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Discussing Song on Saron: Boosting Students' Skills in IT, English, and Arts

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Abstract. In the evolving landscape of 21st-century education, the integration of digital media, linguistic proficiency, and artistic expression constitutes a fertile ground for holistic student development. However, the integration of traditional musical instruments into digital English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context remains limited, often overlooking local cultural practices. This study explores the pedagogical synergy between multimedia technology, music-based learning, and language skill acquisition through an innovative "Sing on Saron" educational playlist hosted on YouTube. Rooted in contemporary theories of digital literacies, multimodal learning, and culturally responsive pedagogy, the research investigates how students engage with interactive video content to cultivate information technology fluency, English communicative competence, and aesthetic appreciation. Utilizing a qualitative content analysis of the instructional media, this study examines the structural and pedagogical integration embedded within the multimedia materials. The analysis reveals that the playlist functions as an immersive, guided learning environment where technology becomes a conduit for linguistic exploration and artistic creation. The integration of English lyrics, subtitles, and rhythmic patterns aligns with empirical findings that musical elements reduce anxiety while enhancing memory, pronunciation, and motivation in EFL settings. Furthermore, the approach situates the Saron, a traditional metallophone, within a digital pedagogy that connects Indonesian cultural heritage with modern learning tools. The findings demonstrate that such multimodal engagement supports meaningful, joyful, and sustained learning, positioning the Sing on Saron model as a promising exemplar of blended digital, culturally grounded, and arts-infused language pedagogy.

Keywords: *Arts education; Gamelan (Saron); YouTube-based learning.*

Abbreviations: EAL (English as an Additional Language); EFL (English as a Foreign Language); IT (Information Technology).

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary education increasingly emphasizes integrating multiple competencies to prepare learners for complex global challenges [1]. Students are no longer developed through isolated subject mastery but through the combination of technological literacy, language competence, and creative expression. Jewitt [2] argues that modern classrooms require learners to navigate diverse modes of representation, including written text, visual images, and sound. The integration of information technology, language, and arts enables cognitive engagement across multiple forms of representation, supporting creativity, communication, and critical thinking across learning domains [3].

Digital media has transformed learning environments by expanding how meaning is constructed. Multimodal engagement enhances comprehension by enabling the processing of information through multiple representational systems, aligning with Paivio's [4] dual coding theory. In language education, video-based materials provide contextualized input that supports comprehension and sustained attention [5]. Concurrently, music-based learning effectively supports vocabulary development and pronunciation accuracy [6]. Musical elements stimulate emotional engagement, facilitate deeper cognitive processing, reduce language anxiety, and heighten motivation in instructional settings [7], [8].

Digital platforms further expand opportunities for participatory learning [9]. The Discuss Sing Song on Saron concept utilizes YouTube as a structured educational playlist, integrating music performance to create a cohesive multimodal learning experience. This format supports repeated exposure, guided participation, and progressive skill development. Empirical research on YouTube-assisted language learning demonstrates that video-based materials enhance comprehension [10], while the playlist format promotes self-regulated learning and sustained interaction with instructional content [11], [12]. Thus, the model positions digital media as an interactive space integrating language education with artistic practice [13].

Although digital learning and music-based instruction are well-researched, the integration of traditional musical instruments into digital EFL contexts remains limited [14]. Existing studies often emphasize Western traditions, leaving instruments rooted in local heritage, such as the Saron, rarely incorporated into technology-enhanced English learning. Culturally grounded instruction is vital for developing culturally responsive pedagogy that acknowledges learners lived experiences [15], [16]. Linking traditional arts with digital platforms enables learners to situate global English learning practices within their own cultural contexts.

The present study aims to examine the pedagogical potential of the Discuss Sing Song on Saron model as an integrated approach to digital, language, and arts-based learning [6]. Rather than investigating learner experiences directly, the research focuses on the structural and pedagogical integration embedded within the multimedia materials. Through qualitative content analysis, the study evaluates how these multimodal elements function within a culturally grounded digital learning framework [17]. The guiding research questions examine how linguistic, musical, and digital elements are integrated pedagogically within the digital playlist format [10]. Ultimately, this study offers conceptual insight into culturally grounded digital language pedagogy and extends current approaches to multimedia-based instruction [13].

