

Senior High School Students' Perceptions on Using Songs as English Learning Media

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ABSTRACT

This study explores senior high school students' perceptions of using songs as a medium in English language learning. Recognizing the potential of songs to enhance motivation, engagement, and language proficiency, the research focuses on four 12th-grade students majoring in Computer and Network Engineering at SMKN 2 Kuningan. Utilizing a descriptive quantitative approach, data were collected through questionnaires comprising closed and openended questions. Findings reveal that students hold positive perceptions of using songs in learning English, noting benefits such as improved pronunciation, better vocabulary retention, increased motivation, and enhanced listening skills. The pop genre was most favored due to its clear and simple lyrics. Despite the overall enthusiasm, students identified some challenges, including difficulty understanding lyrics without written text and unclear pronunciation. Nonetheless, all participants recommended more frequent integration of songs into English instruction, emphasizing the engaging and enjoyable nature of this approach. These results suggest that incorporating music into language education can significantly contribute to student learning outcomes, especially in vocabulary acquisition and listening comprehension.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The growing significance of English proficiency in the global era has led educators to seek more innovative and engaging methods for language teaching. One such method gaining popularity is the use of music—specifically songs—in the classroom. Songs are not only enjoyable but also provide linguistic, emotional, and cultural benefits that support language learning (Pangaribuan & Chairunnissa, 2023; Hidayati, 2023). Previous research suggests that songs can increase students' motivation and improve various skills, particularly listening and vocabulary acquisition.

However, despite the proliferation of such studies, little is known about how senior high school students perceive the use of songs in English classrooms, especially in vocational settings. Students' perceptions can significantly influence the effectiveness of any instructional approach. Therefore, understanding how students view the integration of songs is essential for designing suitable pedagogical strategies.

1.1 Definition of Students' Perception on Using Songs in English Language Learning

Students' perception refers to how learners interpret, evaluate, and emotionally respond to their experiences during the learning process. In this context, students' perception denotes how they view the use of songs as a medium for learning English, including its usefulness, appeal, and impact on their motivation and comprehension. Perception in language education is not only shaped by the students' experiences but also by their learning styles, prior knowledge, and interests.

(Pangaribuan & Chairunnissa, 2023), students generally perceive songs positively in English classes due to their ability to present vocabulary and grammar in context while also offering enjoyment. Dewi (2023) affirms that students' attitudes toward learning with songs tend to be favorable, especially when songs align with their proficiency levels and preferences. The use of songs in language learning is also supported by cognitive and affective theories.

Cognitive theories emphasize memory retention, pattern recognition, and auditory reinforcement, while affective theories—such as Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis—highlight the importance of lowering anxiety and increasing student motivation. Songs, with their rhythmic and repetitive structures, provide both cognitive stimulation and emotional engagement. Furthermore, songs can deliver authentic language input, including pronunciation, intonation, and colloquial expressions. This supports the development of listening skills and cultural awareness. Thus, students' perception is a crucial indicator of the effectiveness and relevance of songs as learning tools in the English classroom.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in several key theories of language learning. Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis explains that students learn more effectively when they are relaxed and motivated—conditions often created by using songs. The repetitive and melodic nature of music also aligns with Cognitive Learning Theory, which highlights the role of repetition and rhythm in memory retention. Additionally, Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory supports the inclusion of music in learning, particularly for students with strong musical intelligence. Songs also fit within a constructivist approach, where learners build knowledge through meaningful, real-life input. These theories together support the use of songs as effective tools to enhance language acquisition, especially in engaging and motivating students.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Role of Songs in Language Learning

The integration of songs in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms has been widely recognized as an effective method to support language acquisition. Songs are considered to enhance various aspects of language learning, including vocabulary development, listening comprehension, pronunciation accuracy, and cultural awareness. According to Pangaribuan & Chairunnissa (2023), songs provide a rich linguistic environment where learners are exposed to authentic pronunciation, contextual vocabulary, and natural speech patterns.

Through rhythm and melody, songs help learners to retain new words and phrases more efficiently compared to traditional memorization techniques. Wulandari (2023) similarly found that the use of English songs contributed to significant improvement in vocabulary mastery among senior high school students. Pratiwi (2023) emphasizes the benefits of using songs for improving listening comprehension. Songs help students attune to different accents, intonation patterns, and pace of speech, thereby training their auditory discrimination skills.

In line with this, Hidayati (2023) highlights that songs offer a more engaging and enjoyable learning environment, increasing student motivation and reducing boredom. From a motivational standpoint, Setiawan (2023) argues that music enhances students' intrinsic motivation to learn English. The entertaining nature of songs stimulates learner interest and promotes positive attitudes toward the subject. Beyond linguistic benefits, songs also provide cultural exposure.

Many English songs reflect themes, idioms, and references unique to certain cultural contexts. This aspect supports learners in developing pragmatic awareness and intercultural competence. In summary, songs serve as a multifaceted resource that can facilitate both linguistic development and emotional engagement in EFL contexts. Their inclusion in the classroom not only diversifies instructional methods but also caters to different learner preferences and needs.

