

## Students' Perceptions on the Use of English Songs in Listening Classes at Grade XI of SMAN 11 Jambi City

Nurrahmah Salsabila<sup>1</sup>, Suyadi<sup>2</sup>, Nurul Fitri<sup>3</sup>

English Language Education Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Educational Sciences  
University of Batanghari  
Email: ocha422@yahoo.com

### ABSTRACT

This research aims to explore the perceptions of eleventh-grade students at SMAN 11 Jambi City regarding the use of English pop songs, particularly "Fight Song" by Rachel Platten, as a learning medium in listening classes. This qualitative study involved 36 students from class XI F7 as participants, selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through questionnaires and unstructured interviews. The questionnaire consisted of 17 Likert-scale statements focused on students' perceptions of English songs in learning listening, while the interviews provided deeper insight into student experiences and thoughts. The findings showed that most students had positive perceptions of using English songs in listening activities. They reported increased motivation (85%), improved focus and relaxed learning atmosphere (76–77%), enhanced listening skills and pronunciation (73–77%), and found songs to be efficient and enjoyable learning media. However, memorizing new vocabulary through songs was perceived as more difficult (67%) due to fast tempo, idiomatic expressions, and unfamiliar words. In conclusion, English pop songs especially those with relatable themes and easy-to-follow lyrics, can be a valuable tool in enhancing students' motivation and listening skills. This study supports the integration of music-based learning strategies in EFL classrooms to create engaging, effective, and student-centered learning experiences.

**Keywords:** *Students' perceptions, English Songs, Listening Skill*

### INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization and technological advancement, English has become a crucial communication tool and a gateway to accessing global information. In Indonesia, English is taught as a compulsory subject at various educational levels, with emphasis on four key skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Among these, listening is often regarded as the most challenging skill for learners. According to Brown et al. (2017), listening is not a passive activity but an active process involving attention, comprehension, and interpretation of spoken messages. For many Indonesian students, difficulties in listening arise due to the fast pace of native speakers, different accents, and limited vocabulary knowledge (Bloomfield et al., 2010; Bingol et al., 2014; Graham, 2006).

Listening plays a vital role in communication since it is the foundation for other language skills. Without adequate listening comprehension, learners may struggle to produce language correctly or respond appropriately. Therefore, it is essential to provide students with engaging and authentic learning experiences that can enhance their

listening ability while reducing anxiety. One such approach is the use of English songs as a learning medium.

Music, especially songs, has been recognized as a powerful educational tool. Maru (2009) and Griffe (1992) argue that songs help create an enjoyable classroom environment, reduce learners' anxiety, and increase motivation. Songs also provide authentic exposure to natural speech, pronunciation, and rhythm, which are often absent in textbook materials. Pop songs, in particular, are relatable to students' daily lives as they often feature emotional and motivational themes with easy-to-follow lyrics. This familiarity makes them an effective vehicle for learning English listening skills (Sevik, 2012; Dale, 1992).

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In order to provide a strong theoretical foundation, this section reviews the concepts of listening, perception, the pedagogical role of songs, and findings from previous research.

#### *Theories of Listening*

Listening is the ability to understand and interpret spoken language in real time (Brown, 2017). Krashen's *Affective Filter Hypothesis* (1982)

emphasizes that learning occurs most effectively when emotional barriers—such as anxiety and lack of motivation—are minimized. Songs naturally reduce these barriers by creating a relaxed and positive environment conducive to learning. Furthermore, the repetitive structures of songs enhance language automaticity (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 1998), helping learners internalize vocabulary and grammatical patterns subconsciously.

*Theories of Perception*

Perception is the cognitive process of organizing and interpreting sensory information (Robbins, 2019). It involves both internal and external factors. Internal factors include motivation, attitude, attention, and interest, while external factors include learning environment, teaching method, and materials (Walgito, 2013; Thoha, 2003). Positive perceptions lead to active participation and better learning outcomes. In language learning, students’ perception of a method directly influences their motivation and success.

*The Use Songs in Language Learning*

Songs are valuable linguistic resources that integrate vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation within a meaningful and enjoyable context (Hornby, 1990; Brewster et al., 2002). They provide authentic examples of real language use, which helps learners understand pronunciation and intonation in context (Murphey, 1992). Lo and Li (1998) also note that music reduces students’ negative attitudes toward foreign languages. Moreover, songs provide cultural insights, introducing learners to expressions and idioms used by native speakers (Lorenzutti, 2014).