METHODS

Study area

The research is situated within a digital learning environment structured around a publicly accessible YouTube playlist. Rather than focusing on a specific institutional cohort, the study examines instructional media as the primary site of pedagogical interaction. Digital platforms are increasingly being used in classroom settings [13]. The Sing on Saron playlist integrates musical performance with English-language instruction through multimodal presentations. Such environments align with contemporary understandings of digital literacy that emphasize engagement with audiovisual texts [18]. Bowen [19] argues that document-based qualitative inquiry directs participant involvement through systematic examination of publicly available materials. Therefore, the research context is defined by digital instructional design rather than by a particular school or physical classroom setting.

Procedures

The primary data source comprises instructional videos curated within the Sing on Saron YouTube playlist, each integrating Saron-based musical performance with English lyrics, subtitles, and visual presentation features. Multimedia learning theory indicates that coordinated integration of visual, auditory, and verbal elements enhances instructional effectiveness [17]. The videos are designed to facilitate the simultaneous development of pronunciation, vocabulary acquisition, rhythmic awareness, and digital navigation skills. Data collection was conducted through systematic documentation and structured analysis of these instructional videos. Following principles of document analysis, publicly accessible audiovisual artifacts serve as legitimate units of qualitative inquiry [19]. The analytical process focused on identifying patterns in sequencing, multimodal integration, instructional framing, and pedagogical coherence across the videos. As Creswell [20] noted, qualitative research may rely on textual and audiovisual materials as primary sources of evidence when aims centre on interpretation.

Data analysis

Data analysis was conducted using qualitative content analysis to identify recurring pedagogical patterns across the instructional materials [21]. The analysis processed semiotic resources—such as image, sound, text, and performance [2], [22]—and categorized them into thematic domains related to information technology skills, English language development, and artistic performance. Nowell et al. [23] emphasize that thematic analysis requires systematic coding and transparent reporting to ensure trustworthiness. To ensure overall rigor, this study adheres to criteria for excellent qualitative research, focusing on methodological coherence and analytical depth [24]. Patterns were identified inductively based on repeated multimodal configurations. Analytical consistency was maintained through iterative review and refinement of categories, and the findings were subsequently interpreted within the frameworks of multimodal learning and culturally responsive pedagogy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Frontiers in Education [25] explains that digital competence develops when learning environments require intentional interaction with platform features. The qualitative content analysis of the Sing on Saron playlist reveals that navigation skills are embedded within its instructional sequencing. Subtitles, replay-compatible musical phrasing, and a systematically organized video cluster structure make YouTube a guided learning space. Operational IT competence is therefore positioned as an integral outcome of the

playlist's design architecture. Smith and Storrs [26] stated that digital literacy extends beyond technical operation toward cognitive and sociocultural engagement with media. In structured YouTube-based learning, students are required to interpret, evaluate, and purposefully navigate digital content. Within the Sing on Saron playlist, linguistic cues, visual layering, and rhythmic repetition guide learners to interact actively with platform features. The sequencing minimizes incidental browsing and aligns media interaction with pedagogical goals. Digital navigation is therefore positioned as a mediated academic practice rather than passive consumption.

Figure 1. The Lecturer taught about Apheresis: ra is from ora.

Figure 2. The song was played by Saron with other musical instruments. Because it needs a syllable.

Ludke et al. [27] highlighted that melodic structuring enhances vocabulary retention and pronunciation accuracy in foreign language learning. The qualitative content analysis of the Song on Saron playlist shows that English lexical items are embedded within rhythmic, Saron-based musical patterns supported by subtitles and visual cues. Repetition is digitally mediated through replay functions, enabling learners to refine stress and intonation systematically. Vocabulary acquisition, therefore, emerges from multimodal rather than isolated drills. Linguistic development is structurally integrated within the playlist's musical architecture. Kitaoka [28] emphasized that music-based learning lowers anxiety and increases learners' willingness to communicate. Within the playlist, singing and performance tasks highlighted students' ability to take communicative risks in supportive contexts. This observation aligned with Fronseca-More et al. [29], who noted that musical repetition fosters confidence and sustained participation in language interaction. Learners thus developed communicative confidence that extended beyond classroom boundaries, reinforcing their readiness to use English in authentic exchanges. Engh [6] stated that songs provide meaningful contexts for language use, making vocabulary and expressions more memorable. The playlist highlighted this by situating English practice within authentic and enjoyable musical settings. Learners engaged with language in contexts that were both culturally grounded and emotionally supportive, aligning with Calabrò et al. [30] who emphasized the motivational role of rhythm and melody. Consequently, language learning became more sustainable, joyful, and effective.

