

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Mastery of four essential language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, is fundamental for students' academic and professional development in English Education. In line with Ahmed et al. (2024), these skills are the foundation and are also interconnected and contribute to the development of communicative competence and overall language proficiency when developed together. The four language skills are not learned separately; rather, they interact and support one another in the process of language learning to promote better language acquisition and performance (Shiblee, 2025; Pradhani, 2025). Hence, mastering these interconnected language skills becomes particularly important for students in various educational contexts, including English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings.

In an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, where opportunities to use English outside the classroom are limited, mastery of these language skills is important in academic achievement (Budiman et al., 2023). It facilitates students' comprehension of complex tasks, engagement in scholarly discourse, and understanding of ideas that are delivered clearly. Among these skills, listening plays a vital role because it provides students with access to spoken language input that supports language development and

communication. Therefore, listening is widely regarded as a fundamental skill that needs attention in English language teaching and learning.

Listening skills hold a crucial position in language learning because it enables students to receive and understand spoken input before producing language. Listening is the first receptive skill acquired by individuals and plays a significant role in developing language awareness (Rost, 2011; Musayeva, 2025). Different from hearing, which refers to the passive perception of sounds, listening is an active process that involves receiving, interpreting, and constructing meaning from spoken language (Supriyani et al., 2025; Fedoryshyn & Stanislavchuk, 2025). Through listening, students are exposed to pronunciation, vocabulary, grammatical structures, and phonology, all of which contribute to the development of language proficiency (Harsa et al., 2020; Daulay, 2025). As a fundamental component of language acquisition, listening serves as the basis for learning a new language. Given its significant contribution, listening has become an essential focus in English language learning. However, many EFL students still face various difficulties in mastering effective listening skills.

Despite its crucial role in language learning, listening is often considered one of the most challenging skills for EFL students because it requires students to process spoken language in real time (Anh, 2025). While in academic reading, people are able to control what they read, in academic listening, listeners cannot easily pause or review spoken language, so they must understand information as it is delivered (Rost, 1990; Lund, 1991; Ferrera &

Anes, 1994; Nguyen, 2020). Students frequently experience difficulties in understanding spoken English because of limited vocabulary, unfamiliar pronunciation, different accents, and fast speech rates (Khanh & Diep, 2025). These challenges may reduce students' comprehension and affect their overall listening performance.

Besides students' listening difficulties, one of the major lecturers' challenges is selecting appropriate instructional materials that match students' language proficiency while maintaining their interest and motivation. Lecturers often rely on textbooks or conventional audio recordings, which are typically scripted and simplified, thereby providing limited exposure to authentic spoken English and failing to reflect the diversity and spontaneity of real-life communication, as well as to engage students effectively (Wang et al., 2020). Moreover, factors such as limited instructional time, insufficient technological support, and limited availability of authentic listening materials may pose challenges to effective listening instruction (Gong et al., 2025). These conditions encourage lecturers to select instructional media that are appropriate for students' language level while also creating engaging and meaningful learning experiences. Therefore, appropriate learning strategies and suitable media are needed to help students improve their listening skills and become more effective students.

To address the challenges faced by EFL students in listening, the use of appropriate instructional media has become increasingly important in English language learning. Instructional media can support the learning process by

providing students with real-world language input, increasing students' motivation, and creating more engaging learning experiences (Mitrulescu & Negoescu, 2024). Various instructional media have been used to improve listening skills, such as podcasts, videos, movies, and songs (Abdulrahman et al., 2018; Putri et al., 2025). Among these media, songs have attracted considerable attention because they combine language learning with enjoyable and meaningful learning experiences.

The use of songs in the teaching and learning process of listening comprehension can enhance the students' listening skills. Integrating songs in the learning process can result in killing two birds with one stone. Through natural rhythm, intonation, and diverse accents, listening practice can be made more enjoyable and engaging while supporting students' cognitive development (Wusqo, 2024). Songs contain elements such as sounds, lyrics, and melodies, which can help strengthen students' memory (Maley, 1987; Lestary & Seriadi, 2024). When students listen to and memorize songs during classroom activities, the song lyrics tend to be retained in their long-term memory, which becomes a powerful support for vocabulary retention. In addition to their melodies, song lyrics can serve as valuable learning resources that help students connect spoken language with written text.

Song lyrics are one of the main components of songs since they convey messages, meanings, and linguistic features that students can explore during language learning activities. In listening activities, song lyrics can support students' comprehension by allowing them to connect spoken language with

written words, which may facilitate vocabulary recognition and understanding of pronunciation patterns (Huang & Chen, 2024). Additionally, the integration of auditory and written lyrics in songs is able to offer students an interactive learning experience, allowing them to process spoken English while referring to textual information to facilitate comprehension. Thus, the use of song lyrics has the potential to support listening and vocabulary learning through meaningful exposure to authentic language. For this reason, selecting songs with appropriate linguistic characteristics and relevant themes is necessary to maximize their potential.

The song by Celine Dion with the title '*The Power of The Dream*' is considered one of the potential songs, especially for instructional media for listening activities. Released in 1996 as the official theme song of the *1996 Summer Olympics*, the song presents a meaningful message about hope, determination, and achieving dreams. These themes make the song relevant to students' learning experience because the song is delivered at a moderate tempo with clear pronunciation, allowing students to recognize spoken words more easily. The lyrics contain contextual vocabulary related to motivation, figurative language, and sentence structure that are suitable for vocabulary learning, as well as learning activities that help students understand the delivered language.

