz, 2016) found songs may be a good method of vocabulary memorization because the lyrics are sung repeatedly and catchy tunes made it easily to remember. In addition, Bishop (2016) reported that songs provide an enjoyable way to learn vocabulary through novel activities. Moreover, Turnbull (2017) also mentioned that songs are new tools that allowed the teacher to promote joyful learning and improve foreign language learning at the same time.

There are several kinds of songs that can be used in teaching English. However, Zamin et al. (2020) found that the use of English songs from contemporary genres, such as Western or Islamic songs can be an effective way to promote language learning. Yeni (2018) remarks Islamic songs are the suitable song used in teaching vocabulary because it is rich in moral messages.

## **The Use of Islamic Songs at ELT**

Indonesia has the biggest population of Moslems around the world and has vast number of Moslems who learning English as a foreign language.. As the biggest Moslem population, Indonesia needs teaching activities that also contain the values of Islam. Furthermore, song as an aid in teaching English should also contain the value of Islam or at least the positive message within the lyrics. Sartika (2017) argues that the Islamic song provide the authentic vocabularies. Listening to Islamic songs familiarizes the students with the native speaker pronunciation. More importantly, the students obtain the moral values of Islam. The use of modified salutation songs will ease the Islamic boarding school students to receive the English learning materials (Maisarah, 2018).

## **METHODS**

### **Participants**

This study involved lecturers and the university students as the respondents. A total number of participants in this research is 110. It consists of 10 lecturers and 100 students. Both the lecturers and the students were given different questionnaires.

### **Data Collection**

The data collection was held (due to Covid-19) by using questionnaire via google-form and documentation. The questions used in the questionnaire were open-ended questions. The first questionnaire was itended for the university students. The students were given two open-ended questions to examine their favorite English songs and to know whether the songs had been ever heard during the learning. The second questionnaire was purposed to the English lecturer. There were five open-ended questions for the lecturers. The documentation was the islamic songs taken from youtube.

## **Procedures**

This research is a case study which used as an approach to elicit the perspectives of the involved participants (Gall, Gall, & Walter R. Borg, 2003). This research used qualitative research. The researcher gathered several Islamic songs to provide alternatives for the lecturers in term of using Islamic song in teaching learning process. Afterwards, the researcher created two different questionnaires distributed for the university students and the lecturers.

## **Data Analysis**

The research data were processed quantitatively. The data gained from the lecturer were processed accordingly by using the frequency and percentage to know how often the teacher used the Islamic song in teaching learning process and what effect on the students learning process is. To support the teachers' data, the data from the students were provided accordingly.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

In general, songs particularly the pop songs have already been used to teach English. It was also found that Islamic songs have already been used by the lecturers. However, Islamic songs used in the classes were insignificant in number. Islamic songs were expected to be the teaching aid used in the Islamic universities or schools. There were several reasons why the teachers used songs as teaching aid. It is mainly because the songs made the learning process more enjoyable. The remaining remarkable findings will be discussed further in the following section.

### **The song criterias in ELT**

Before a song is used in learning process, the lecturers determine the song according to some categories. The categories are shown within the table below.

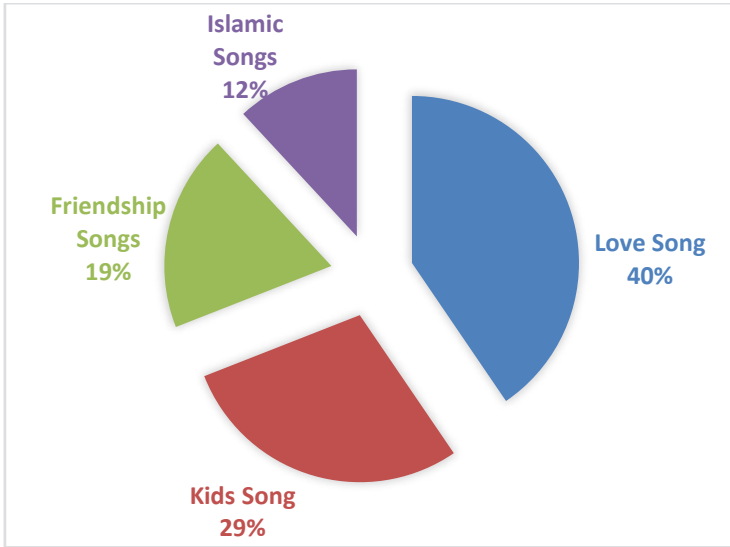
**Tabel 1**  
**Utilizing Song as Teaching Aid**