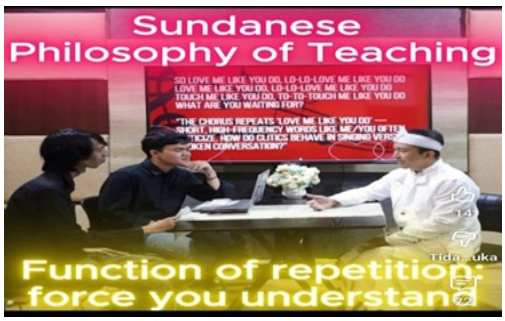

Figure 3. The lecturer taught about The Philosophical meaning of teaching.

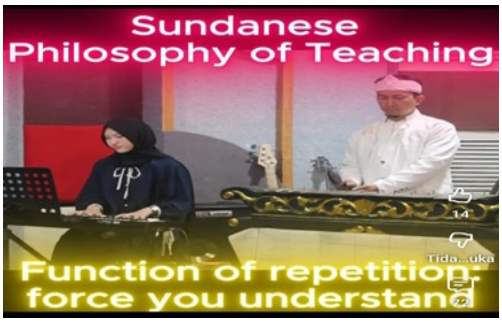

Figure 4. The song played by Saron and the other musical instruments in Sundanese: Ngawulang; to repeat; to force you understand.

The implementation of the Song on Saron playlist significantly bolstered student engagement with the Saron and its foundational music elements. Revana et al. [31] stated that virtual representation of traditional instruments like the Saron provides high-precision interaction, allowing learners to master melodic patterns within a digital environment effectively. This digital mediation bridges the gap between traditional musicianship and modern technology, as emphasized by recent studies on virtual gamelan that foster hands-on learning. Through repeated interaction with the YouTube content, students internalized Saron's unique scale and timbre, which aligns with the dual coding theory discussed in the literature. This multimodal approach ensures that auditory and visual stimuli work in tandem to solidify the students' understanding of complex musical structures. Furthermore, the creative process involved in responding to the playlist significantly enhanced students' rhythm awareness and performance confidence. It was highlighted by Arslan Değirmenci [32] that digital literacy practices in English language teaching often elicit imaginative and creative responses when integrated with artistic media. Students synchronized their vocal performances with the Saron's rhythmic pulse, and they developed a more nuanced appreciation for timing and cadence, which pointed to a heightened sense of musicality. This development is not only technical but also physiological, as the digital platform provides a safe space for students to experiment with their creative expression. Consequently, the synergy between IT skills and musical performance cultivates a robust sense of self-efficacy among students, empowering them to showcase their skills with greater assurance.

The integration of the Saron within a digital pedagogy also served as a powerful conduit for cultural appreciation through traditional music. Muflikah et al. [33] pointed out that utilizing interactive media for local sound art is essential for preserving cultural heritage among the younger generation immersed in digital lifestyles. By situating the Saron as a core component of the gamelan ensemble and a familiar YouTube feature, the study effectively connected students with their cultural roots while utilizing modern learning tools. This fusion is said to create a meaningful learning experience where traditional values are not lost but rather amplified through digital multimodal composing. Ultimately, the song on Saron model exemplifies how ethnomusicology can be revitalized in the 21st century, fostering a generation that values their artistic heritage. Findings indicate that the song on Saron model significantly enhanced student motivation, enjoyment, and sustained participation throughout the learning process. Almusharraf and Engemann [34] emphasized that multimodal digital literacy approaches in EFL contexts strengthen engagement and commitment to learning goals. Students described the digital playlist as enjoyable and immersive, with rhythm serving as a scaffold for language acquisition. Music transposes linguistic input into a meaningful and creative experience. Sustained engagement is essential for long-term retention and peer processing of language. Authentic musical input further reinforced students' intrinsic motivation. Thus, the song on Saron demonstrates how structured musical integration can promote enduring learner involvement. In addition, music integration reduced anxiety and enhanced learners' willingness to communicate. According to Kim et al. [35], music listening significantly lowers communication apprehension in foreign language learning. Focusing on melody and rhythm shifted attention away from grammatical fear toward aesthetic engagement. This shift created a relaxed classroom climate that

encouraged linguistic experimentation. As anxiety decreased, students became more open to new vocabulary and complex structures. Fajt [36] further noted that music-based digital activities strengthen communicative confidence. Within the song on Saron model, this translated into greater readiness to use English in both artistic and social interactions.