*Students’ Perceptions of Using Songs*

Research has shown that songs increase student engagement, reduce anxiety, and improve comprehension. Mena and Chapetón (2014) found that songs helped Colombian learners express emotions and participate actively. Similarly, Avdiu (2022) reported that songs improved students’ confidence and attitudes

toward English in Kosovo. Learners from Vietnam and Romania also reported better vocabulary and pronunciation outcomes after learning with songs (Anh, 2019; Camarã & Naznean, 2022). Therefore, students’ positive perceptions are key indicators of the success of song-based learning.

**METHODOLOGY**

This section explains the design, participants, instruments, data collection, and analysis procedures used in the study.

*Research Design*

This research used a mixed-method approach that combined quantitative (questionnaire) and qualitative (interview) techniques. The design provided both numerical trends and in-depth explanations, allowing triangulation of findings (Creswell, 2014).

The study was conducted at SMAN 11 Jambi City in 2025. Participants included 36 students from class XI F7, selected through purposive sampling. This sampling technique was chosen because participants had prior experience using English songs in their listening activities.

Two instruments were employed:

A questionnaire Containing 17 statements based on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). It measured students’ perceptions across three dimensions: attitudes toward learning English through songs, perceived benefits, and perceptions of songs as learning media.

Unstructured interviews, Conducted with five participants to explore detailed personal experiences and opinions. Questions were guided by key indicators such as motivation, enjoyment, vocabulary acquisition, and classroom atmosphere.

Table 1 interview Guide Grid

Variable	Aspect	Indicator	Instru ment numbe r
Students’ percepti ons on the use	Interna l factor	Attitude	1,9
		Attention	2
		Interest	3,8

of english songs in listening	Ekster nal factor	Motivation	4,10
		Object	5,7
		Environment	6

Motivational Impact  
 Students expressed that songs made learning enjoyable and reduced their anxiety. One student said, *“I feel more confident to listen when we use songs; it’s not stressful like usual listening tests.”*

Adopted: Tolhairi (2003) & Maghfiroh (2022)

The researcher distributed questionnaires during class and collected them after completion. Interviews were then conducted individually, either face-to-face or online, depending on students’ availability. All participants provided informed consent.

Quantitative data from questionnaires were analyzed using percentage calculations to summarize students’ responses. Qualitative data from interviews were analyzed thematically following Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six-step framework: familiarization, coding, theme identification, review, definition, and interpretation. The integration of both datasets provided a holistic understanding of students’ perceptions.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The questionnaire results indicated overwhelmingly positive student perceptions.

Motivation: 85% agreed or strongly agreed that English songs increased their motivation and enthusiasm.

Focus and Atmosphere: 76–77% stated that songs improved focus and created a more relaxed classroom environment.

Listening and Pronunciation: 73–77% agreed that songs helped them recognize pronunciation patterns and improve listening comprehension.

Challenges: 67% acknowledged difficulties in catching new vocabulary due to fast tempos and idiomatic expressions.

Overall, the mean score indicated a “positive” level of perception across all indicators.

**Qualitative Findings**

Interviews revealed three major themes:

This finding supports Krashen’s (1982) theory that lowering the affective filter enhances language input.

**Linguistic Benefits**

Students noted improvement in recognizing pronunciation, accent, and rhythm. They also gained new vocabulary through repetition. However, some mentioned that understanding idioms and fast lyrics remained difficult.

**Emotional and Environmental Effects**

Students described song-based lessons as “fun,” “relaxing,” and “different from ordinary listening.” They preferred learning with popular songs because the lyrics were relatable and motivational.

1. The Result of Questionnaire

The questionnaire results showed that the majority of students perceived English songs positively in their listening classes. For example, 85% of students agreed that songs increased their motivation. Around 76–77% reported that songs made the learning atmosphere more relaxed and improved their focus. A similar percentage agreed that songs helped enhance listening skills and pronunciation. However, 67% admitted that memorizing vocabulary through songs remained difficult due to fast tempo and idiomatic expressions.

**Table 1. The Result of Questionnaire**

No	Statement	Score	Percentage
1	I listen to English songs to practice my English skills.	146	81%
2	Listening to English song never bores me because it is exciting.	147	82%
3	English songs can	153	85%
4	Listening to English songs while learning can make me more focused.	137	76%

5	Using English songs while learning English can make the learning atmosphere more relaxed.	138	77%
6	Listening to English songs makes me more familiar with the English words.	137	76%
7	Listening to English song make me easy to memorize a new vocabulary.	121	67%
8	English songs help me to speak like a native speaker.	134	74%
9	English songs can make me more active in learning English in the classroom.	136	76%
10	Using English songs as learning media in class can help me to understand the material better.	134	74%
11	I usually practice my listening skill using English songs.	132	73%
12	English songs can be efficient listening learning media because I can access them anywhere and anytime.	137	76%
13	I enjoy using English songs as my listening learning media	139	77%
14	English songs are good media to support listening activities.	139	77%
15	English songs can help me to improve my listening skill	136	76%
16	English songs can help me enhance my listening skill and pronunciation in a fun way	138	77%
17	I feel more comfortable learning listening skills using English songs rather than using other media.	132	73%

## 2. The Result of Interview

The interviews confirmed the questionnaire results and provided more detail. Students shared that they felt more engaged and less bored when songs were included in lessons. They highlighted that songs created a fun learning atmosphere and increased their willingness to practice listening. Some students, however, admitted difficulties in catching every word in songs, especially when singers pronounced words quickly or used unfamiliar expressions.