No.	Question Substance	Sub-items	Percentages
<b>Lecturer Perceptive</b>			
1.	Utilize song as an aid in teaching vocabulary	Yes	95%
		No	5%
2.	Factors that are considered in choosing songs used in the class	Linguistic Level	27,59%
		Values/Messages	24,14%
		Themes	20,69%
		Age	18,97%
		Students Condition	8,62%

In line with the data, most of the lecturers use song to teach vocabulary. In the process of selecting the song, lecturers primarily prioritize the linguistic level and what value delivered by the songs. Furthermore, many lecturers appraise the themes of the songs and the students’ age. However, only a few lecturers think over the students’ conditions.

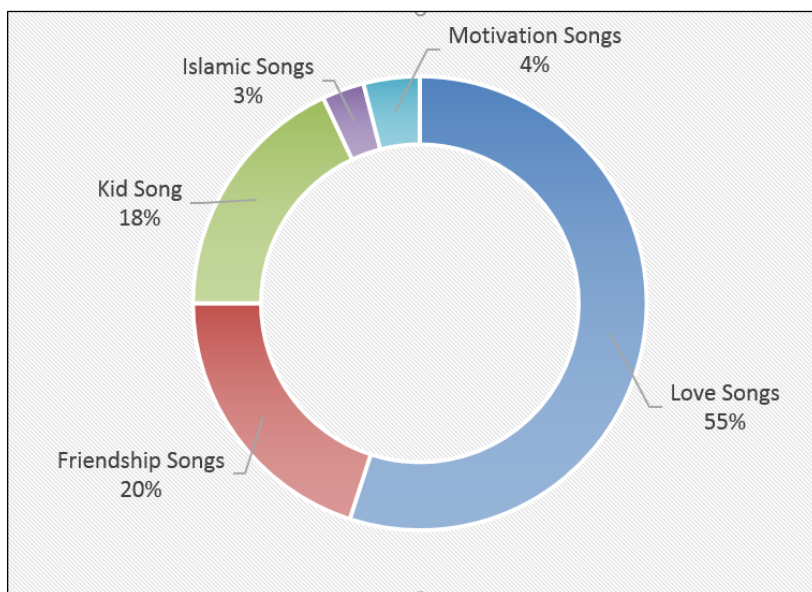
**The Use Percentage of Islamic Songs in ELT**

In accordance with the questionnaire distributed to some lecturers, the data are displayed in two perspectives; (1) the lecturer perspective; and (2) student perspective. The results are as follow.



**Figure 3. Common Songs Used in ELT in Lecturers Perspective**

In the figure 3, It is revealed that the most common song used in the class was love song which is totally inappropriate with Indonesian culture especially in Islamic university and school. This fact becomes a problem because mostly, the songs used in the class have negative implied meanings; forty out of one hundred students mentioned that the most common song used in the class is love song such as All of Me by John Legend and Closer by The Chainsmokers. These songs have totally different values from those of the students in the Islamic university. The teachers need to find another source of the songs. It is believed that Islamic songs are seen to be the solution of this problem.