The findings demonstrate that the Discuss Sing Song on Saron model operationalizes digital literacy as structured, intentional interaction with multimodal instructional design rather than as mere technical competence. In line with Hobbs [18] and Ng [37], digital literacy encompasses critical navigation, cognitive engagement, and purposeful participation within digitally mediated environments. The playlist's organized sequencing, subtitle integration, and replay-compatible musical structuring indicate that digital skills are embedded within pedagogical architecture. This configuration aligns with Jewitt's [2] view of multimodality as the coordinated orchestration of semiotic resources in meaning-making. By integrating digital navigation with linguistic and musical cues, the model positions IT competence as mediated academic practice, reinforcing the conceptual linkage between digital literacy and structured multimodal pedagogy. The enhancement of English language skills observed in the content analysis further aligns with established research in multimedia and music-based learning. Mayer and Moreno [17] emphasize that coordinated audiovisual input strengthens cognitive processing, while Engh [6] highlights the role of songs in providing meaningful contexts for vocabulary retention and pronunciation development. The rhythmic structuring of vocabulary items within the playlist supports phonological awareness and vocabulary consolidation through multimodal repetition. Moreover, research on effective dimensions of music-based learning indicates that musical integration can reduce communicative anxiety and promote willingness to engage in language use [28]. These findings suggest that the interplay of melody, repetition, and visual scaffolding functions not as decorative enhancement but as a structurally embedded mechanism for linguistic development within digital environments. The findings suggest that English teachers and arts educators can purposefully design multimodal, culture-based digital materials that integrate technological navigation, linguistic development, and artistic performance within a coherent instructional structure. Consistent with the principle of digital literacy [18], [37], educators should embed platform interaction, subtitle scaffolding, and replay functions as intentional components of learning design rather than supplementary tools. The coordinated use of audiovisual input, as emphasized in multimedia learning research [17], can be combined with music-based language practice to strengthen vocabulary retention and pronunciation development [6]. Furthermore, aligning instruction with culturally relevant pedagogy [15] enables teachers to integrate local artistic heritage into English learning, fostering both identity affirmation and cross-curricular curriculum integration, positioning digital platforms as structured ecosystems for interdisciplinary skill development rather than isolated technological add-ons.

Furthermore, the integration of multiple modes of representation is central to the design of music-mediated instructional approaches. Zhang et al. [38] argue that learning is enhanced when multiple forms of information reinforce one another within authentic contexts. This is supported by Linder and Falk-Ross [39], who found that multimodal texts foster greater learner autonomy, and Heli et al. [40], who highlighted that multiple input modes reduce communicative anxiety in EFL contexts. On a broader educational scale, UNESCO [41] emphasizes that incorporating arts and culture fosters creativity and intercultural understanding. Traditional music serves as a vital resource for this; Yatim et al. [42] noted that local music traditions in schools preserve cultural heritage. Specifically for the Saron, Wijayanto and Fidyastuti [43] pointed out that gamelan instruments bridge traditional heritage and modern educational innovation, while Halimatus'diah et al. [44] emphasized its potential for interdisciplinary STEM learning.

CONCLUSION

The study reveals that the Discuss Sing Song on Saron model successfully integrates digital literacy, English language development, and artistic learning within a structured multimodal framework. First, IT skills are developed through intentional interaction with YouTube features such as subtitles, replay functions, and sequenced playlists. Digital competence emerges not as an isolated technical ability, but as guided academic navigation embedded in instructional design. Second, English language skills are enhanced through rhythm-based vocabulary presentation, audiovisual reinforcement, and repeated multimodal exposure. The integration of melody, subtitles, and visual cues strengthens pronunciation accuracy, vocabulary retention, and communicative confidence. Music functions as both a cognitive scaffold and affective support, reducing anxiety while promoting sustained engagement. Third, artistic appreciation grows through the incorporation of the Saron as a central learning medium. The playlist design connects traditional gamelan performance with digital platforms, enabling learners to develop rhythmic awareness, musical sensitivity, and cultural understanding. The findings also indicate positive affective outcomes, including increased motivation, enjoyment, and willingness to communicate in English. This study offers several important contributions at theoretical, pedagogical, cultural, and methodological levels.