2.2 Previous Studies

Several previous studies have examined the effectiveness of songs in English language learning, particularly focusing on students' attitudes, motivation, and skill development. Pangaribuan and Chairunnissa (2023) conducted a study on students' perceptions of using songs as a medium in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Their findings demonstrated that students perceived songs positively due to the enjoyable atmosphere and the support they provided in vocabulary acquisition, speaking, and listening skills.

Rahmawati (2023) explored students' perceptions of English songs as a tool for listening comprehension. Her study revealed that students became more engaged and motivated when songs were integrated into their learning

process. The rhythmic structure of music helped students to better focus and process auditory input. Sari (2023) also emphasized the value of songs in auditory learning.

Her study showed that the use of English songs in listening practice led to significant improvements in students' listening comprehension, as they were more focused and interested in the content. Another study by Hidayati (2023) highlighted the cultural and contextual understanding gained through songs. She noted that songs introduced learners to colloquial language and expressions used in real-life communication, enhancing both language proficiency and cultural literacy.

Setiawan (2023) focused on the motivational impact of music. His research indicated that music created a more dynamic classroom atmosphere and significantly increased students' enthusiasm and willingness to participate. Taken together, these studies confirm that songs can effectively support English language acquisition, especially when aligned with students' learning preferences and linguistic levels. However, few of them explored the perceptions of students in vocational schools, indicating a gap this study aims to fill.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research employed a descriptive quantitative method supported by qualitative elements to explore the perceptions of senior high school students toward the use of songs in learning English. The aim was to gain both statistical trends and in-depth insights into student experiences. The descriptive design allowed for a systematic analysis of opinions, preferences, and challenges expressed by students. The study was conducted at SMKN 2 Kuningan, involving four 12th-grade students from the Computer and Network Engineering (TKJ) program.

These participants were selected purposively based on their availability and prior exposure to English learning activities that involved songs. Although the sample size was small, it allowed the researcher to capture focused and detailed feedback from students within a vocational school setting. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire that combined closed-ended Likert-scale items with open-ended questions. This mixed-format approach enabled the researcher to collect both quantifiable data and personal narratives.

The questionnaire included items related to students' general attitudes toward learning English through songs, the perceived benefits (e.g., vocabulary improvement, listening comprehension), types of songs preferred, and obstacles encountered during such learning. Prior to distribution, students were informed about the purpose of the study and gave their consent voluntarily. The data collection was conducted in person and completed within one week.

Responses from the closed-ended items were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and averages, to identify common trends. Meanwhile, the qualitative responses from open-ended questions were examined thematically to extract recurring patterns such as enjoyment, motivation, vocabulary retention, and listening skills development. Through this combined approach, the study aimed to present a comprehensive understanding of how students perceive the use of songs in English language learning, both in terms of measurable trends and meaningful student reflections.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The findings from the questionnaire revealed that all participants had a generally positive perception of using songs in English language learning. The students reported that songs made the learning process more enjoyable and engaging, reducing classroom boredom and enhancing focus. They also indicated that vocabulary retention improved due to the repetitive and melodic structure of songs, which made it easier to memorize words. In addition, the students noted that songs helped them improve their pronunciation and listening comprehension by exposing them to natural speech, intonation, and rhythm.

Pop music was the most preferred genre among the participants, as it often uses clear, relatable language and simpler sentence structures. However, challenges were also mentioned—particularly the difficulty in understanding fast-paced lyrics and unfamiliar vocabulary when lyrics were not provided in written form. Despite these obstacles, students expressed a strong preference for the inclusion of songs in English classes, suggesting that they be used more frequently and purposefully. These findings support several relevant theories and previous studies.

The positive perceptions align with Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis, which highlights how lower anxiety and increased motivation can enhance language acquisition. The enjoyable atmosphere created by songs seems to lower emotional barriers, helping students engage more freely with language input. Cognitive theories of language learning also support the role of repetition and rhythm in facilitating vocabulary retention and pronunciation accuracy. In addition, the preference for familiar music genres like pop suggests that student-centered approaches—those that consider learners' interests and preferences—can lead to better educational outcomes.

The challenges identified by students highlight the importance of teacher support strategies such as pre-teaching vocabulary, providing lyric handouts, or slowing down audio. Overall, songs can be considered not just supplementary, but integral to effective English language instruction, especially when used strategically to meet

learners' needs. The integration of songs into classroom practice is highly recommended to enhance student motivation, engagement, and linguistic development.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This study concluded that the use of songs as a medium in English language learning is perceived positively by senior high school students, particularly those in vocational education settings. Songs were found to enhance vocabulary retention, improve listening and pronunciation skills, and foster a more enjoyable and motivating classroom atmosphere. These benefits are closely aligned with established language learning theories, including Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis and cognitive learning principles.

Although some challenges were noted—such as difficulty understanding fast lyrics or unfamiliar vocabulary—students strongly supported the integration of songs into English lessons. To address these challenges, teachers are encouraged to provide scaffolding tools such as lyric sheets and guided listening activities. Overall, songs are not only entertaining but serve as effective pedagogical tools that can significantly enhance the language learning experience. Further research involving a broader and more diverse sample is recommended to strengthen and expand upon these findings.

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