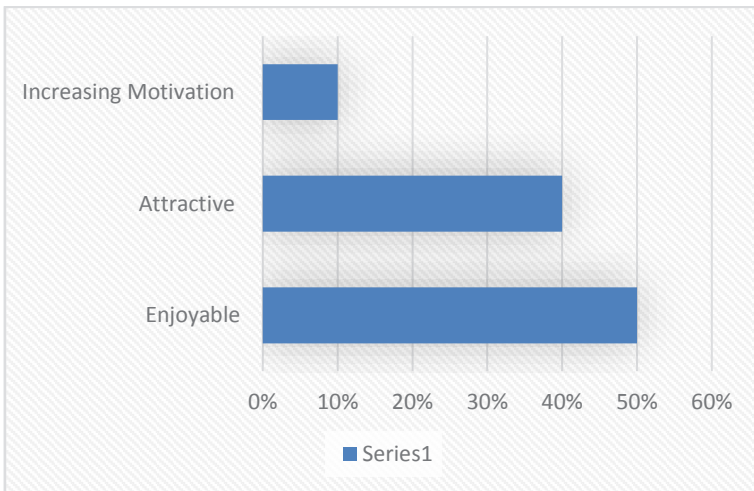
**Figure 4. The common song in the students learning experience**

To underpin the data of the lecturers, the researcher collected the data from the Islamic University students. The data above ensure that the Islamic songs are rarely used in teaching English, even in Islamic university. The lecturers prefer to utilize romance songs in the learning process. However, the lyrics of the songs used in class often contain negative implied meanings. According to Coyle et al. (2011) the lyrics of the popular songs in recent years mostly included loneliness, anger, antisocial behavior and social rejection. The songs used in class should be carefully selected by the teacher. Nevertheless, in the selecting process the teachers tend to ignore the meaning of the lyric, the selected song mostly based on the popularity. Meanwhile, most of the popular songs contained the negative meaning within the lyrics as mentioned in (Sadikin, 2017) there are five songs that are forbidden to sing involving *Last Friday Night* (Katy Perry), *Locked Out of Heaven* (Bruno Mars), *We Won't Stop* (Miley Cyrus), *Gangnam Style* (PSY) and *Partition* (Beyonce). It is needed for the English teacher to switch the

song; it is better to use Islamic songs so it can deliver the material efficiently and give positive influence to the students.

### **The Effect of Utilizing Islamic Songs as an Aid in Teaching English**

There are a lot of positive effects that can people get by utilizing songs as an aid in teaching English, the effects showed in the figure 1.



**Figure 1. The effects of using song in ELT**

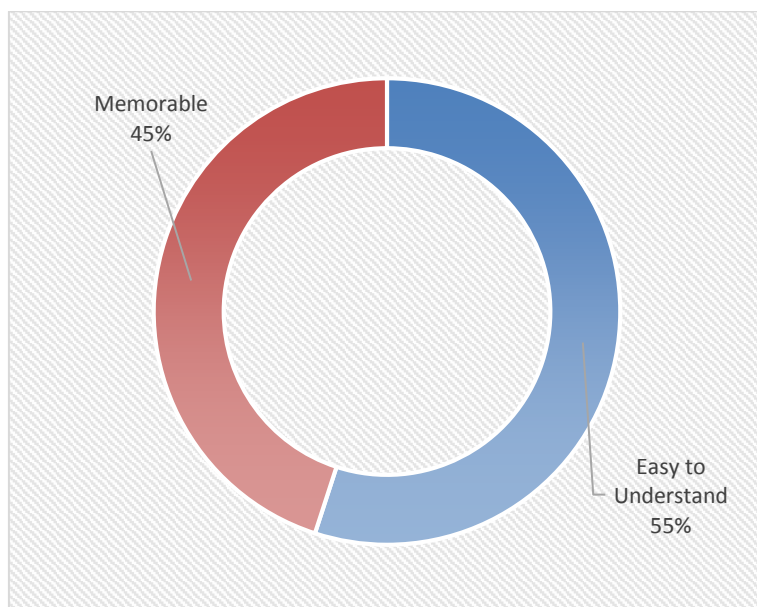
Based on the data above, it can be inferred that there are mainly three effects on using songs as an aid in teaching vocabulary. First, it creates an enjoyable atmosphere within the class atmosphere that will lead to the better understanding of the students. Most of the English foreign language classes are so tense and it made the students suffocated. The learning environment made the students nervous, but using the songs as an aid in teaching English will put the students at ease.