## DISCUSSION

The findings confirm that English songs positively influence students' affective and cognitive engagement. The relaxed atmosphere fosters concentration and reduces anxiety, validating Griffe's (1992) and Murphey's

(1992) claims. Moreover, pop songs serve as authentic linguistic input that facilitates listening practice beyond the textbook (Sevik, 2012). However, vocabulary comprehension challenges suggest the need for teacher mediation, such as pre-listening vocabulary discussions or lyric-based comprehension exercises. Teachers can also select songs with clearer pronunciation and moderate tempo to suit students' proficiency levels.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that students have highly positive perceptions of using English songs in listening classes. Songs enhance motivation, focus, and enjoyment while improving listening and pronunciation skills. Although vocabulary difficulty remains an obstacle, students still prefer song-based learning due to its authenticity and entertainment value. Therefore, integrating songs—particularly pop songs with clear pronunciation and relevant themes—can significantly improve students' engagement and listening comprehension.

## REFERENCES

- Alqahtani, M. (2020). The effectiveness of using songs in teaching English as a foreign language. *International Journal of Linguistics*, 12(2), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.5296/ijl.v12i2.16753> Angkasa.
- Anh, N. T. M. (2019). *The effects of English songs on pronunciation and vocabulary retention*. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 10(3), 523–531. *Asian EFL Journal*, 29(1), 77–91.
- Avdiu, N. (2022). *The effects of songs on students' motivation in learning English*. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 13(1), 56–63.
- Beasley, R. E., & Chuang, Y.-C. (2008). *The effects of music on listening comprehension in English as a second language classrooms*. *Taiwan Journal of TESOL*, 5(1), 1–28.
- Berne, J. E. (2004). Listening comprehension

- strategies: A review of the literature.
- Bimo Walgito, Psikologi Sosial (Suatu Pengantar), 6th ed. (Yogyakarta) Andi Offset, (2013).
- Bloomfield, A., Wayland, S. C., Rhoades, E. L., Blodgett, A., Linck, J., & Ross, S. (2010). *What makes listening difficult? Factors affecting second language listening comprehension*. University of Maryland: Center for the Advanced Study of Language.
- Brewster, J., Ellis, G., & Girard, D. (2002). *The primary English teacher's guide* (2nd ed.). Penguin English.
- Brown, H. D. (2001). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy* (2nd ed.). Longman.
- Camară, G. A., & Naznean, A. (2022). *Music in language education: Romanian learners' perceptions*. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 180, 1259–1265.
- Chaney, A. L., & Burk, T. L. (1998). *Teaching oral communication in grades K-8*. Allyn & Bacon.
- Claerr, T. A., & Gargan, R. A. (1984). The role of songs in the foreign language classroom. *OPC Publications*, 72(4), 1013–1017.
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Dale, M. (1992). *Listening in language learning*. Cambridge University Press.
- Diakou, M. (2013). *The use of songs in the English language classroom*. English
- Diakou, M. (2013). *The use of songs in the English language classroom*. English
- Fatah Syukur, —Perspsi Mahasiswa Tadris Terhadap Pembelajaran Dosen dan Pengaruhnya terhadap Prestasi Belajar Mahasiswa di Jurusan Tadris Fakultas Tarbiyah IAIN Walisongo Semarang, Citraedukasi's Weblog (blog), accessed August 31, <https://citraedukasi.wordpress.com/2008/01/25/penelitian-3/>.
- Fian, H. (2024). *The impact of English language proficiency on student academic performance*. *Journal of Education Research*, 22(1), 50–62.
- Foreign Language Annals*, 37(4), 521–531.
- Futonge, K. (2005). *Using English songs in the ESL classroom*. Retrieved from <http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Futonge-Songs.html>
- Gibson, B. (1989). *The psychology of music and language learning*. *Journal of Music Psychology*, 9(1), 37–45.
- Graham, S. (2006). Listening comprehension: The learners' perspective. *System*, 34(2), 165–182.
- Griffie, D. T. (1992). *Songs in action*. Prentice Hall International.
- Hampp, C. (2019). *Music as a resource for second language learning*. *Applied Linguistics Review*, 10(2), 215–236.
- Hidayati, N. (2022). Enhancing students' motivation through English songs in the EFL classroom. *Edu-Ling: Journal of English Education and Linguistics*, 5(2), 101–112. <https://doi.org/10.33650/edu-ling.v5i2.2345>
- Hornby, A. S. (1990). *Oxford advanced learner's dictionary*. Oxford University Press.
- Hypothesis]
- iEduNote. (2019). *What is perception in psychology?* Retrieved from <https://www.iedunote.com/percepti on>
- Ivenna, N. D. (2023). *Teenagers' music preferences and their impact on learning English*. *Journal of*