Song lyrics have the potential to facilitate vocabulary learning through meaningful listening activities. Several previous studies have examined the use of English songs as instructional media for improving EFL students'

listening comprehension. Ghanbari & Hashemian (2014) found that teaching English nursery rhymes to elementary EFL students (ages 8-11) significantly improved their listening comprehension and pronunciation compared to a traditional textbook approach, while also increasing motivation and engagement. Similarly, Pourkalhor and Tavakoli (2017), in a quasi-experimental study involving 30 Iranian children (7-8 years old), found that a nursery-rhyme group showed significantly greater improvement in listening comprehension than a control group receiving traditional instruction, with both students and lecturers perceiving the rhyme-based lessons as fun, relaxing, and motivating. In addition, Jashari & Sefiu (2025) revealed that authentic audiovisual input such as songs and films significantly improved students' listening comprehension compared to traditional instruction, a finding consistent with Krashen's affective filter hypothesis, Mayer's multimedia learning theory, and Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which together suggest that such materials lower anxiety, raise motivation, and promote deeper understanding.

While previous studies mainly investigated that English songs are effective in improving students' listening comprehension, pronunciation, motivation, and classroom engagement through experimental approaches (Ghanbari & Hashemian, 2014; Pourkalhor & Tavakoli, 2017; Jashari & Sefiu, 2025), most of the studies focused on listening skills rather than the use of song lyrics to support students' vocabulary mastery. Moreover, these studies were generally conducted for young students in elementary school settings between 7 until 11

years old. This indicates the need for further research exploring how song lyrics are implemented in listening instruction to support students' vocabulary mastery at the university level. Second-semester university students were selected as the focus of this study because they are in the early stage of developing their English vocabulary and listening skills at the tertiary level. At this stage, students are expected to adapt to more authentic English learning materials while strengthening their receptive language skills.

The purpose of this study is to fill this gap by exploring how Celine Dion's "*The Power of The Dream*" song lyrics are used in teaching listening to support vocabulary mastery among second-semester university students. This study identifies the strengths and weaknesses of using song lyrics during the teaching and learning process. It is expected that the findings will contribute to the development of more engaging listening instruction and provide practical insights for English lecturers who wish to integrate authentic songs into vocabulary learning activities.

B. Research Focus

This study focuses on second-semester students of the English Education program at Universitas PGRI Madiun. It specifically describes the use of Celine Dion's "*The Power of The Dream*" lyrics as instructional media in teaching listening to support students' vocabulary mastery. Furthermore, this study explores the strengths and weaknesses of using song lyrics during the teaching and learning process. The study is limited to describing the

classroom implementation of song lyrics and does not examine their effectiveness through experimental comparison or statistical measurement of students' vocabulary achievement.

C. Research Questions

1. How are the song lyrics of Celine Dion's "*The Power of the Dream*" used in teaching listening to English Education students?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of using Celine Dion's "*The Power of the Dream*" song lyrics in teaching listening to English Education students?

D. Purpose of the Study

1. To describe how the song lyrics of Celine Dion's '*The Power of the Dream*' are used in teaching listening to English Education students.
2. To identify the strengths and weaknesses of using Celine Dion's '*The Power of the Dream*' song lyrics in teaching listening to English Education students.

E. Significance of the Study

The result of this study is expected to provide both educational and practical contributions to students, lecturers, and future researchers.

1. For Students

This study is expected to help students become more interested and actively involved in listening activities by using authentic English song lyrics. It is also expected to support students in enriching their vocabulary mastery by connecting spoken English with written lyrics, making the learning process more meaningful and enjoyable.

2. For lecturers

Hopefully, this study provides practical insights into the use of song lyrics as authentic instructional media in teaching listening. The findings may serve as a reference for designing more engaging listening activities that support students' vocabulary mastery and encourage active classroom participation.

3. For Researcher

This study is expected to serve as a useful reference for future researchers who are interested in investigating the use of English song lyrics in language teaching. The results may provide additional information and inspiration for conducting similar studies with different songs, different educational levels, language skills, or research designs.

F. Definition of Key Terms

1. Song Lyrics

Song lyrics are the words or text of a song that are arranged to accompany a musical composition and convey ideas, emotions,

experiences, or stories. They are typically written in verses, choruses, and other structural components to create meaning through language and rhythm. Song lyrics employ various literary devices, such as imagery, metaphor, symbolism, rhyme, and repetition, to express the songwriter's intended message. As a form of literary and artistic expression, song lyrics communicate themes and meanings that can be interpreted by listeners in different ways.

2. Listening

Listening is the process of receiving, understanding, interpreting, and responding to spoken language. Listening has been viewed as a process that involves receiving, comprehending, retaining, evaluating, and responding to spoken messages. This process consists of five stages: (1) receiving, which involves hearing and paying attention to the message; (2) understanding, which refers to deriving meaning from what is heard; (3) remembering, which involves storing and recalling information from memory; (4) evaluating, which entails critically analyzing and judging the message; and (5) responding, which refers to providing feedback or reacting appropriately to the speaker.

3. Teaching listening

Teaching listening refers to the instructional process of developing students' ability to understand and interpret spoken English through meaningful listening activities, appropriate learning strategies and authentic audio materials. It involves helping students identify sounds, comprehend vocabulary, recognize main ideas and supporting details, and interpret the speaker's intended meaning.

4. The Power of The Dream

"The Power of the Dream" is an inspirational song performed by Celine Dion and released in 1996 as the official theme song of the 1996 Summer Olympics held in Atlanta, Georgia, United States. The song delivers inspiring messages of hope, determination, perseverance, and dream achievement, highlighting that people can accomplish their goals through hard work, self-confidence, and dedication. Besides its motivational themes, the song emphasizes universal values, such as unity, courage, and human capability, which closely reflect the spirit of the Olympic movement.