Second, it is attractive. It makes students pay attention to the class; the better concentration is, the better understanding will be gain. The students are often passing out during the class and it happens because they feel boredom within the class. Third, it is

increasing motivation. The most important aspect in learning something is motivation. Song is increasing the students' motivation to attend the class and to learn English. The stereotype that often lives in the society was that English is difficult. Increasing the motivation of the students will reduce the stereotype of English as a difficult subject.

### **The Benefits of Utilizing Song as an Aid in Teaching English**

Several benefits can be gained by using songs as an aid in teaching English. There are mainly two benefits that will be gained through using songs in the teaching activities in class. The benefits will be presented in the Figure 2.



**Figure 2. The Benefits of Using Songs in ELT**

The utilizing of song gives great benefits in the students' comprehension. Song helps the students to understand the material easily and effectively. Many of students feel shy to practice pronunciation and find it hard to remember a vocabulary, song help the students to practice and remember the vocabulary easier.

Students are not shy to practice because it is common for people to sing. Additionally, being memorable is also the benefit that people gained by using songs as an aid in teaching. Song has catchy and unique sounds that help people to memorize easily.

### **The Popular Islamic Songs Used to Teach English**

There are a lot of Islamic songs that can be used as the replacement of love song as the aid in teaching English in the class. However, many teachers and lecturers found it difficult to search and select the Islamic songs that can be used in teaching English. Here is Table 2 listing Islamic songs that can help teachers and lecturers in teaching English.

**Tabel 2**  
**List of Islamic Songs**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Singer</b>	<b>Title</b>
1.	Maher Zain	Insha Allah
2.	Maher Zain	Thank You Allah
3.	Maher Zain	For The Rest Of My Life
4.	Maher Zain	Ramadan
5.	Maher Zain	Forgive Me
6.	Yusuf / Cat Stevens	A is for Allah
7.	Yusuf / Cat Stevens	The Laughing Apple
8.	Yusuf / Cat Stevens	The Little Ones

9.	Yusuf / Cat Stevens	I Look, I See
10.	Yusuf / Cat Stevens	Heaven / Where True Love Goes
11.	Native Deen	Small deeds
12.	Native Deen	My faith my voice
13.	Native Deen	Nothing light
14.	Native Deen	Our Earth
15.	Native Deen	I am near
16.	Zain Bhikha	The monkey, the cow and the wolf
17.	Zain Bhikha	Cotton candy sky
18.	Zain Bhikha	Allah made everything
19.	Zain Bhikha	HasbunAllah
20.	Zain Bhikha	Allah knows
21.	Harris J	Salam alaikum
22.	Harris J	Good life
23.	Harris J	The one
24.	Harris J	Rasool'Allah
25.	Harris J	You are my life
26.	Safe Adam	Believe

27.	Safe Adam	By my side
28.	Michael Heart	We Will Not Go Down
29.	Raef	The Path
30.	Raef	Call On Him
31.	Dawud Wharnsby	Dear Mr. Crow
32.	Dawud Wharnsby	When The World Is Dark At Night
33.	Dawud Wharnsby	Hear Me Beat My Drum
34.	Dawud Wharnsby	A Picnic of Poems
35.	Dawud Wharnsby	Rose

## CONCLUSION

The data revealed that most lecturers are familiar with using songs as the aid in teaching English. This proves that the utilizing of Islamic songs is possible in the Islamic university and school in Indonesia. There are no commotion in using song in class, it is indeed very easy and does not need expensive hardware. Indonesia has been fighting pandemic of covid-19 and it makes many things change not only the personal life but also education. Using the songs as the aid in teaching will help the lecturers and teachers to lighten up their job. In the time when people can only meet in front of screen and demonstration by the teachers or lecturers is impossible to do, songs are the solution of this problem. For example, teaching vocabulary can be replaced by using songs, the demonstration of spelling or pronunciation can be replaced by assigning the students to listen to songs. The streaming of the songs does not certainly need the good connection so it will not become the problem for the students who live in the remote area.

The utilizing of Islamic song in teaching English gives the students both knowledge and the values of Islam at the same time.

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