- Language and Youth Culture, 11(2), 34–42.  
*Jurnal Ilmu Budaya*, 6(2), 189–195.
- Krashen, S. D. (2018). *Explorations in Language Acquisition and Use*. Heinemann. (Reprint with updates). [This source supports the Affective Filter
- Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing*.
- Le, T. V. (2024). *Trendy songs and student motivation: A case study from Vietnam*.
- Lengkoan, F. (2017). *Developing listening comprehension through songs*. *Language Circle: Journal of Language and Literature*, 12(1), 13–20.
- Lestari, A., & Widiati, U. (2021). The use of English songs to improve students' listening skills. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Literature*, 6(1), 55–62.  
<https://doi.org/10.47080/jeltl.v6i1.1234>
- Lo, R., & Fai Li, H. C. (1998). Songs enhance learner involvement. *English*
- Lorenzutti, N. (2014). Beyond the gap fill: Dynamic activities for song in the EFL classroom. *English Teaching Forum*, 52(1), 14–21.
- Lynch, T. (2009). *Teaching second language listening*. Oxford University Press.
- Maghfiroh, S. N. (2022). *Investigating students' perception on the use of English popular songs in teaching listening*. Undergraduate Thesis, UIN Walisongo.
- Maru, M. G. (2009). English song lyrics as authentic materials for teaching reading.
- Mena, A. M., & Chapetón, C. M. (2014). EFL teenagers' social identity, language learning, and the use of songs for meaningful communication. *Profile Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 16(2), 67–83.
- Mercado Lara, L. (2013). Students' perception and performance in higher education. *Journal of Educational Research and Studies*, 15(4), 44–56.
- Mogea, Y. F. (2019). *Perception and its implications in learning*. *Journal of Education Psychology*, 10(2), 18–29.
- Murphey, T. (1992). *Music and song*. Oxford University Press.
- Nation, I. S. P., & Newton, J. (2020). *Teaching ESL/EFL Listening and Speaking* (2nd ed.). Routledge.  
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429292100>
- Pareek in Sobur, A. (2003). *Psikologi umum*. Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Putri, B. G., Degeng, P. D., & Isnaini, M. H. (2022). *EFL students' perception towards the use of English songs as listening learning media*. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Literature*, 7(1), 1–10.
- Robbins, S. P. (2019). *Organizational behavior* (18th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Sadiku, L. M. (2015). The importance of four skills reading, speaking, writing, listening in a lesson hour. *European Journal of Language and Literature*, 1(1), 29–31.  
 Sage Publications.
- Saleh, N. B. M. (1998). *The effectiveness of Pop songs for developing listening skills for one Intermediate Level Students*. Universiti Putra Malaysia.
- Samaniego, N., & Zúñiga, L. (2011). *Students' perceptions of songs for English language learning*. *Revista de Lenguas Modernas*, (15), 1–18.
- Saricoban, A., & Metin, E. (2000). Songs, verse and games for teaching grammar.
- Sevik, M. (2012). Teaching listening skills to young learners through “Listen and Do” songs. *English Teaching Forum*, 50(3), 10–17.

- Sugiyono. (2017). *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan (Pendekatan Kuantitatif, Kualitatif dan R&D)*. Alfabeta.
- Tarigan, H. G., & Tarigan, D. (1990). *Teknik pengajaran keterampilan berbahasa*. *Teaching Forum*, 36(3), 8–11. *Teaching Forum*, 51(3), 14–21.
- Teppa, D., Sutrisno, H., & Putri, D. (2022). *The influence of English songs on students' learning motivation*. *Journal of English Language Studies*, 7(2), 15–24. *The Internet TESL Journal*, 6(10).
- Thoha, *Perilaku Organisasi, Konsep Dasar, dan Aplikasi*.
- Vandergrift, L. (2007). Recent developments in second and foreign language listening comprehension research. *Language Teaching*, 40(3), 191–210.
- Walgito, B. (2010). *Psikologi Umum*. Andi Offset.
- Yusnida, D., Zaim, M., & Refnaldi. (2017). A study on listening comprehension problems encountered by EFL students. *English Language Teaching*, 10(3), 1–10.