From a theoretical perspective, the research advances multimodal learning scholarship by illustrating how culturally embedded music can be systematically incorporated into digital EFL instruction. It brings together frameworks of digital literacy, multimedia learning, music-based language pedagogy, and culturally responsive teaching into a unified conceptual model. In doing so, the study expands existing discussions of technology-enhanced language learning by positioning traditional music as an integral—not peripheral—component of digital pedagogy. From a pedagogical standpoint, the study proposes an innovative instructional model that transforms YouTube from a passive content platform into a structured learning environment. The Sing on Saron framework demonstrates how technological navigation, English language practice, and musical engagement can be intentionally aligned within a coherent design. This interdisciplinary approach provides educators with a practical and adaptable template for integrating IT skills, language learning, and arts education in classroom settings. In terms of cultural contribution, the research highlights the educational value of incorporating the Saron into digital English learning contexts. By bridging traditional gamelan heritage with contemporary digital tools, the study supports the preservation and revitalization of local culture while promoting global communicative competence. It shows that local artistic traditions can meaningfully coexist with modern educational technologies. Methodologically, the study demonstrates the relevance of qualitative content analysis in examining multimedia instructional materials. By focusing on artifact-based analysis rather than participant-based data collection, it provides an alternative approach for investigating digital pedagogy through systematic examination of multimodal design.

The Sing on Saron model demonstrates significant potential for implementation across a wide range of educational settings due to its interdisciplinary and multimodal structure. By integrating digital literacy, English language development, and musical performance within a cohesive instructional design, the model offers flexibility for adaptation in various institutional, cultural, and technological environments. In primary and secondary schools, the model supports cross-curricular learning by linking English, arts, and information technology competencies within a single learning framework. The integration of the Saron allows students to simultaneously develop linguistic skills, rhythmic awareness, and cultural understanding. This holistic approach aligns well with competency-based curricula that emphasize creativity, communication, collaboration, and critical thinking. In EFL and EAL contexts, particularly in regions with limited exposure to authentic English interaction, the model provides contextualized and engaging language input through music-mediated repetition and multimodal reinforcement. Subtitle features, replay options, and structured playlists enable learners to regulate their own pace, fostering autonomy and sustained engagement. This makes the model especially suitable for blended and online learning environments. At the tertiary level, including teacher education programs, the model can serve as an example of culturally responsive digital pedagogy. Pre-service teachers may examine its design to understand how multimodal elements—visual, auditory, textual, and performative—can be orchestrated to support integrated skill development. Thus, the model functions not only as a teaching tool but also as a framework for instructional design training. Beyond formal schooling, the Sing on Saron model holds value in community education and informal learning spaces. Connecting traditional gamelan music with digital platforms, it facilitates intergenerational cultural transmission while remaining relevant to digitally oriented learners. The framework can also be adapted globally by substituting the Saron with other local musical instruments, preserving its pedagogical principles while contextualizing its cultural content.

Despite its conceptual and pedagogical contributions, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the research relies exclusively on qualitative content analysis of instructional materials within the Sing on Saron YouTube playlist. The study does not include empirical data from learners or teachers, such as classroom observations, interviews, or measurable learning outcomes. Consequently, the findings focus on pedagogical design potential rather than verified instructional effectiveness in real classroom implementation. Second, the absence of quantitative assessment limits the ability to determine the extent to which the model improves IT competence, English proficiency, or artistic skills. While the analysis identifies strong multimodal integration, it does not statistically measure gains in vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation accuracy, digital literacy development, or musical performance. Future research incorporating experimental or mixed-method approaches would strengthen empirical validation. Third, the study is contextually grounded in the use of the Saron and Indonesian gamelan tradition. Although this cultural specificity is a strength, it may limit immediate transferability to contexts where gamelan is unfamiliar. Adaptation to other cultural settings would require careful contextualization of local musical traditions. Fourth, the research examines a publicly accessible digital playlist rather than a controlled instructional environment. Variations in learner access to technology, internet stability, and digital competence may influence implementation outcomes in diverse educational contexts. These external factors were not examined within the scope of this study. Finally, the study focuses on structural integration of digital, linguistic, and artistic elements, but it does not explore long-term sustainability, teacher readiness, or institutional constraints that may affect large-scale adoption. Future studies are therefore

recommended to include classroom-based implementation, learner perception data, comparative experimental designs, and cross-cultural adaptations to further evaluate the effectiveness and scalability of the Sing on Saron model.

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